

Star BUSINESS



Bangladesh plans PayPal integration to boost SME market access

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh is moving to integrate international payment systems such as PayPal to expand global market access for small entrepreneurs and modernise the cottage and small industries sector through stronger digital connectivity, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur yesterday. "We have already removed regulatory barriers. SMEs should be able to receive payments seamlessly through platforms like PayPal," he said while addressing the Annual Conference and Workshop 2025 at the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) headquarters in Dhaka.

Citing global shifts, he highlighted the importance of linking international payment gateways to help local entrepreneurs reach global markets.

He stressed the urgent need to modernise and support small and cottage industries by strengthening supply chains, encouraging integration with larger firms, and building robust digital and sustainable platforms.

"Here, firms try to do everything on their own," he said, attributing part of the challenge to tax complications and policy inconsistencies that

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Mega project costs surge in currency shock

Higher bills for foreign-funded projects due to taka devaluation strain budget, and may force government to borrow again

REJJAUL KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

Government spending on several foreign-funded mega projects, including the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and metro rail works in Dhaka, has increased as the local currency Taka weakened sharply against the US dollar in recent years.

The increase has pushed up local currency costs even though dollar-based project values remain unchanged.

For the Rooppur plant alone, estimated costs may rise by 23 percent, equal to Tk 26,181 crore. However, the project value in dollars stays the same.

According to economists, a steep fall in the currency makes repayment for foreign-funded projects heavier. The impact is even harsher when the economy slows and revenue growth stalls, which is now the case in Bangladesh.

The Rooppur project was approved in 2016 at Tk 113,092 crore. Russian finance support was projected at Tk 91,040 crore, or \$11.38 billion, based on an exchange rate of Tk 80 per dollar. After approval, the rate hovered near Tk 85 for several years.

Pent-up demand after the Covid pandemic drove imports up, and the Russia-Ukraine war raised global prices. The country then saw its dollar stocks fall rapidly.

Subsequently, dollar shortage worsened, and the exchange rate climbed gradually as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) pressed for a market-based rate. It eventually rose from Tk 85 to around Tk 115 before the political changeover in August last year.

But the project cost was not revised in step with the depreciation.

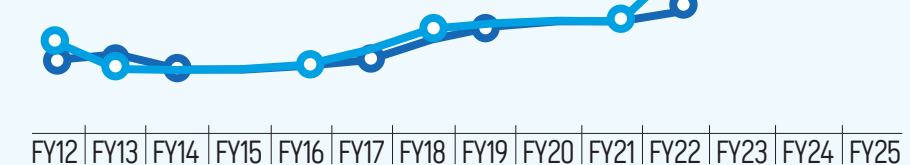
Recently, the Ministry of Science and

US DOLLAR-TAKA EXCHANGE RATE

● Period Average
● End Period



Taka has lost 42% in value against the US dollar on average since FY21



Technology has sent the first revised proposal to the Planning Commission, seeking an increase to Tk 126,479 crore to account for the weaker currency.

The commission, however, has assessed that the dollar component was not fully reflected in the ministry's estimate. Its own calculation suggests the cost may reach Tk 139,274 crore.

So far, the project has used \$8.29 billion, valued at Tk 95.28 per dollar. The rest of the financing, equal to \$3.09 billion, is projected at an exchange rate of Tk 122.4.

The commission is reviewing the figures and expects to finalise them soon. It says the adjustment is necessary to determine the power generation

cost accurately so that the project can meet its cost-benefit requirements.

Discussions have begun on the likely tariff for electricity from the nuclear power plant, estimated at around Tk 7 per unit, although the rate has not been finalised yet.

Although costs in dollars have not risen, the taka depreciation has pushed up the local currency burden sharply, said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

He said the higher repayment costs will strain the budget. If revenue collection fails to improve, the deficit will widen.

"To cover that shortfall, the government may need to borrow again," he said.

In the first four months of the current fiscal

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Govt may cut mobile phone import duty to curb illegal imports

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government is considering reducing import duties on legally imported smartphones ahead of the launch of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) on December 16.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR), the commerce ministry and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) have agreed on measures to curb unauthorised imports, support local manufacturers and ease rules for expatriates, said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, yesterday.

"Work on the duty cut is already in progress. Any reduction in duties on imported phones will be matched by adjustments to VAT and other taxes for the country's 13 to 14 assembly plants to ensure fair competition," Taiyeb said.

He warned that without such alignment, foreign investment in Bangladesh's mobile device manufacturing sector could face setbacks.

NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan told The Daily Star, "We will make decisions based on the broader national interest. We are not saying that duties will be reduced immediately, but the matter is under consideration."

Currently, import duties on legally imported smartphones stand at about 61 percent.

The move comes after a protest by the Mobile Business Community Bangladesh on November 30, when many mobile shops closed their doors over high import taxes and the upcoming NEIR rollout.

NEIR is expected to block unauthorised and stolen devices. Industry leaders have welcomed the move, though traders fear unsold stock without a valid International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) registration will become worthless.

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Refiners hike oil price without govt approval

SUKANTA HALDER and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Refiners have reportedly once again increased the prices of soybean oil, even though the government says it has not authorised the hike in the essential commodity.

Retailers in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Barishal reported yesterday that a one-litre bottle of soybean oil is now selling at Tk 198, about 5 percent higher than a week ago. Five-litre bottles are priced at Tk 965, up Tk 45 or 5 percent from the previous week.

Market data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) also confirmed the rise, with 5-litre bottles recorded at Tk 960, compared with Tk 910 a week earlier. Loose palm oil prices have similarly surged.

The latest increase comes amid persistently high inflation, which stood at 8.17 percent in October, adding financial pressure on households already struggling with

from Tk 920-Tk 922. One-litre bottles now retail at Tk 198, although newly priced stocks have yet to fully reach the market.

Mohammad Rafique, proprietor of Nabin Trading at Chattogra's Khatunganj, the country's largest wholesale market for consumer goods, claimed that refiners reduced supply ahead of Ramadan, contributing to the spike at the wholesale level too.

However, Md Shafiqul Ather Taslim, director for finance and operations at TK Group, said the rise is driven by global market increase.

He said international prices rose by \$150-\$200 per tonne over the past two to three months. Import costs have also risen from \$1,090 to \$1,203 per tonne, affecting operational expenses.

"As a company, we have followed the law. We informed the Ministry of Commerce 15 days before the price adjustment and sought verification. Since the ministry did not respond or object, we proceeded within the legal

Govt updating Pakistan-era law on commodities

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The commerce ministry has started drafting amendments to Pakistan-era essential commodities law, saying the old law is inadequate for monitoring markets.

The law -- Control of Essential Commodities Act, 1956 (East Pakistan Act) -- was broad, and many clauses are now outdated because Bangladesh has created numerous ministries, departments, and organisations since independence, Commerce Secretary Mahubur Rahman said yesterday.

For example, the old law gave the commerce ministry control over cotton, yarn, biscuits, rayon, and food items. However, over the years, separate ministries, departments, and organisations have taken over the responsibility of regulating and monitoring these markets, he added.

The government has already set up the Bangladesh Competition Commission and the Directorate of National Consumers' Rights Protection to monitor commodity markets and prices.

Additionally, the ministry plans to update the definition of hoarding of essential commodities to prevent dishonest traders from creating artificial shortages and hiking prices, which harm consumers.

"The ministry is drafting the amendment, and the first inter-ministerial meeting on it was held at the ministry in Dhaka today (Wednesday)," Mahubur Rahman added.

After the meeting, he said the commerce ministry convened edible oil traders, association leaders, and millers yesterday to discuss soybean oil price fixing.

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RETRAIL PRICES OF SOYBEAN OIL IN DHAKA			
	03-Nov	26-Nov	03-Dec
Loose	Tk 170-180	Tk 170-180	Tk 170-180
One litre bottle	Tk 189-195	Tk 189-192	Tk 189-198
5-litre bottle	Tk 900-930	Tk 900-925	Tk 910-960

SOURCE: TCB

rising living costs.

Speaking to the media at the Bangladesh Secretariat on Tuesday, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said the refiners' price hikes lack legal justification. "Traders raised prices without informing the authorities."

Retailers blame the big groups for the sudden hike.

"All brands have raised prices," said Hasibul Islam Ponir, a trader in Mirpur's Pallabi area.

Sagar Hossain, a retailer at Karwan Bazar, noted that customers frequently question sudden price spikes.

A market visit to Khatunganj, Kazir Dewri, Chawkbazar, and Choumuhani in Chattogram confirmed the increase, with major brands such as Rupchanda, Teer, Pusti, and Fresh selling five-litre bottles at Tk 965, up

framework," he said.

He added that without the ability to adjust prices according to global market conditions, companies risk heavy losses, struggling to pay bank loans, employee salaries, and operational costs. "Shutting down operations becomes the only remaining option."

According to the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, companies proposed the price hike on November 10, with a planned effective date of November 24. However, the government did not approve the bid.

Bangladesh's domestic consumption of soybean and palm oil in the 2024-25 marketing year, beginning in October, was estimated at 28.6 lakh tonnes, including 11.35 lakh tonnes of soybeans, with 85 percent imported, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025

Accelerate your international success

Dhaka, 7 December

Exporters are a key driving force behind Bangladesh's continued economic progress. HSBC Export Excellence Awards returns to honour the determination and achievements of Bangladesh's outstanding exporters who have opened up a world of opportunities beyond borders and elevated the nation's presence on the global stage.

At the Awards Night, we are commemorating the winning enterprises across four key categories, including:

- Export Excellence in -
- Ready Made Garments
- Ready Made Garments Backward Linkage
- Non-traditional and Emerging Sectors - Manufacturing
- Non-traditional and Emerging Sectors - Service

Stay tuned for the result announcement.

Scan to know more about the award

Ministry of Commerce

British High Commission Dhaka

Opening up a world of opportunity

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited in Bangladesh

bKash sees 50 lakh remittance transfers thru Pubali Bank in 10 months

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bangladeshi expatriates have sent remittances to their bKash accounts more than 50 lakh times in the last 10 months through Pubali Bank.

This hassle-free and secure service, provided by two of the country's leading financial institutions, has earned the trust of expatriates and their families. It also encourages the use of legal remittance channels, thereby strengthening Bangladesh's foreign currency reserves.

The country's leading mobile financial service provider, in association with Pubali Bank Limited, organised a programme at the bKash headquarters in Dhaka recently to celebrate this achievement.

Mohammad Ali, managing director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, and Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash Limited, inaugurated the programme, according to a press release.

They highlighted the significance of this joint service and pledged to make remittance transactions even easier and safer for users.

As a vital lifeline for the national economy, remittances from expatriates play a critical role in boosting foreign exchange reserves and supporting macroeconomic stability.

To support this, Pubali Bank and bKash have developed a robust ecosystem that enables expatriates to send money easily and securely.

Currently, expatriates from 33 countries can send remittances through 11 international money transfer operators (MTOs), which are settled instantly into recipients' bKash accounts via Pubali Bank.

Additionally, recipients receive a government incentive of Tk 25 per thousand and can conveniently cash out the remittance from nearby bKash agent points.

Families of expatriates can also use remittances to access a wide range of services through their bKash accounts, including payments for products and services, utility bills (gas, electricity, water), mobile recharge, educational and government fees, donations, insurance premiums, microfinance instalments, and more—all from the comfort of their homes.



Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash Limited, and Mohammad Ali, managing director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, inaugurate a programme celebrating a record 10 months of remittances at the bKash headquarters in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BKASH

Moin Ullah Chowdhury made MD of Coca-Cola Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Coca-Cola, one of the country's leading beverage companies, has appointed Moin Ullah Chowdhury as the managing director (MD) of Coca-Cola Bangladesh Limited.



Moin Ullah Chowdhury

Chowdhury brings over 15 years of extensive experience in marketing, distribution, and business leadership across diverse industries.

He joined Coca-Cola Bangladesh as a commercial and franchise manager in 2018 and later advanced to director of franchise, according to a press release.

In this role, he has played a key part in strengthening the company's market presence, fostering strategic brand partnerships, and driving sustainable commercial growth.

Chowdhury began his professional career at British American Tobacco Bangladesh, where he progressed from territory officer to area manager and brand executive. He later served as head of customer engagement and client support at bKash.

He holds a bachelor's degree from North South University.

Prime Bank organises annual risk conference



ANM Moinul Kabir, director of the Department of Off-Site Supervision (DOS) at Bangladesh Bank, and Hassan O Rashid, chief executive officer of Prime Bank PLC, pose for a group photograph with participants of the "Annual Risk Conference 2025" at Prime Tower in Nikunja, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC recently organised its "Annual Risk Conference 2025" at Prime Tower in Nikunja, Dhaka, reaffirming its commitment to fostering a proactive risk culture and ensuring sustainable growth in line with regulatory standards.

ANM Moinul Kabir, director of the Department of Off-Site Supervision (DOS) at Bangladesh Bank, attended the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Surabhi Ghosh, additional director of DOS, attended the event as the special guest.

In his welcome address, Hassan O Rashid, chief executive officer of Prime Bank PLC, emphasised the bank's unwavering commitment to developing a proactive risk culture and maintaining sustainable growth in accordance with regulatory expectations.

Nazmin Nahar, joint director of DOS at the central bank, served as a resource

person and shared valuable insights with participants.

During the sessions, experienced central bankers discussed key issues related to risk management policies, the implementation of risk-based supervision (RBS), expected credit loss (ECL), and current challenges facing the banking sector.

They praised Prime Bank's strong risk management framework and its continued efforts to uphold a robust risk culture. The bank also honoured the top proactive risk identifiers for their contributions to strengthening the bank's risk culture.

Faisal Rahman, additional managing director and chief business officer of Prime Bank PLC; Md Ziaur Rahman, deputy managing director and chief risk officer; M Nazeem A Chowdhury and Md Iqbal Hossain, deputy managing directors; and Kazi Naim Morshed, head of risk management, among others, were also present.

Mohammad Ali named as IRBA transformation leader

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank PLC, has been awarded the "IRBA Transformation Leader in Bangladesh 2025" by the Awards Committee of the Islamic Retail Banking Awards (IRBA).



Mohammad Ali

The award highlights Mohammad Ali's exceptional leadership, strategic foresight, and transformative contributions to advancing Islamic banking practices and strengthening the overall financial ecosystem in Bangladesh, according to a press release.

His visionary approach, commitment to innovation, and dedication to ensuring inclusive, shariah-compliant financial solutions have been instrumental in elevating the standards of Islamic retail banking across the country.

Organised by Cambridge IFA, the IRBA is a globally respected platform renowned for recognising excellence, innovation, and best practices in Islamic retail banking.

The selection of the "Transformation Leader" is based on a rigorous evaluation model conducted by an independent panel of experts, reflecting outstanding performance, influence, and impact within the industry.

Upon receiving the recognition, Ali expressed gratitude, saying, "This award is a profound honour and a testament to the collective efforts of our teams dedicated to strengthening Islamic banking services in Bangladesh."

"I remain committed to fostering innovation, promoting ethical banking, and contributing to the continued growth and transformation of the Islamic finance sector," he added.

Berger Paints launches 'Color Carnival' campaign

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited has launched a campaign, titled "Color Carnival" on Tuesday at the Berger Experience Zone in Bashundhara, Dhaka.

The campaign offers special discounted rates on painting services and exclusive gift vouchers, making it an ideal opportunity for homeowners to refresh their living spaces ahead of the New Year.

Abul Kashem Mohammad Sadek Nawaj, chief business officer of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, inaugurated the campaign as the chief guest, according to a press release.

At the event, Nawaj said, "Color Carnival is one of our most impactful consumer campaigns. It reflects Berger's commitment to making painting easier, more accessible, and more enjoyable for homeowners."

"With new Illusions designs and exclusive benefits, we are enabling

customers to experience world-class, worry-free painting services," he added.

As demand typically rises during the year-end and peak wedding season, Berger aims to make professional painting services more accessible and cost-effective for customers across the country.

This year's Color Carnival also features new Illusions textures and designs, giving customers an expanded range of creative and visually appealing options to enhance their interiors.

During Color Carnival, customers can enjoy additional benefits along with Berger's best-in-class professional painting services, bringing trusted and comprehensive painting solutions just a phone call away.

Saluddin Ahmed Track, chief marketing officer of the company, and Shabbir Ahmed, general sales manager, were also present, along with senior officials, partners, and representatives.



Abul Kashem Mohammad Sadek Nawaj, chief business officer of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, inaugurates the "Color Carnival" campaign at the Berger Experience Zone in Bashundhara, Dhaka on Tuesday.

PHOTO: BERGER PAINTS BANGLADESH

ACI Agrolink's shrimp processing matches European standards: EU delegation

STAR BUSINESS DESK

International delegates have highly praised ACI Agrolink's shrimp processing and quality control during a regional workshop organised under the European Union's (EU) "Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF)" programme.

Following a recent visit to the factory, delegates from eight EU and Asian countries said the ACI Agrolink processing facility is on par with advanced shrimp processing plants in Europe, noting no observable difference in standards.

A total of 45 government representatives from eight countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam – as well as observers from the EU, attended the workshop.

As part of the training, the delegation toured the ACI Shrimp Genetics Nursery and the ACI Agrolink Shrimp Processing Factory. During the visit, they were briefed on the full process of Post Larval (PL) nursing and the EU-required protocols for processing export-quality shrimp.

Participants expressed strong satisfaction with ACI's management and recognised the company's contribution to strengthening the shrimp value chain. They praised the food safety, quality assurance, and biosecurity measures maintained during PL nursing and shrimp processing. Several delegates also said they would be willing to purchase ACI Agrolink products at premium prices due to the consistently high quality.

In response to a query from Syed M Istiak regarding potential areas for improvement, a representative of the European Commission said ACI Agrolink is already maintaining the

highest standards, adding that the priority should be to ensure continuity.

The EU delegation presented ACI Agrolink with a "Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF)" certificate of appreciation for maintaining high standards.

The third day of the four-day training, titled "BTSF SPS Non-EU Countries Bangladesh: Regional Workshop on Aquaculture", was organised by the Spanish Association for

Standardization (AENOR) and funded by the EU.

ACI Agrolink Limited, in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries, conducted the event.

Md Khaled Kanak, deputy director of the Department of Fisheries, Syed M Istiak, business director of ACI Agrolink Ltd, along with senior officials of the Department of Fisheries; and district and upazila-level fisheries officers, were also present.



International delegates pose for a group photograph after visiting the ACI Agrolink Shrimp Processing Factory as part of the "BTSF SPS Non-EU Countries Bangladesh: Regional Workshop on Aquaculture", organised by the Spanish Association for Standardization and conducted by ACI Agrolink Limited and the Department of Fisheries, in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: ACI AGROLINK

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার প্রধান মন্ত্রীর কার্যালয় শেখ হাসিনা সরকারি আর্থনিক মন্ত্রণালয় শেখ হাসিনা, ঢাকা web: flourmill.dhaka.gov.bd	
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৬	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং
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GD-2647

Full FoC import could backfire, say textile, accessory makers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Textile millers and garment accessories manufacturers have voiced strong opposition to the government's proposed amendment to the import policy, which would allow full import of raw materials for export-oriented garments under the free-of-charge (FoC) arrangement.

Currently, exporters can import only 50 percent of the raw materials they need under FoC. Under this system, international buyers supply fabrics, accessories, and other inputs, while local manufacturers are paid only for cutting and making the garments.

Although the policy aims to reduce costs and encourage high-end exports, the amendment could undermine Bangladesh's domestic textile and accessories industries, leaders of the sectors conveyed to Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin at a meeting at the ministry on Tuesday.

They warned that the primary textile sector - which has attracted around \$23 billion in

investment and provides yarn, fabrics, dyeing, washing, and finishing services to garment exporters - could face severe disruption due to the amendment.

In a statement issued yesterday, Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said the FoC amendment "will destroy the primary textile sector."

He noted that local mills are already struggling with gas shortages and cannot operate at full capacity.

Allowing full FoC imports would further reduce demand for locally produced raw materials, potentially weakening the entire supply chain that supports Bangladesh's garment industry, he said.

Similarly, in a separate statement, Md Shahriar, president of the Bangladesh Garments Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGAPMEA), expressed concern that the Tk 40,000 crore packaging and accessories sector will be severely affected due to the change.

However, exporters say that FoC is

straightforward, less risky and faster. Without any quota on FoC import, they believe global brands will place more orders in Bangladesh because of the country's skilled workforce and strong manufacturing capacity.

At present, more than 95 percent of garments are exported using usual letters of credit (LCs). FoC has seen limited uptake because of import restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles.

The move is expected to bring an additional \$5 billion in export earnings within the first year of implementation. Md Shehab Udduza Chowdhury, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), told The Daily Star in early November.

In the second year, he added that the value is expected to cross \$10 billion as factories can get all raw materials under the FoC arrangement.

A few years ago, FoC imports were capped at 33 percent of total raw materials. This was increased to 50 percent later.

Shrimp sector struggles to keep pace with regional peers despite potential

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's shrimp industry is struggling to compete with regional peers despite its strong potential and deep socio-economic importance, largely due to gaps in policy support, according to paper presented at a seminar yesterday.

For decades, shrimp has been vital to rural livelihoods, nutrition, and export earnings, supporting millions across coastal districts through extensive networks of farmers, hatcheries, processors, and exporters.

"Once a major foreign exchange earner, shrimp helped shape Bangladesh's reputation in the global seafood market. But in recent years, the momentum has stalled," said Bazlul Haque Khondker, research director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh. Export earnings have dropped sharply, even as global demand remains robust, he added.



Khondker made the remarks at a policy dialogue on "Transforming Policy Support for Reviving Bangladesh's Shrimp Sector" held in Dhaka, jointly organised by PRI and the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFEEA).

He noted that while competitors like India, Vietnam, and Indonesia have rapidly expanded Vannamei shrimp farming, a higher yielding variety than black tiger shrimp, Bangladesh remains largely absent in Vannamei cultivation except for some pilot projects.

Mega project costs surge

FROM PAGE B1

year, debt servicing costs rose by 10 percent. In Taka terms, the increase was 13 percent, driven mainly by the weaker currency.

Hussain emphasised increasing revenue collection and reducing public spending to keep borrowing in check.

METRO PROJECTS HIT BY RISING COSTS

Cost pressures are not limited to the Rooppur plant. Rather, several metro rail projects in Dhaka also face higher bills.

The cost of Metro Rail Line 6, the country's first metro service, which

now carries several lakh passengers daily on the Uttara to Motiheel route, has fallen slightly to Tk 32,717 crore from Tk 33,472 crore due to lower land acquisition costs under the government funded portion.

However, costs under foreign loans have risen because of the weaker currency. Consultancy fees and repayment liabilities have increased, including an additional Tk 270 crore in foreign loan repayment linked to the depreciation.

The government approved the latest project

costs this week. Two other metro lines, Mass Rapid Transit-1 and Mass Rapid Transit-5, are also set for cost increases.

When the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) funded projects were approved in 2019, they were valued at Tk 95,000 crore. Since then, the Taka has lost more than 40 percent of its value, meaning significant upward revisions.

An MRT-1 official recently informed Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) that the cost of Japan's funding package would rise to

Tk 75,649 crore from Tk 39,450 crore, while the total project was originally estimated at Tk 53,977 crore.

A similar rise is expected for the 20-kilometre MRT-5 line from Hayemaypur to Bhatara through Gabtoli, Mirpur and Gulshan.

The project, split into ten packages, was approved at Tk 41,261 crore. The latest assessment shows Tk 15,527 crore will be needed for just one package, originally priced at Tk 3,968 crore.

Officials said talks are going on between Jica and the government to reduce the overall costs.

Bangladesh plans PayPal integration

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hinder both vertical and horizontal integration.

On financing, he criticised the limited scope of BSCIC's loan disbursement.

Only Tk 200-250 crore is being distributed. This should have been much higher, he said, pointing to weak distribution channels and inadequate institutional capacity.

Mansur recommended partnering with microfinance institutions or specialised banks so that loans reach the intended SMEs.

The governor also called for a dynamic online marketplace for BSCIC entrepreneurs, proposing a professionally managed e-commerce platform to directly connect producers with buyers, eliminate middlemen, and ensure fair prices.

"It must be updated continuously and operated professionally. We must invest in quality IT personnel and infrastructure," he said.

Mansur further highlighted the need for stronger demand-side development, warning that increasing supply without corresponding market creation would create inefficiencies.

"Entrepreneurs will suffer if they can't sell. Market access must come first," he said.

Govt updating Pakistan-era

FROM PAGE B1

Traders had raised soybean oil prices by Tk 10 per litre above the government-purchased rate meant for sale through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin told journalists that the ministry was not informed about the price hike beforehand.

"I learned of the increase only half an hour before it was

implemented," he said.

He noted that the government had recently procured around 50 lakh litres of soybean oil, yet the current retail price is Tk 10 higher than what the government paid. "If we can buy through tender at a lower rate, why is the retail market paying so much more?" he asked.

The adviser said the companies' actions had no legal basis and that there was "no logical reason" for

a Tk 10 per litre jump in the retail market. "If there is any logical reason for the price hike, we are happy to discuss," he added, noting that prices had also been raised illogically in the past, but the ministry did not act then.

He promised action after an urgent review with industry stakeholders and warned that the government would take legal measures against the wrongdoers.

Govt may cut

FROM PAGE B1

Taiyeb reassured consumers that any handset already in use and activated before December 16 will not be blocked once NEIR becomes operational.

He added that the government is also preparing to crack down on used foreign handsets being imported as new. Customs has already identified flights from India, Thailand and China for targeted enforcement.

The proposed Telecommunication Ordinance 2025 will further enhance safeguards for IMEI and electronic know-your-customer (eKYC) data.

During a recent inter-agency meeting, officials decided that expatriate Bangladeshis may use personal smartphones

for up to 60 days without registration. Those staying longer will need to register under NEIR.

Those with Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) registration cards can bring one personal handset plus two new devices duty-free; a fourth device will incur duty. Travellers without BMET registration may bring one additional handset tax free.

Currently, Bangladeshi travellers can bring two devices duty-free.

Authorities also urged travellers to carry proof of purchase, noting that smugglers at airports in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Middle East often pressure migrant workers to carry high-value items.

The BTRC and NBR are continuing discussions with the commerce ministry to align taxes on imported and locally assembled devices, with final decisions expected soon.

The inter-agency meeting also stressed consumer safety, warning users not to let others operate SIM cards registered in their name, which are often used for cybercrime, scams, and mobile banking fraud.

Bangladesh will block cloned, stolen, and refurbished phones from entering the market. Importers may legalise devices with valid IMEI numbers brought in before December 16 by paying reduced duty, but cloned and refurbished units will not qualify.

Mastercard launches 'Safari Spirit' winter campaign

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mastercard has launched its 2025-26 winter spend-and-win campaign, titled "Safari Spirit", offering Bangladeshi Mastercard debit, credit, and prepaid cardholders the chance to win exciting rewards.

Cardholders can participate by making eligible retail transactions from December 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026, according to a press release.

The top prize is a 3-night, 4-day couple's trip to Kenya, including round-trip airfare from Dhaka and a premium safari experience.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Telephone: 02587742145
Road Division, Nilphamari.
Email: rhdnil@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.7364.456.07.012.25-2283 Date: 03-12-2025

Amendment/Corrigendum Notice of Tender ID No - 1177729

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Tender Document last selling/ downloading Date and Time		Tender Closing Date and Time	
			Old value	New Value	Old value	New Value
1.	1177729	Widening & Bituminous overlay with DBS Wearing Course from Ch. 360+257 (Chhik Bridge) to Ch. 364+467 (BSCIC Training Center) & Ch. 364+750 (Shutkir Moor) to Ch. 373+567 (Rabeyar Moor) including necessary repairs of pavement distresses of Dhaka (Mirpur)-Utholi-Paturia-Natakholia-Kashinathpur-Bogra-Rangpur-Beldanga-Banglabandha National Highway (N 5) under Road Division Nilphamari, as a part of the PMP (Major Roads) program for FY 2025-2026.	08 Dec-2025 17:00	14 Dec-2025 17:00	09 Dec-2025 11:30	15 Dec-2025 11:30

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 portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branch up to particular date and time specified on the Tender Notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also can be obtained from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). For more details please contact e-GP help desk contact numbers.

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

(Md. Arif Zahan)
Sub-Assistant Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari.

(Md. Sultan Mahmud)
ID No. 602281
Executive Engineer(C.C.), RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari.

GD-2643

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়
চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ
www.forestnorth.chittagong.gov.bd

বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার ২০২৫ প্রদানের জন্য আবেদন পত্র আহবান।

সর্বসাধারণের অংশগ্রহণের জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত বৃক্ষরোপণ কর্মকর্তাকে নিম্নে বর্ণিত ০৭ (সাত) টি শ্রেণীভুক্ত করে প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীতে ০৩ (তিন) টি করে পুরস্কার প্রদানের জন্য সরকার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করছে।

(ক) প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়/উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়/একতমাবী মাদ্রাসা/সিনিয়র মাদ্রাসা/ কলেজ/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
(খ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/উপজেলা পরিষদ/জেলা পরিষদ/সৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন/অভিদপ্তর/পরিদপ্তর/ সেক্টর কর্পোরেশন/ প্রতিষ্ঠান/এন জি ও/ক্রব/বেঙ্গালেশী সন্থা
(গ) ব্যক্তিগত পর্যায়ে বৃক্ষরোপণ
(ঘ) ব্যক্তি মালিকানাধীন মার্গারী
(ঙ) ব্যক্তিগত/প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক পর্যায়ে সৃজিত ছাদ বাগান
(চ) বন বিভাগ কর্তৃক সৃজিত বাগান
(ছ) বৃক্ষ সম্পর্কিত গবেষণা/সংরক্ষণ/উদ্ভাবন

আবেদনপত্রের ফর্ম প্রাপ্তি ও দাখিলের স্থান

(১) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম এর কার্যালয়, বন পাহাড়, নন্দনকানন, চট্টগ্রাম।
(২) উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, (সকল), চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।
(৩) রেঞ্জ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, মীরসরাই রেঞ্জ, মীরসরাই উপজেলা/বারোতালা রেঞ্জ, সীতাকুণ্ড উপজেলা/নারায়নহাট রেঞ্জ, ফটিকছড়ি উপজেলা/হাটহাজারী রেঞ্জ, হাটহাজারী উপজেলা/ইছামতি রেঞ্জ, রাউজান উপজেলা/ রাঙ্গুনিয়া রেঞ্জ, রাঙ্গুনিয়া উপজেলা/পটিয়া রেঞ্জ, পটিয়া ও বোরালহাটী উপজেলা/ পটিয়া এস.এফ.এন.টি.সি. কর্তৃক সৃষ্টি ও আয়োজিত উপজেলা/দোহাজারী রেঞ্জ, চন্দনাইশ উপজেলা/ পদুয়া রেঞ্জ, লোহাগাড়া উপজেলা/ কানীপুর রেঞ্জ, বংশাব্দী উপজেলা/ মাদার্সা রেঞ্জ, সাতকানিয়া উপজেলা/ ফনীপ রেঞ্জ, ফনীপ উপজেলা/শহর রেঞ্জ, মহানগর এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।

এতদসংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় (প্রয়োজন হলে) বর্ণিত কার্যালয় হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে।

আবেদনপত্র দাখিলের শেষ সময়: ০৪/০২/২০২৬ খ্রি.

(মোঃ সফিকুল ইসলাম)
বিভাগীয় কর্মকর্তা
চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ
ও
সদস্য সচিব
বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার প্রদান সংক্রান্ত সেলা কமிটি, চট্টগ্রাম
ই-মেইল: gfocn@forestnorth.gov.bd
ফোন: ০২৩৩৩০৬০৯৯

GD-2648

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of The Superintending Engineer, RHD
Road Circle, Rangamati.
Phone No: 02333371016
E-mail: seranga@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No: 35.01.8400.194.00.001.25.1670 Date: 03.12.2025.

e-GP Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concerns that e-Tender is invited and published on 03/12/2025 in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of works for the following Tenders. Interested persons/firms can see details by visiting the web site www.eprocure.gov.bd.

Sl.	Tender ID	Tender Reference No.	Name of Work	Date & Time
01.	1177216	e-Gp/DEV/WB/HELP-RHD/PW-03 2025-2026	Construction and Improvement of Tankabati-Baroawlia Road (Z-1013) under Bandarban Road Division during the year 2025-2026 (PW-03)"	Last Selling: 04-Jan-2026 16:00 Closing: 05-Jan-2026 12:30

(Mohammad Mahade Iqbal)
ID No.: 601956
Superintending Engineer (C.C), RHD
Road Circle, Rangamati.
&
Project Director
Construction & Improvement of Three Roads
Targeting Host Community under
Bandarban Road Division.

GD-2650



Poor yields of summer onions have left growers frustrated, with many blaming low-quality seeds supplied under a government subsidy scheme. The photo was taken recently from Char Mahipur area of Gangachara upazila in Rangpur.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Summer onion project wilts as seeds cannot withstand heat

Farmers welcome project but say they need heat-tolerant seeds

S DILIP ROY and SUKANTA HALDER

Over the last two years, the government has spent nearly Tk 37 crore in farmer incentives to grow summer onions and narrow the gap between annual demand and local output.

The project, though launched with good faith, is faltering with farmers reporting that the seeds - Nasik N-53 - supplied under the project sprout, then wither and die because of its low tolerance to summer heat.

District agriculture officers say the variety can tolerate temperatures only up to 25 degrees Celsius. In northern districts, the mercury climbs to around 40 degrees during peak summer, and the seedlings collapse in the heat. Officials in the north say they have been sending regular field reports to the agriculture ministry. But top officials at the agricultural extension department, which is responsible for facilitating agricultural growth and development, say they are yet to receive any formal complaint regarding the onion seeds.

Meanwhile, an agricultural economist said the entire seed supply chain from the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) to the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) and the Department of

Agricultural Extension (DAE) must shoulder full responsibility.

Official data show that Bangladesh consumes an estimated 28 lakh tonnes of red onions each year. Local cultivation accounts for about 80 percent of this, with the rest met through imports.

Farmers usually plant onions in winter. After years of price spikes that pushed retail rates to as high as Tk 200 a kilogramme, the government explored ways to increase output and narrow the gap between annual demand and supply.

GOOD PROJECT, BAD SEED

The project was supposed to help achieve those goals. However, interviews with 40 farmers - 20 from Rangpur, 10 from Kurigram and 10 from Lalmonirhat - revealed that its potential was nipped in the bud.

"The seeds sprout after sowing, but the seedlings wither and die before growing big. The same thing happened in the last two years. I won't take these seeds again," said Akbar Ali, a farmer from Char Korai Barishal area in Chilmari of Kurigram.

He added, "During summer, the temperature in our area is very high, and the seeds cannot tolerate this heat."

Aminul Islam, a farmer from Harati village in Lalmonirhat, said, "We were happy to receive the incentive for onion

cultivation, but the seeds were ruined within a few days. We made no profit; instead, we suffered losses."

He added that farmers would benefit if heat-tolerant varieties were supplied instead.

Nader Ali, a farmer from Char Mohipur in Gangachara, said, "The project is very necessary. But without improving seed quality, it is of no use. For two years, I did not get any yield."

District officers are frustrated as well. Kurigram DAE Deputy Director Abdullah Al Mamun said, "Nasik N-53 is not a summer variety. We regularly report field outcomes to the ministry. If heat-tolerant seeds are supplied, the project will see better success."

Sirajul Islam, additional director of Rangpur Regional DAE, said, "A different seed variety must be supplied for summer cultivation. We have already informed the ministry in writing about changing the variety. Discussions on this issue are ongoing in review workshops on summer onion cultivation."

However, SM Sohrab Uddin, director general of the DAE, told The Daily Star that he is yet to receive any written complaint on the matter.

"If a complaint is filed and an investigation confirms the allegations, appropriate action will be taken against all those involved," he added.

According to the DAE, in 2024 a total of Tk 19.85 crore was provided as incentives to 60,518 farmers for cultivating summer onions on the same amount of land across 28 districts. For each bigha, Tk 3,280 was given to farmers for seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and other inputs. In the Rangpur Division's eight districts, 6,160 farmers received this incentive.

In 2025, a total of 50,000 farmers in 20 districts received Tk 17 crore in incentives. Each farmer received Tk 3,400. In the Rangpur division, 8,500 farmers received the incentive.

Meanwhile, blaming the agencies responsible for supplying the seeds, agricultural economist Jahangir Alam Khan, said the BADC is accountable for the varieties it multiplies and delivers to farmers, and the DAE must verify whether the seed is properly tested and truthfully labeled.

He noted that when farmers receive poor-quality seed, they suffer financial losses and have every right to seek compensation. "If private companies can be penalised for supplying bad seed, the same standards must apply to government institutions as well."

Since the government spends public money to produce and subsidise these seeds, collecting low-quality seed is unacceptable, he said.

Cash transactions hold back economic growth

AF NESARUDDIN

In principle, there is nothing wrong with cash financial transactions. The problem arises when they are used to evade tax, launder money, facilitate illegal deals or pay bribes. In such cases, the transactions become questionable.

A clear definition of cash transactions is essential. Issuing cash cheques and moving funds outside banking channels are common examples. The government has tried through various regulations to reduce reliance on cash, yet the impact has been limited.

As a result, financial statements are drifting away from reality, and personal finances are being pushed into the informal economy. These practices have fuelled large-scale tax evasion and corruption. The use of illegal funds for criminal activities adds another layer of concern that cannot be ignored.

Cash transactions are widespread in property deals, where a large portion of the payment takes place in cash outside the official deed value. Similarly, cash sales are often not deposited into company bank accounts and remain outside the books. Cash payments to suppliers are another area where tax evasion is a key motivation.

Recently, some bank officials have begun questioning ordinary clients about withdrawals exceeding Taka five hundred thousand. Yet it is striking that, within this environment, billions have been siphoned out of banks, apparently without similar scrutiny.

The government has introduced various measures to bring untaxed black money into the formal economy, but these have shown little success.

With the introduction of document verification, ICAB has ended the practice of maintaining multiple sets of financial statements.

If cash transactions can be reduced or controlled, the quality of financial reporting will improve, and government revenue will be better protected, which in turn will help support economic growth.

There is also an irrational rule in the country. Any individual, regardless of income, tax history, social standing or

financial position, is entitled to the same foreign currency quota, including international credit card limits. Money exchange houses operate largely on a cash basis, and the extent to which these are effectively monitored is unclear. Only account holders under the export retention quota receive some flexibility, and students are allowed to remit funds for overseas education. These narrow opportunities encourage further cash transactions.

Foreign currency quotas for overseas travel should vary according to income, frequency of foreign trips and annual personal tax contribution. In many countries, cash payments beyond petty purchases in small shops or street markets are rare. Some argue that cash cannot be avoided in retail trade. Yet daily sales can be deposited by evening or the next working morning. Bank branches are now widespread across the country.

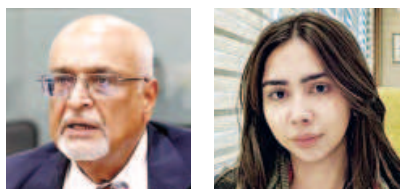
Many companies, particularly foreign ones, already follow such practices. Salaries and wages can be paid through banks, as can student allowances, overtime and local travel costs, which is standard in all CA firms under ICAB requirements. No supplier should receive cash payments in any corporate entity. Auditors can attach a certificate to cash transactions with tax returns to ensure transparency. In property acquisitions, all payments, whether within or beyond deed value, should be subject to tax and penalties where evasion is detected.

Ultimately, digitalisation is a crucial tool for correcting these irregularities. Like many developing countries, Bangladesh must reduce cash transactions to remove a significant barrier to economic growth, and the sooner the better.

The writer is a senior partner of Hoda Vasi Chowdhury and Co, and past president of ICAB



Why we need to revisit the LDC paradigm



DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA and MAMTAJUL JANNAT

It has been more than five decades since the UN established the Least Developed Countries (LDC) category, in 1971, identifying these countries as facing the most severe roadblocks to sustainable development.

LDC status unlocks international support measures (ISMs) including trade preferences, concessional finance, technical assistance, and prioritisation in aid allocation. Buffering against shocks and creating openings for investment, trade, and institutional strengthening, these measures are a lifeline for countries facing vulnerabilities due to geography, climate exposure, fragility, or conflict. The ultimate goal is "graduation" from LDC status, which triggers a transition period during which countries prepare to phase out ISMs.

This framework was designed to help countries move out of extreme structural disadvantage. But has it worked? The picture is mixed: today, some LDCs have advanced toward graduation, but many remain stuck. LDCs host about 12 percent of the world's population, including 27 percent of its refugees, but generate less than 2 percent of global GDP and 1 percent of world trade.

These imbalances reveal the limits of the current graduation model,

which overlooks the structural realities keeping many trapped in underdevelopment. To be truly fit for purpose, the LDC paradigm must be updated to better reflect these vulnerabilities, recognise diverse trajectories, and align support with today's challenges.

THE UNEVEN PATH OF GRADUATION PROGRESS

To determine whether countries should retain LDC status or be considered for graduation, the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) reviews the list of LDCs every three years, using three criteria: income level, measured by gross national income per capita; human assets, assessed through health, nutrition, and education indicators; and environmental and economic vulnerability, captured through the Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI). Countries qualify for graduation after meeting thresholds in two of the three categories in two consecutive reviews. As of late 2025, only eight countries have managed to exit the group of LDCs; 44 remain.

Six countries, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Cambodia and Senegal, have confirmed exit years and are preparing transition plans.

Comoros, Myanmar, Djibouti, Kiribati and Tuvalu have met the graduation criteria but deferred their exit due to political or structural challenges. Kiribati and Tuvalu, both Small Island Developing States (SIDS), have remained in the graduation pipeline for nearly two decades, reflecting the compound effects of remoteness, small size and exposure to climate risks.

Despite meeting thresholds in

all three categories since 2018, Myanmar's graduation has been held back by protracted political instability. The graduations of Comoros and Djibouti, which became eligible in 2024, were deferred due to political uncertainty and weak institutions.

Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania

are the newest additions to the graduation pipeline, having met the thresholds for the first time in 2024. Thirty LDCs (the "holdover" LDCs) have never qualified for graduation. Of these, 26 are in Africa. The remaining four, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Yemen and Haiti, face instability and isolation. About 40 percent of holdover LDCs are landlocked, limiting opportunities for connectivity and integration into

global markets. Around 60 percent are conflict-affected or institutionally weak; nearly 93 percent fail to meet the EVI threshold. They are also home to 17 percent of the world's refugees. These pressures deepen fiscal strain and weaken state capacity, making progress toward graduation even more challenging.

— all realities many LDCs face. The EVI threshold, while helpful, does not necessarily fully capture these dimensions, either. ISMs likewise fall short, focusing heavily on trade preferences and concessional finance rather than addressing the challenges that impede sustainable progress. By penalising countries for conditions they cannot easily change, the LDC paradigm keeps them at the bottom of the development ladder.

TOWARD A NEW LDC FRAMEWORK

Graduation must reflect a country's capacity to absorb shocks, recover and sustain progress despite conflict, climate exposure or geographic disadvantage. Here are some elements that policymakers at national, regional and global levels should prioritise to create a more responsive and equitable framework.

Modernise how vulnerability is measured. A more comprehensive risk and resilience index would better identify structural weaknesses and guide targeted ISMs that strengthen long-term preparedness and adaptive capacity. The UN-CDP along with UNCTAD should revisit how the EVI captures risk, ensuring that conflict, fragility, climate exposure and refugee inflows are adequately reflected.

Promote a cross-pillar approach to resilience. The LDC agenda must move beyond economic metrics to integrate climate action, governance, peace and security, and social inclusion as equal pillars of progress. This would better capture the links between economic performance, environmental stability and institutional strength, aligning international support with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda.

Strengthen international support measures and link them to resilience-building. ISMs must go beyond trade preferences and concessional finance to address structurally weak and conflict-ridden economies. Climate funds, debt relief, governance support and peacebuilding should be strategically linked.

Domestic reforms such as stronger institutions, fiscal discipline and diversification are also vital to ensure lasting gains.

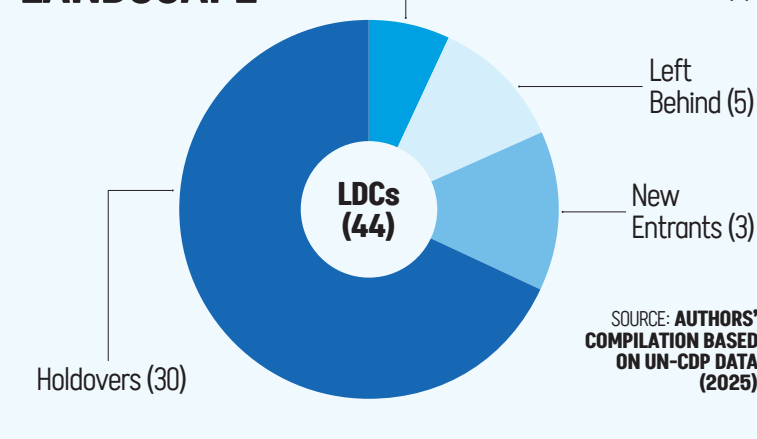
This reimagined framework cannot be one-size-fits-all: the experience of many LDCs makes clear that the graduation trajectories of landlocked developing countries, SIDS, conflict-affected or climate-vulnerable economies must be considered separately.

There are some positive signs that support for this approach is growing. The UN-CDP has introduced supplementary graduation indicators (SGIs) to allow greater flexibility in evaluating country progress. The Doha Programme of Action (2022, 2031) recognises the diversity of LDCs and calls for tailored support that reflects distinct vulnerabilities.

These are welcome steps, but more work is needed to ensure that global frameworks evolve to match the complex realities of the countries left behind. It is time to rethink the LDC paradigm, aligning measures of progress and support with today's structural, climate, governance and peace-security challenges.

Debapriya Bhattacharya is a distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue, and Mamtajul Jannat is a senior research associate at Centre for Policy Dialogue

THE CURRENT LDC LANDSCAPE



SOURCE: AUTHORS' COMPILATION BASED ON UN-CDP DATA (2025)

THE LIMITS OF THE LDC PARADIGM

The slow pace of graduation is not a function of inadequate effort on the part of LDCs. Rather, it reflects the weaknesses of the model itself.

Specifically, the graduation criteria reward relatively short-term gains in economic and social indicators and downplay the impact of conflict exposure, remoteness, climate and peace and security risk