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Four exporters receive HSBC excellence awards

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The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) in Bangladesh has recognised four local companies with the HSBC Export Excellence Awards for their contribution to the country's export growth and global trade competitiveness.

The award recipients are Flamingo Fashions Limited, NZ Tex Group, Janata Jute Mills Limited and Sadat Jute Industries Limited, and Ulkasemi Pvt Limited.

The awards were handed over at an event at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. The programme was organised in partnership with the commerce ministry and the British High Commission in Dhaka, while KPMG Advisory Services was the technical partner.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin attended the event as the chief guest. British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke joined as the special guest. HSBC Bangladesh Chief Executive Officer Md Mahbub ur Rahman and representatives from a wide range of sectors were also present.

This year's winners were chosen based on several factors, such as annual contribution to national exports and the wider economy, diversity, responsibility, sustainable business practices, strength in governance, and regulatory compliance, HSBC said in a statement.

Flamingo Fashions Limited received the Export Excellence award in the ready-made garments category for export revenue of $100 million and above.

The vertically integrated manufacturer produces 44 million pieces a year and supplies brands in 50 countries. It has invested in GRS-certified recycling, renewable energy, and water-efficient dyeing as part of a broader sustainability drive.

NZ Tex Group won in the ready-made garments backward linkage category for export revenue of $50 million and above.

The group produces 52,000 tonnes of yarn annually across spinning, woven, denim and linen operations.

It holds certifications from several international sustainability bodies for its work in renewable energy and water-saving initiatives.

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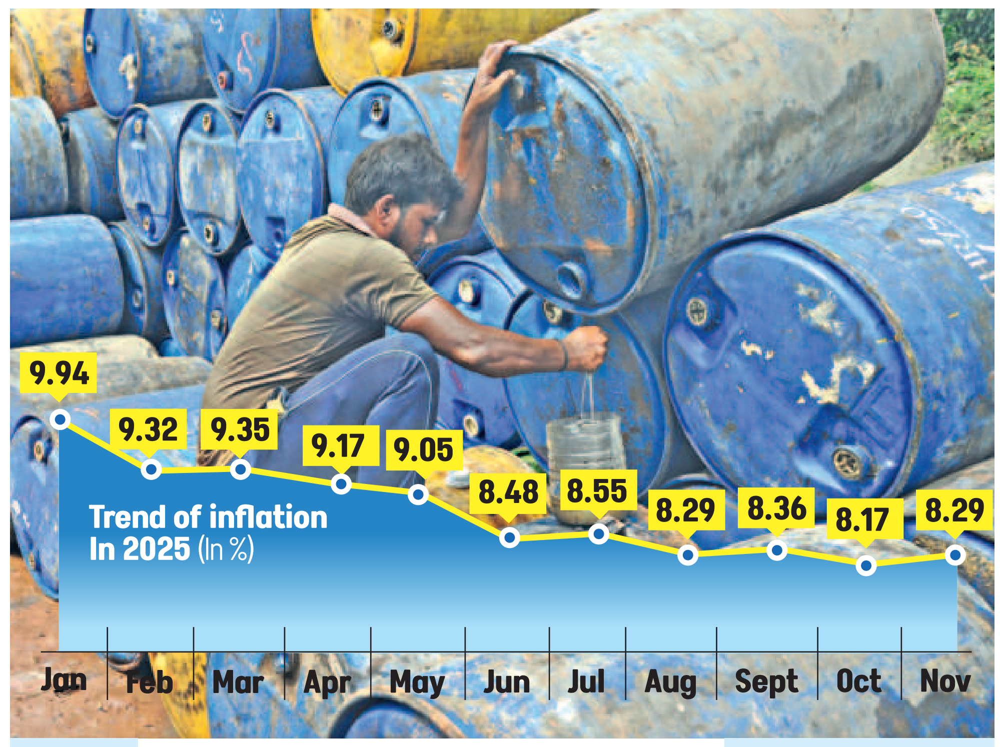
Rising food prices push inflation to 8.29% in Nov

Economists warn of raising further

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN



SOURCE: BBS PHOTO- AZAHAR UDDIN

Inflation in Bangladesh rose to 8.29 percent in November, driven largely by higher food prices, highlighting persistent pressures on households, especially those with low or fixed incomes.

The figure, released yesterday by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), is slightly higher than October's 8.17 percent but remains well below last year's 11.38 percent for the same month.

Data from the BBS show that the consumer price index (CPI), which tracks changes in a basket of goods and services, climbed in both rural and urban areas.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), essential food items such as rice, flour, edible oils, lentils and onions, have witnessed an increase in November.

Besides, late autumn rain disrupted supplies and pushed up winter vegetable prices.

Bangladesh has been grappling with persistent inflation for nearly three years. Consumer prices stayed over 9 percent until May 2025 and have remained over 8 percent since then, sparking renewed debate about the effectiveness of recent economic policies.

"Despite minor fluctuations, there has been no meaningful change in the underlying trend," said Selim Raihan, a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka.

He noted that while the Bangladesh Bank has tried to curb aggregate demand by raising interest rates, such monetary adjustments alone have been insufficient to achieve lasting price stability.

"This is because gaps in policy coordination, structural weaknesses in markets, and external shocks have collectively kept inflation elevated," he added.

Raihan said the recent surge in prices of essential food items such as onions and vegetables has been a key driver of inflation.

"This clearly reveals how fragile the agricultural supply system remains and how limited competition in markets directly pushes consumer prices upward," he added.

Volatility in global markets and dependence on imports have further compounded the situation, Raihan, also executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), pointed out.

"In other words, current inflation is largely driven by supply-side pressures, where conventional monetary tools like raising interest rates have limited effects," he said.

Raihan added that addressing inflation requires not only monetary measures but deeper institutional reforms. These include disciplining anti-competitive market practices, improving supply-chain efficiency, ensuring transparency in trade and imports, and investing in agricultural production.

The economist said a lack of coordination among fiscal policy, monetary policy, and market oversight as a key obstacle to controlling prices. "Inflation today is not merely a macroeconomic indicator; it reflects institutional weaknesses and policy inconsistencies."

The solution, he said, lies in building a coherent, credible, and long-term policy environment. Economist Mustafa K Mujeri also made similar observations, saying that Bangladesh's prolonged high-inflation environment is unlikely to ease without stronger policy coordination beyond monetary tightening,

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Climate change reducing RMG productivity

Finds BIDS study

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Climate change is already denting production in Bangladesh's garment factories as rising temperatures reduce worker productivity, according to a study presented yesterday.

The research, titled "Global Value Chains and Climate Change Governance: Garment Producers' Futures", said excessive heat inside factories poses a major barrier to social upgrading.

Mohammad Harunur Rashid Bhuyan, senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), carried out the work with Rachel Alexander. He presented the findings at a session of the Annual BIDS Conference on Development in Dhaka.

The study noted that climate refugees are increasingly taking up jobs in the garment sector. As their numbers rise, more may enter the workforce, which "may have negative impacts on wages".

Moreover, it said climate pressures could heighten gender-based violence and harassment as productivity falls and socio-economic vulnerability increases.

The global garment industry is a major emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), releasing between 1.025 billion and 3.29 billion tonnes of CO2e. This represents 2 percent to 7 percent of total worldwide emissions.

Fossil fuel-based energy across apparel production stages remains the main source of emissions, according to the study.

It said fertiliser and pesticides used in cotton farming and the production of polyester contribute heavily. During manufacturing, emissions are generated by sewing machines, production lines, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

The study said pressures to cut emissions may support environmental improvements in factories, although the shift to green energy in Bangladesh remains slow.

The government has pledged to produce at least 30 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2041. Yet only 1.4 percent of Bangladesh's electricity in 2019 came from renewables.

The study said factories depend almost entirely on the national grid, which needs to be "green for environmental upgradation of this sector".

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Protesting NEIR rollout, handset traders besiege BTRC headquarters

Traffic gridlock at Agargaon disrupts access to hospitals

Mobile handset sellers under the banner of the Mobile Business Community Bangladesh (MBCB) demonstrate outside the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) calling for a six-month to one-year delay in the rollout of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system. PHOTO: STAR

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Mobile phone traders staged a sit-in yesterday in front of the telecom regulator's headquarters and blocked roads in Dhaka's Agargaon, demanding a delay in the rollout of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system and lower import taxes on mobile phones.

The protest caused severe traffic congestion and made access to nearby hospitals, including Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation, and Shyamoli TB Hospital, extremely difficult, with some patients waiting on the roadside for hours.

Sahidul Islam, an engineer, said he was stuck on the road for over an hour and a half. "Many people around me asked the protesters to let their cars pass, but they didn't agree."

One group, under the banner of the Mobile Business Community Bangladesh, staged a sit-in in front of the Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) building in Agargaon. Another blocked the Agargaon intersection under the same banner.

Handset traders also staged protests across the city as part of their "nationwide shutdown".

During the sit-in, they urged the BTRC to delay the rollout of the NEIR system by six months to one year.

The NEIR system, scheduled to take effect on December 16, is designed to identify and block stolen or unauthorised mobile phones using their unique 15-digit International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) numbers.

Protesters claimed that the rollout of the NEIR would negatively affect hundreds of thousands of traders and their families across the country. They also claimed the policy would benefit a specific group of businesses, while additional taxes and restrictions would increase mobile phone prices for consumers.

One of the protesters, Arafat Hossain, a mobile phone shop owner at Bashundhara City in Dhaka, said, "We want our demands to be met through a peaceful movement."

He noted that when import taxes are applied to the base price of a phone, the retail price becomes very high. "This is causing losses for our business. This movement is not only for us but also for our customers."

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

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and

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Tk 4 lakh crore default loans stuck in lawsuits

MD MEHEDI HASAN

More than Tk 4 lakh crore in defaulted loans remain locked in over 2.22 lakh cases in money-loan courts, putting further strain on the already fragile banking sector and dragging on the wider economy.

Bangladesh Bank data show that as of June, 222,341 cases involving Tk 407,435 crore were pending across the courts.

Recently, a growing number of banks have filed cases in money-loan courts against major loan defaulters, including S Alam Group, Beximco Group, and Nassa Group.

Over just the last three months, the number of lawsuits rose by 2,708, while the amount tied up in litigation surged by Tk 86,674 crore, the data show.

At the end of March, pending cases stood at 219,633 with Tk 320,761 crore under dispute, according to figures compiled by the central bank's Law Department.

Despite the surge in lawsuits, central bank officials say the strategy has yielded limited success as case disposal rates remain far lower than the pace at which new cases are being filed.

Between April and June, courts disposed of 11,944 cases, enabling banks to recover Tk 2,910 crore. During the same period, lenders filed 14,652 new cases involving Tk 96,904 crore.

In the January-March quarter of this year, banks disposed of 10,064 cases and recovered Tk 1,833 crore.

Bankers and industry insiders say many of the disputed loans involve irregularities or fraud, and that repeated waivers and rescheduling schemes have failed to bring defaulters

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Economic expansion might have slowed: PMI

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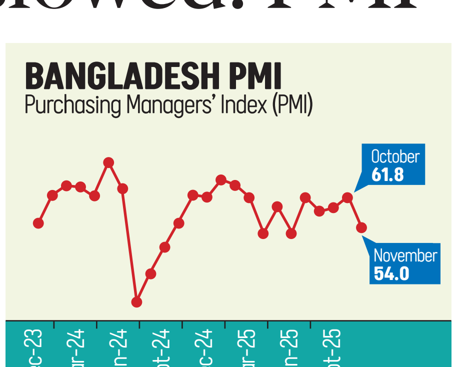

Bangladesh's economic expansion might have lost steam in November after two consecutive months of expansion, according to the latest Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) released yesterday.

Bangladesh's PMI fell by 7.8 points in November from October, reaching 54.0, indicating slower expansion across all major economic sectors.

The PMI is a key economic indicator that shows future trends. Readings above 50 indicate expansion, below 50 indicate contraction, and 50 signals no change. It helps businesses, investors, and policymakers track production, employment, and new orders.

The slower growth in November was seen across all key sectors -- agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and services -- according to a report by the

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