

'Prioritise national API policy implementation'

Says the Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh (AHRB) has called on the chief adviser to personally prioritise and oversee the rapid implementation of the National Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) Policy, citing its critical importance to Bangladesh's economic resilience and public health security.

An open letter was issued yesterday, signed by Syed Abdul Hamid, convenor of AHRB and professor at the Institute of Health Economics of the University of Dhaka, and Syed Muhammad Akram Hussain, chairman of the Department of Clinical Oncology at Bangladesh Medical University and member of the Health Sector Reform Commission.

The alliance underscored the urgency of reducing dependence on imported pharmaceutical raw materials.

The letter said that despite meeting

around 98 percent of domestic medicine demand, Bangladesh remains heavily reliant on imported APIs—materials essential for drug production.

This overdependence, the letter warns, not only drains valuable foreign exchange reserves but also exposes the nation to global supply chain disruptions, as seen during the Covid-19 pandemic, said AHRB.

The Health Sector Reform Commission has already identified local API production, alongside vaccines, medical devices, and diagnostics, as a national strategic priority.

The letter urges the government to treat this policy as more than a bureaucratic reform, but rather a foundational investment in the country's future economic security and health sovereignty.

To ensure rapid progress in strengthening Bangladesh's pharmaceutical self-reliance, AHRB has

outlined five urgent priorities in its appeal to the chief adviser.

These include the swift removal of regulatory and infrastructural hurdles currently obstructing API production, along with the introduction of a

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competitive Production-Linked Incentive scheme to attract domestic and foreign investment.

The alliance also stresses the need for sustained public funding to advance pharmaceutical research and innovation, as well as the creation of strong,

institutionalised partnerships between academia and industry to facilitate technology transfer and develop a skilled scientific workforce.

Finally, AHRB calls for the establishment of an empowered, permanent inter-ministerial task force with full authority to ensure coordinated, time-bound implementation of the National API Policy.

AHRB further stressed that the policy holds the potential to transform Bangladesh into a regional pharmaceutical export hub, with significant gains in foreign exchange savings, skilled employment, and a boost in the country's tax-to-GDP ratio.

"The time for action is now," the letter said, urging the chief adviser and the finance adviser to lead the charge and ensure the policy does not remain on paper but delivers measurable impact for the nation.

Rupali Chowdhury, new president of FICCI

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Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, has been elected president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the fourth time.



Rupali Chowdhury

At the same time, Deepal Abeywickrema, chairman and managing director of Nestlé Bangladesh PLC, was elected senior vice-president, and Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, CEO of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh PLC, vice-president.

FICCI made the announcements for the 2026-2027 term at its 62nd annual general meeting at Le Méridien Dhaka yesterday.

The newly elected 15-member board of directors will assume office on January 1, 2026, following the end of the current board's tenure on December 31, 2025, led by Zaved Akhtar, chairman of Unilever Bangladesh Ltd, who took charge as FICCI president for the 2024-2025 term.

Four exporters receive HSBC

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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.

Janata Jute Mills Limited and Sadar Jute Industries Limited received the award in the non-traditional and emerging sectors manufacturing category for export revenue of \$10 million and above.

The company was recognised for expanding jute into technical textiles, geo textiles and sustainable packaging, with exports reaching nearly 90 countries.

Alongside classic hessian and sacking, the firm now produces technical textiles, geo textiles, non-woven felt, retail accessories and eco-friendly packaging.

The use of renewable energy, resource-efficient operations and investment in workforce development highlight its advancement as an emerging leader in modern manufacturing.

Ulkasemi Pvt Limited won in the non-traditional and emerging sectors category for export revenue of \$5 million and above.

As a design centre alliance partner of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, one of only 29 globally, Ulkasemi provides design, verification, custom layouts and post-silicon services for clients in the United States, China, Taiwan and India.

"Today's awards celebrate the grit and ambition of our exporters, but the path ahead requires strategic evolution

and ambition of our exporters, but the path ahead requires strategic evolution," said HSBC Bangladesh CEO Rahman.

"While acknowledging the current success, we must work collaboratively for the country to achieve greater market diversification and maximise the benefits of existing and future preferential trade agreements," he added.

BUSINESSES CALL FOR STABILITY

At the event, business leaders were asked about the challenges they faced over the past 12 months. They pointed to "mob justice", political uncertainty and frequent policy shifts as major concerns.

Today's awards celebrate the grit and ambition of our exporters, but the path ahead requires strategic evolution

Mahbub ur Rahman
CEO, HSBC Bangladesh

AK Azad, former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said anxiety has grown among businesses as many fear becoming targets of false cases. Some vested groups have filed baseless allegations against entrepreneurs.

Abdul Hai Sarkar, president of the Bangladesh Association of Banks, said he believed these fears and wider challenges would ease once the national election is held.

At the programme, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said the country has huge potential to expand and diversify its exports.

He said the private sector must drive this diversification. "Diversification should start from our

best performing sector RMG."

The BB governor said exporters need to broaden their markets and explore new sectors, as they already understand global value chains and have room to expand.

The governor said he would always stand by exporters on the exchange rate policy.

Sarah Cooke, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, reaffirmed the United Kingdom's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's economic growth through trade, investment and strategic partnerships, with a focus on sustainability, innovation and inclusive development.

She said UK businesses have long contributed to Bangladesh's progress, from finance to fashion. "After Bangladesh's graduation from LDC status, exports can only be the engine of economic growth and job creation."

She added that trade success rests on people, partnerships and shared values. The high commissioner said the UK is working with the interim government to improve the ease of doing business, including reducing red tape through initiatives with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida).

She added that the UK is also investing in Bangladesh's future through British International Investment and UK Export Finance, which have £2 billion available for projects in areas such as infrastructure, renewable energy and aviation.

"Together, we can build a future that is innovative, resilient, and green," she said.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said exporters play a vital role in the country's economy.

"Our exporters are champions in resilience."

The adviser said the commerce ministry is working to support the private sector by prioritising competitiveness and innovation to help businesses secure greater export opportunities.

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 about 61 percent.

Mobile traders call off blockade

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Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation, and Shyamoli TB Hospital, extremely difficult, with some patients waiting on the roadside for hours.

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

Rising food prices

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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.

He said that the country has been living in a "high-inflation regime for more than three years," while the only major tool used so far has been monetary policy.

"The policy rate has been raised gradually and kept at around 10 percent for more than a year," he said, adding that the key policy gap is the absence of supportive measures to complement monetary tightening.

Striking a similar tone to Raihan, he said, "In Bangladesh, monetary policy alone cannot control inflation."

Mujeri, executive director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development (InM) highlighted that supply-side factors are a major driver

of inflation in Bangladesh, limiting the effectiveness of interest-rate adjustments. Election spending and non-productive expenditures in the coming months could push inflation even higher, he warned.

He said, "If the election is held in February, money circulation - both formal and informal - will rise.

Economic

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The manufacturing sector grew for the 15th consecutive month, but growth moderated. New orders, exports, factory output, input purchases, finished goods, imports, input prices, employment, and supplier deliveries all expanded, while order backlogs contracted more sharply.

The construction sector expanded for the third month, though at a slower rate. Construction activity, employment, and input costs grew, but new business declined, and order backlogs contracted faster.

The services sector grew for the 14th month, but growth slowed. Employment and input costs increased, while new business, business activity, and order backlogs all fell into contraction.

Looking ahead, future business indices showed faster expansion in agriculture, construction, and services, while manufacturing's growth slowed.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS E IN C'S BRANCH WORKS DIRECTORATE DHAKA CANTONMENT INVITATION FOR TENDER

Notice no. 600/15/33/2025-2026/E-6

MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES

Dated : 02 December 2025.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.				
2. Agency	Military Engineer Services				
3. Procuring Entity Name	E in C				
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka				
5. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)				
6. Budget and source of Funds	GOB, Development Budget				
7. Development Partners (if applicable)	None				
8. Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Conservation of Old Dhaka Central Jail History, Historical Buildings & Development of Surroundings area-1st Revised.				
9. Selling of Tender will commence from	09 December 2025 (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).				
10. Selling of Tender will close on	06 January 2026 (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).				
11. Last date and time of submission of Tender	07 January 2026 upto 1200 hours.				
12. Date and time of opening of Tender	07 January 2026 at 1230 hours.				
13. Name & Address of the Office(s)	Tender Selling & Information Centre of Works Directorate at GE (Army) Central Dhaka and AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantt.				
- Selling Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre of Works Directorate at GE (Army) Central Dhaka.				
- Receiving Tender Document	-Do-				
- Opening Tender Document	-Do-				
14. Eligibility of Tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. MES enlisted contractors Class - 'A' b. Contractors enlisted in other Govt, Semi Government & Autonomous Organization of similar capacity may also participate in tenders having security clearance from DGFI. 				
15. Brief Description of Works					
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of Tender Document (Taka)	Tender Security Amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee in favour of AHQ, E in C's Br, Wks Dic, Dhaka Cantt (Taka)	Completion Time in weeks/ months
a.	Remaining works for Construction of Multipurpose Complex 06 storied building and 02 basement with Mat foundation (Structural works 4th & 5th floor, finishing works Basement to 5th floor) including ancillary works Zone-A for Conservation of Old Dhaka Central Jail History, Historical Buildings and Development of Surroundings area, Dhaka (Group-03).	South City Corporation, Dhaka	96,000.00	2,09,00,000.00	10 (Ten) Months
16. Name of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works				
17. Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works				
18. Address of Official Inviting Tender	AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Web address : www.army.mil.bd				
19. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Army Headquarters, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Tel No. : 9832870 Fax No : 9832906				
20.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.				

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