

# star BUSINESS



Banks asked to ready default data of poll candidates

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has instructed scheduled banks to ensure accurate and complete reporting of loan default information of candidates submitting nomination papers for the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election.

The instruction came from a meeting on December 7 between Bangladesh Bank and a delegation of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB), presided over by Ahsan H Mansur, governor of Bangladesh Bank.

The central bank is likely to issue a letter to banks in this regard soon.

Ahead of the polls, the banking watchdog emphasised that all credit information related to aspiring candidates must be prepared "quickly, accurately, and comprehensively" to support the Election Commission in verifying the financial status of nominees.

According to BB's directive, banks must strictly follow existing BB circulars on loan classification and ensure that the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) database reflects the correct status of all loans, including any off-balance-sheet liabilities.

Officials of the central bank said that several recurring gaps in CIB reporting remain, such as outdated borrower identification data, incomplete reporting of persons or entities linked to a loan, and misclassification arising from unpaid non-transactional credit card fees.

Banks have been asked to correct any adverse classifications made solely

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## Employers less interested in hiring NU graduates

Finds BIDS study

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Employers are less likely to hire National University (NU) graduates, even if they have good academic records, because they are often perceived as low-quality graduates, a new study finds.

Students who fail to secure admission to public universities often enrol at NU, according to the research.

The findings were presented by Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury, a research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), on the second day of the Annual BIDS Conference on Development 2025, held yesterday at Parjatan Bhaban in Dhaka's Agargaon.

46% of NU graduates remain unemployed up to four years  
Employers favour experience over academic grades  
Only 23.7% of NU graduates found in salaried jobs  
Under-resourced colleges leave graduates ill-prepared  
Better-ranked colleges and ICT training improve job prospects

The study, titled "Employability of NU Graduates in Bangladesh: Academic Performance or Work Experience?", surveyed 1,639 graduates from 515 NU-affiliated colleges nationwide.

Chowdhury cited a World Bank report showing that 46 percent of NU-affiliated college graduates remain unemployed even three to four years after graduation. This is significantly higher than the 38 percent unemployment rate for all university graduates, highlighting gaps in Bangladesh's higher education system and job market.

Bangladesh currently faces nearly 9 lakh unemployed graduates, according to the Labour Force Survey 2024 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

While overall unemployment has fallen in the past five years, the rate among tertiary-educated individuals has risen to 13.5 percent in 2024—the highest among all education levels.

### CHALLENGES FACED BY NU GRADUATES

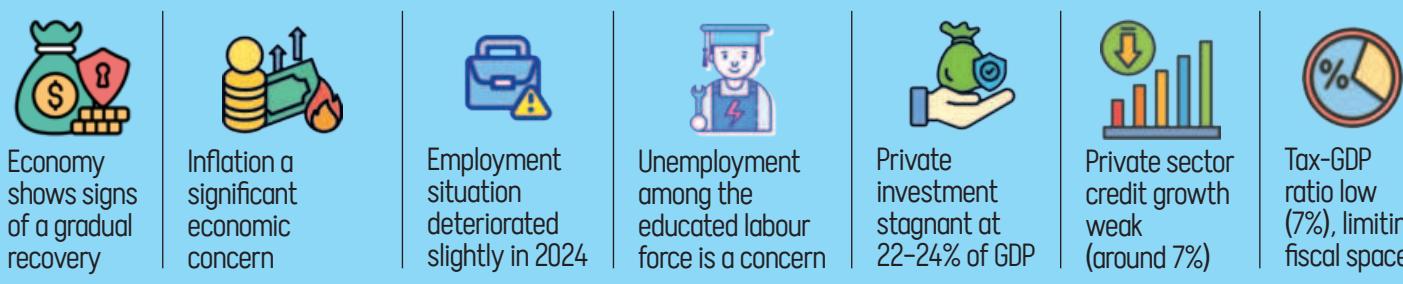
With over 2,000 affiliated colleges, NU produces the largest number of tertiary graduates in the country. However, many colleges are under-resourced, have weak industry connections, and provide limited career guidance, putting their students at a disadvantage compared to peers from public and private universities.

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## Economy at a critical point despite some stability

Tackle threats now or risk slower growth, rising poverty, warns GED report

### HIGHLIGHTS



### Key priorities suggested

Labour force: Addressing the needs of a large and growing labour force  
Manufacturing: Strengthening key sectors, especially garments and SMEs  
External flows: Boosting remittance inflows  
Future growth: Investing in human capital

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's economy may have regained some stability in recent months, but it now stands at a critical point, with inflation, financial sector weaknesses, low investment, governance shortcomings and external risks emerging as major threats, according to a new government report.

Unless these vulnerabilities are addressed, the country risks slower growth, falling living standards and rising poverty, warns the report, Bangladesh State of the Economy 2025, prepared by the General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission.

"Foreign direct investment remains critically low and is expected to remain at

this level in the coming months. Subdued investment and industrial activity are cited as major contributors to slower growth," states the report unveiled yesterday.

However, it added, "Bangladesh has a real chance to re-accelerate, build more resilient institutions, and make growth more inclusive."

"The key will be speed and seriousness of reform, clear communication, policy credibility, and ensuring that those reforms benefit ordinary people, not just aggregate macro statistics. Bangladesh has a real chance to re-accelerate."

The GED noted that the second half of fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) showed rebounding economic activity. But the outlook remains clouded by political uncertainty, subdued

industrial output, persistent inflation and global headwinds, including pressures linked to the reciprocal tariff imposed by the United States.

It pointed out that growth forecasts from international agencies, including the World Bank, now range between 3.3 percent and 4.1 percent for FY25, with a modest rebound expected in the ongoing fiscal year. According to provisional government data, the growth rate for FY25 stood at 3.97 percent.

The GED identified remittances, export performance and manufacturing, particularly garments and SMEs, as the main drivers of growth in FY26, while noting that improvements in capital machinery imports may indicate early signs of recovering investment appetite.

The report, however, stresses that inflation continues to erode real incomes, particularly among low-income households.

"If Bangladesh can keep inflation under control, rebuild investor confidence, and stabilise the financial sector, there is potential for stronger growth in FY26."

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## Extortion at Chattogram port Tk 2-2.5 crore daily, adviser says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Extortion occurs at every corner of Chattogram port, according to Labour Adviser Brig Gen (retired) M Sakhawat Hussain, who estimates the daily amount at Tk 2 crore to Tk 2.5 crore.

"That is the minimum. The amount could be even higher," the adviser told journalists at his Secretariat office in Dhaka yesterday.

He said, "The port is somewhat like the golden goose; everyone wants to slaughter it quickly and take everything out."

When asked whether he had managed to stop the extortion, Hussain said, "It has decreased a lot."

Pressed on whether it was possible to end the practice entirely, he replied, "Is it possible to stop it entirely in Bangladesh?"

Hussain said transport stands inside the port had been removed, but extortion continued outside, near bus and truck stands, where people collected money after being displaced from the port.

Turning to labour reforms, he said the government had amended the labour law with an ordinance on November 17, allowing domestic workers and agricultural labourers to form trade unions.

"The amendment aligns our labour law with international standards, responding to pressure from the European Union, the United States and the International Labour Organization (ILO)," he said.

The changes also extended maternity leave for female workers from 112 days to 120 days and lowered the threshold for forming a trade union to 20 workers, making it easier for workers to organise.

Hussain said the government has ratified ILO Conventions 155, 187 and

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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

It found that 61.37 percent of women employed in agro-based enterprises had faced verbal and emotional abuse. Of this group, 10.98 percent reported sexual or physical harassment, and 2.55 percent mentioned cyber harassment. Supervisors accounted for 64.4 percent of all reported incidents.

Researchers also highlighted punishing work hours with little reward. Women work an average of 51.6 hours a week. Nine in ten said overtime is compulsory, yet only 6.3 percent receive the legally required double overtime pay.

The session featured four studies that highlighted systemic inequalities across cities, farms, factories and households. The study on the working conditions and economic empowerment of women in agro-based industries was presented by Kashfi Rayan, research associate at BIDS.

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IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫৯৯



Mohd Rafat Ullah Khan, acting managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph after inaugurating an SME stall at the 12th National SME Product Fair at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in Agargaon, Dhaka on Sunday.

PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK

## Al-Arafah Islami Bank opens stall at SME Product Fair

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC has opened an SME stall at the 12th National SME Product Fair at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in Agargaon, Dhaka.

Mohd Rafat Ullah Khan, acting managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, inaugurated the SME stall as the chief guest on Sunday, according to a press release.

During the inauguration, Khan said the SME sector is playing an important role in enhancing the capacity of small and medium entrepreneurs in the country.

"Al-Arafah Islami Bank is continuously working to provide financing, training, and guidance to entrepreneurs through financial inclusion."

"The bank is committed to providing easier, innovative, and Shariah-compliant banking services to SME entrepreneurs," he added.

Visitors at the fair can receive on-the-spot information, consultation, and guidance from the stall regarding the bank's Shariah-compliant investment facilities, SME financing, women entrepreneur support, digital banking services, and various other offerings.

SM Abu Jafar, deputy managing director of the bank; Jalal Ahmed, executive vice-president; Solaiman Al Raji and Monirul Islam, senior vice-presidents; and Sheikh Asadul Haque, senior assistant vice-president; along with other senior officials, were also present at the event.



Nazma Mobarek, secretary to the Financial Institutions Division under the Ministry of Finance, inaugurates the workshop, titled "Non-Performing Loan (NPL) Management", at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT BANK

## Bangladesh Development Bank holds workshop on NPL management

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bangladesh Development Bank PLC recently organised a workshop, titled "Non-Performing Loan (NPL) Management", at its head office in Dhaka.

Nazma Mobarek, secretary to the Financial Institutions Division under the Ministry of Finance, inaugurated the

workshop as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Ahmed Ismet, chairman of the bank; Md Azimuddin Biswas, additional secretary of the Financial Institutions Division; and Md Jashim Uddin, managing director and chief executive officer, along with other senior executives of the bank, were also present at the event.



### Office of the Executive Engineer

Jashore Water Development Division  
BWDB, Jashore

#### Invitation for e-Tenders

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

Invitation Reference No.	Tender ID	Package No. & description	Tender/ proposal document last selling date & time	Tender/ proposal closing & opening date & time
42.01.4100. 622.01.07. 09.25-1507 Dated: 07.12.2025	1191943	Package No. Jash/OEB-09/25-26 Supply of 175 kg weight(polyester) geobags for use Emergency Situations in the Coming monsoon season under operational expenditure budget of Jashore WD Division, BWDB Jashore during the year 2025-26.	23-Dec-2025 17:00 hrs	24-Dec-2025 11:10 hrs
42.01.4100. 622.01.07. 09.25-1502 Dated: 07.12.2025	1191829	Package No. Jash/OEB-05/25-26 Re-excavation of Buri Bhadrin River from km 0.000 to km 1.000-1.000 km & from km 3.800 km to km 5.000 = 1.200 km Total 2.200 km at Upazila: Keshabpur, District Jashore under Operational Expenditure Budget of Jashore WD division, BWDB. Jashore during the year 2025-26.	23-Dec-2025 17:00 hrs	24-Dec-2025 11:00 hrs

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

2025-12-08

Polash Kumar Banerjee  
Executive Engineer  
Jashore Water Development Division  
BWDB, Jashore

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GD-2695

## Prime Bank, BB host 'Customer Awareness Week'

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

PrimeBank PLC, in collaboration with Bangladesh Bank, recently organised the "Customer Awareness Week 2025 (Dhaka Division)" at the City Convention Hall in Kishoreganj.

Md Niamul Kabir, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, attended the event as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Under the theme "Building Awareness for Financial Security", the event was attended by Joydeb Chandra Banik, director of Bangladesh Bank's Mymensingh Office, and Md Iqbal Hossain, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, as special guests.

The ceremony featured extensive discussions on key aspects of banking safety – including secure digital transactions, fraud prevention strategies, cyber risks, customer grievance redressal mechanisms, data protection, banking policies, and the rights and responsibilities of customers.

Several sessions were held on financial inclusion and customer protection to ensure that people from all walks of life can access financial services easily, safely, and confidently.



Md Niamul Kabir, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, poses for a group photograph with participants of the "Customer Awareness Week 2025 (Dhaka Division)" at the City Convention Hall in Kishoreganj recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Munir Ahmed Chowdhury, director of the Financial Integrity and Customer Services Department of the central bank, presided over the programme.

Kazi Reshad Mahbub, head of consumer protection and service quality at Prime Bank, gave a presentation on the bank's innovative initiative 'Prime Serve' and its customer complaint resolution process.

Mohammad Mahenur Alam, additional director of the FICSD of Bangladesh Bank and head of the strategic communication team; Kamal Siddique and Fakir Mazhar, customer representatives; along with senior officials from Bangladesh Bank, senior representatives from 54 banks and 19 non bank financial institutions, as well as local customers and business leaders, were also present.

## Mutual Trust Bank inaugurates entrepreneurship development programme in Jashore

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) PLC, in collaboration with the SME and Special Programmes Department of the Bangladesh Bank, has inaugurated a month-long entrepreneurship development programme in Jashore.

Some 25 entrepreneurs have registered for this ADB-funded and Ministry of Finance-implemented programme under the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP).

Husne Ara Shikha, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, attended the event as the chief guest and highlighted the importance of the programme.

This intensive programme aims to enhance the competencies of entrepreneurs and help them attain eligibility to access finance and financial services from the formal sector to grow their businesses.

Sanjib Kumar Dey, head of the SME and agri banking division at the bank, presided over the event and thanked all relevant stakeholders for their support and guidance in holding such a timely programme.



Husne Ara Shikha, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, poses for a group photograph with participants of an entrepreneurship development programme, organised jointly by Mutual Trust Bank PLC and the SME and Special Programmes Department of the Bangladesh Bank, in Jashore recently.

PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK

## Trust Bank signs MoU with Bangladesh Angels Network

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Trust Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bangladesh Angels Network (BAN) aimed at bridging institutional financial strength with the dynamism of early-stage startups, fostering new avenues for growth and investment.

Sadat Ahmad Khan, senior vice-president and head of the SME division of Trust Bank PLC, and Ivy Huq Russell, chief executive officer of Bangladesh Angels Network, signed the MoU at the bank's head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Under this collaboration, Trust Bank and Bangladesh Angels Network will work jointly to identify promising startups and support them through access to capital, strategic advisory services, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building programmes, and business readiness initiatives.



Ivy Huq Russell, chief executive officer of Bangladesh Angels Network, and Sadat Ahmad Khan, senior vice-president and head of the SME division of Trust Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing a memorandum of understanding at the bank's head office in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: TRUST BANK

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs  
Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP)  
Probashi Kalyan Bhawan (12th Floor), Easkaton Garden  
Ramma, Dhaka-1000  
[www.simcbp-mowca.gov.bd](http://www.simcbp-mowca.gov.bd)

### Corrigendum for Advertisement of EOI

Ref: মোর্চিক/SIMCBP/SIC-05/41/2025/16

Date: 04.12.2025

Following aspect of the reference EOI "Selection of Training Specialist and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist", published on 05 December 2025 has been corrected as follows:

For:

EOI Closing Date Expressions of Interest must be submitted to the undersigned address by 3:00pm on or before 21/12/25, in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Expression of Interest", contract Package number and position applied for. In addition to that soft copy of REOI will be required to be submitted through email to: [pd.beibev.simcbp@gmail.com](mailto:pd.beibev.simcbp@gmail.com)

Read:

EOI Closing Date Expressions of Interest must be submitted through e-GP by 3:00pm on or before 30/12/25

This is an e-GP tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP website and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, first you need registration on e-GP.

Dec 04/12/2025

Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury  
Joint Secretary and  
Project Director  
Phone: +880 2 5510046  
Email: [pd.beibev.simcbp@gmail.com](mailto:pd.beibev.simcbp@gmail.com)

GD-2693

### Directorate General Defence Purchase

Ministry of Defence  
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215  
Web: [www.dgdp.gov.bd](http://www.dgdp.gov.bd)  
E-mail: [ddp3navy@dgdp.gov.bd](mailto:ddp3navy@dgdp.gov.bd)

### RE-TENDER NOTICE

1. Sealed tender in Local currency is invited from bonafide Manufacturer/Dealer/Suppliers/Importers (enlisted with DGDP) for supply of the following item for Bangladesh Navy:

S.No	Name of Item	Date of Selling	Date of Opening	Cost of Tender Schedule	Tender Number	Currency
From	To					
1.	Rifle Magazine Pouch for 5.56 mm M-4 Carbine Utility Pouch, Flash Bang Pouch, Smoke Grenade Pouch, Radio Pouch and Tourniquet Pouch (Qty: 06 L/I)	08-12-25	21-12-25	22-12-25	2000.00	2nd Time Local

2. Tender schedule with detailed specification/condition will be available in this Directorate General on payment as per I/T selling rate (non-refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours on the above mentioned date of selling. The tender can be dropped in the tender box latest by 1200 hours and the same will be opened at 1205 hours on the specified date of opening in the presence of the tenderers (if present).

আই এস পি আর/বিবিধ/১০৩

GD-2691

Lt Commander BN  
For Director General

## BRAC Bank retains S&P 'B+' rating with stable outlook

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank PLC has obtained a 'B+' long term credit rating with a 'Stable' outlook, as affirmed by S&P Global Ratings, the world's leading credit rating agency.

This is equivalent to the sovereign rating of Bangladesh and marks the continuation of this achievement for the last nine years, according to a press release.

Despite challenges in the banking sector, S&P has maintained its confidence in BRAC Bank and stated in its report released on November 26 this year: "BRAC Bank will maintain its financial profile amid tough operating conditions. BRAC Bank's improved profitability, high earnings retention, and calibrated loan growth should support the risk-adjusted capital ratio over the next two years."

"We expect the bank's non-performing loan ratio to stay at 3.1 percent-3.5 percent over the next 12-18 months, significantly lower than the average for Bangladesh's banking sector. The bank's balanced loan book and proactive risk management should keep asset quality healthy," the S&P Global Ratings report added.

Regarding BRAC Bank's stable outlook, S&P commented: "The stable outlook on BRAC Bank reflects our view that the bank should be able to steadily navigate challenging operating conditions in Bangladesh and maintain its financial profile over the next 12-18 months."

# NEIR to boost local high-end mobile production, curb grey market

Says industry owners

## STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Mobile phone assemblers yesterday said the introduction of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) — a system to identify and block unauthorised handsets — will allow local companies to manufacture high-end phones and sell them at prices comparable to the grey market.

"Without the NEIR system, we cannot produce high-end phones locally because the grey market affects the prices," said Jakaria Shahid, president of the Mobile Phone Industry Owners' Association of Bangladesh (MIOB), at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"Once the system is in place, we will be able to produce high-end phones and offer them to customers at prices close to what they currently pay," he added.

The grey market, also called a dark market, involves trading goods through unofficial or unauthorised channels, outside the original manufacturer or trademark owner.

The NEIR system is scheduled to take effect on December 16.

Meanwhile, mobile phone traders suspended their blockade outside



PHOTO: STAR

the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), which they had staged to demand a delay in the NEIR rollout and lower import taxes on mobile phones. The suspension came after the regulator agreed to reform the NEIR system.

Protesters also claimed that the

introduction of NEIR will push up the prices of handsets.

Shahid rejected these claims, saying these rumours are being spread to protect the interests of a specific group.

He added that the grey market is currently the biggest challenge for the mobile industry in Bangladesh. It controls

a large share of the market, worth Tk 6,000 crore, and causes the government an annual revenue loss of over Tk 2,000 crore.

"This is not just a financial loss," Shahid said. "The use of insecure devices also threatens cybersecurity, users' personal information, and national financial stability."

He added that a certain group is spreading false information, claiming that a 57 percent duty will be imposed once the NEIR system is launched. In reality, the 57 percent duty on mobile imports was introduced back in 2019.

According to the association, Bangladesh's mobile industry currently has 18 manufacturing companies, with over Tk 3,000 crore in foreign and local investment, providing direct employment to 50,000 workers.

The country can produce 15 lakh smartphones and 25 lakh feature phones per month, but 30-40 percent of this capacity remains unused due to pressure from the grey market.

The industry contributes significantly to the national economy, paying more than Tk 2,000 crore in taxes, Tk 500 crore in wages, and Tk 400 crore in utility bills annually.

## Economy at a critical point

### FROM PAGE B1

Foreign exchange reserves stabilised at a level above three months of import coverage, it also said, attributing this to prudent macroeconomic management and structural strengthening of the economy's external front.

"A VICTIOUS CYCLE"

Speaking at the event, Prof Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), recognised that some stability has returned but said it comes at a cost.

"The [existing] high policy rates being used to curb inflation really hurt investment. But interest is only one part of the cost of capital. Entrepreneurs face many other expenses as well," he said.

"We needed to ease the burden on entrepreneurs in these other areas, like strengthening institutional capacity and reducing corruption. We should have done more, especially since the cost of capital is already high. But we didn't," he added.

The economist said

the lack of initiatives has trapped the economy in a "vicious cycle" of high interest rates increasing the cost of capital, which is raising the cost of doing business, and which ultimately depresses investment and job creation.

He warned that without faster reforms and stronger revenue mobilisation, Bangladesh risks slipping into a debt trap.

Former World Bank economist Zahid Hussain said the economy is showing no major signs of stress.

He mentioned several reform initiatives taken by the interim government to stabilise the financial sector, including changes to the Bank Company Act, issuing the Bank Resolution Ordinance and restructuring the boards of several banks. "We also have to make the next government accountable for these things because these are significant progressions."

The governor said reserves have risen by about \$10 billion over the past 16-17 months, and reiterated that the policy rate will not

stronger results.

"This government has shown ample evidence of intent to reform. But at the ground level, we still do not see major, visible results. To push reforms forward, willpower alone is not enough; stamina is also crucial," he added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H. Mansur stated that stabilising the financial sector remains difficult, even though the external sector is showing no major signs of stress.

He mentioned several reform initiatives taken by the interim government to stabilise the financial sector, including changes to the Bank Company Act, issuing the Bank Resolution Ordinance and restructuring the boards of several banks. "We also have to make the next government accountable for these things because these are significant progressions."

Speaking on Prof Rahman's warning about falling into a debt trap, he said, "We have already fallen into a debt trap; unless we acknowledge this

be lowered until inflation declines to a tolerable level.

Shafiqul Alam, chief adviser's press secretary, criticised sections of the business community and media for highlighting "only negative developments", failing to acknowledge reforms such as the Chattogram port modernisation drive.

"If the Chattogram port becomes efficient, the garment sector would benefit first," he said, adding that the government has not seen a single welcoming statement from the many top trade bodies.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan said the tax-to-GDP ratio has fallen from over 10 percent a few years ago to around 7 percent now, as revenue cannot be collected from all sectors of the economy.

Speaking on Prof Rahman's warning about falling into a debt trap, he said, "We have already fallen into a debt trap; unless we acknowledge this

truth, it will not be possible to move forward."

Meanwhile, speaking on the government's reform initiatives, Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser, said there is no textbook for the sequence and speed of reforms.

"We must decide what comes first, what comes later, and how to balance them. Low-hanging fruit should be taken first, but sometimes distortions or internal balance issues prevent that," he said.

He added that the government has set minimum wages for seven sectors and is in the process of setting wages for seven more. Work is underway to set the minimum pay for 21 sectors in total.

## 61% of women

### FROM PAGE B1

It also found that essential facilities remain rare. Only 21 percent of enterprises provide childcare rooms, and just 31 percent offer full paid maternity leave.

Despite the rising participation of women in agro-industries, the study said empowerment remains limited due to restrictive household decision-making, weak representation at work and low awareness of labour rights.

Rayan called for tighter enforcement of labour laws, gender-responsive facilities and stronger grievance and reporting systems to ensure safety and dignity at work.

In the same session, Badrun Nessa Ahmed, senior research fellow at BIDS, presented findings on wage disparities between cities and rural areas in her paper titled "One size does not fit all: urban heterogeneity and labour market inequalities in Bangladesh".

Drawing on Labour Force Survey data, she said workers in metropolitan areas earn 2.6 times more than those in rural areas. Between 2013 and 2022, rural wages grew by only 4.2 percent, compared with 10.7 percent in big cities.

An instrumental variable analysis showed a 21.6 percent wage premium in metropolitan areas, while smaller towns offered only 5.2 percent.

"Urban Bangladesh is not homogeneous. The advantages are heavily concentrated in big cities," Ahmed said, pointing to factors such as agglomeration, productivity clustering and better job matching.

She recommended strengthening secondary cities, improving urban services and formalising labour markets to reduce widening spatial inequality.

Another study, presented by senior research fellow Mohammad Golam Nabi Mozumder, warned of ecological pressures linked to rapid mechanisation in agriculture.

Titled "The irresistible shift from agriculture to agri-venture: technology, habitus, and the looming threat of ecocide", the study examined how rising wages and persistent labour shortages are turning farming from a livelihood into a profit-driven agri-venture that risks upsetting ecological balance.

Based on interviews in 14 districts, the study recorded heavy use of hybrid seeds, synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, along with inefficiencies when machines are used on small, fragmented plots.

It also found irregularities in the subsidised machinery market, ranging from counterfeit equipment to dual-branded machines and contract terms that vary widely.

Mozumder warned of a "pesticide treadmill" that is degrading soil and threatening aquatic life, calling it a looming "spectre of ecocide". He urged policymakers to regulate machinery distribution, set quality standards and promote agro-ecological models to protect the environment.

SM Zulfiqer Ali, research director at BIDS, moderated the session.

## Employers less

### FROM PAGE B1

While the average university graduate takes about 10 months to find a job, NU graduates often wait much longer, with many unable to secure employment at all. This points to a systemic mismatch between their education and the skills demanded by employers.

The research explored whether academic performance (CGPA) affects employment outcomes for NU graduates. The results were striking: CGPA had little to no effect.

"Good grades might help a graduate get shortlisted for interviews, but they don't guarantee job offers," said Chowdhury. "This raises questions about whether NU academic results truly reflect job market competencies."

In contrast, practical experience — such as internships or part-time jobs during studies — significantly increased a graduate's chances of finding stable employment. Graduates with such experience were far more likely to be employed,

suggesting employers value hands-on skills over academic scores.

NU graduates not only face long periods of unemployment, but many also end up in underemployment, taking jobs that do not match their qualifications or offer job security.

The study painted a worrying picture for NU graduates. Only 23.7 percent had salaried jobs, and just 1.6 percent were self-employed. A large 33.2 percent were unemployed and actively looking for work, showing the severity of the crisis.

Another 29.1 percent were in irregular, short-term, or daily-wage jobs, often unrelated to their studies and offering little long-term stability.

The study also found that college quality and access to training strongly influence job prospects. Graduates from higher-ranked colleges performed better, and those who received off-campus ICT training had slightly higher chances of finding employment.

## Banks asked to ready default

### FROM PAGE B1

due to unpaid annual fees, renewal charges, or similar non-transactional dues, as such liabilities do not render a borrower a defaulter under current rules.

Lenders have also been instructed to immediately update KYC and e-KYC information of borrowers and all associated persons or institutions, in line with the definition of a "defaulter" under Section 5 of the Bank Company Act, 1991.

In addition, banks have been told to take steps such as appointing legal counsel to expedite the resolution of CIB-related cases pending with the High Court.

They must also inform the CIB of any court cases that have already expired or reached a verdict so the database can be updated accordingly, said BB officials who attended the meeting.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Jhalakati Road Division, Jhalakati  
E-mail: [eeja@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eeja@rhd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 35.01.4240.432.04.001.25-2323

Dated: 08/12/2025

### Invitation of RHD Quotation for Bridge Toll Collection (1st Call)

1	Lease Quotation Notice No.	Lease-01/2025-2026/JRD
2	Name of Quotation	Lease for Toll Collection from "Gabkhan Bridge" at 22nd km of Barisal-Jhalakati-Pirojpur-Bagerhat-Khulna National Highways (N-807) during 3 (three) financial years under Jhalakati Road Division.
3	Lease implementation period	3 (three) financial years (1095-day)
4	Price of lease quotation schedule	Tk. 5,000.00 (five thousand) per set.
5	Security money	10% of Quoted Rate. (including VAT and Tax) (In favour of Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Jhalakati in the form of Pay Order or Bank Draft).
	Quotation last selling date	23/12/2025 up to office hour (4-00pm)
	Tender closing date and time	24/12/2025 at 12:00pm.
6	Eligibility of lease quotationer	All interested Persons/Firms regardless of whether enlisted or not with the employer may submit Quotation provide that they are otherwise qualified who can fulfill the qualification criteria stipulated in the Quotation's document.
7	Selling quotation document	Divisional Commissioner, Barisal/DC Office, Jhalakati EE (RHD), Road Division-Jhalakati/Barisal/Bhola/Pirojpur/Planning Division-1, Sarak Bhaban, Dhaka/SDE (RHD) Road Sub-Division, Jhalakati.
8	Receiving quotation document	EE (RHD), Road Division, Jhalakati. SE (RHD), Barisal Road Circle, Barisal. D.C, Jhalakati.
9	Quotation opening place, date & time	Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Jhalakati. 24/12/2025 at 2:00pm.
17	a	The concern authority reserves the right to accept or reject any/all Quotations.
	b	If it is not possible to receive/open the Quotation the Schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time and same venue.
	c	The Quotationer will quote the rate in figures & words.
	d	This Quotation Notice will also be seen at RHD website <a href="http://www.rhd.gov.bd">www.rhd.gov.bd</a>



Shahriar Sharif Khan  
ID No. 602247  
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD  
Road Division, Jhalakati

প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর  
প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রালয়  
ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

### দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। মন্ত্রালয়/বিভাগ	প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রালয়।
২। সম্প্রতি দ্বারা কর্তৃপক্ষ	প্রতিরক্ষা গোয়েন্দা মহাপরিদপ্তর।
৩। দরপত্র কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম	বাবের কোড-০২৫১০২১০২৪০৩-আসন্নামত (গ্রোজন মোতাবেক, সিটিউল অনুমতি)।
৪। দরপত্র আইটেমের নম্বর	০০/২০২৫-২৬।
৫। দরপত্র আইটেমের তারিখ	১১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫।
৬। টেক্সার সিকিউরিটি হিসাবে ৭৫,০০০.০০ (পাঁচাশ হাজার মাত্র) ঢাকা বাংলাদেশ সরকার কর্তৃপক্ষ অনুমতিতে কেন বাংক হতে পে-অর্জর/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে প	

## European CEOs downbeat on Europe

REUTERS, Brussels

Chief executives of large European companies are downbeat on Europe's economic prospects, albeit less so than six months ago, and have become more bullish about investing in the US than at home, according to a survey published on Sunday.

The survey of the European Round Table for Industry, which comprises about 60 CEOs and chairs of companies such as ASML, BASF and Vodafone, showed respondents found that the business case for investing in Europe was weakening further and that the European Union was too slow to implement required reforms.

Some 38 percent said they would invest less than they had planned six months earlier in Europe or had put decisions on hold, while just 8 percent said their European investments would increase. By contrast, 45 percent said they intended to invest more in the United States.

The business leaders want to see the reforms recommended in influential reports last year by former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi and Enrico Letta, both previously Italian prime ministers.

# Brazil becomes Bangladesh's top cotton supplier, surpassing India

SOHEL PARVEZ

Brazil has emerged as the main supplier of raw cotton for Bangladesh, one of the world's top cotton importers and the second largest garment exporter, surpassing neighbouring India, according to a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) report.

In the marketing year 2024-25 (MY25), beginning in August, Bangladesh imported 8.28 million bales of raw cotton. Brazil supplied about 1.9 million bales, accounting for 23 percent of total imports.

India was the second largest supplier with 1.4 million bales, followed by Benin (1.06 million bales), Cameroon (616,538 bales), and the United States (595,902 bales).

The USDA report said that Brazilian cotton has become popular among Bangladeshi spinners due to its competitive pricing, wide availability during harvest, and stable supply.

In MY24, India was the top supplier, exporting 1.79 million bales (23 percent share). Bangladeshi importers mainly bought Indian cotton for shorter shipment times via the Kolkata and Benapole ports, despite higher prices and some quality issues.

For the current marketing year, MY26, the USDA forecasts Bangladesh's cotton imports at 8.4 million bales, a 1.4 percent increase from MY25, driven by higher usage by local spinners. This is 5.2 percent higher than the 7.8 million bales imported in MY24.

The report highlighted that cotton imports remained stable throughout MY25, despite early disruptions in RMG production following the formation of a new interim government in August 2024 after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled amid a student-led uprising in July.



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**8.28m bales**  
in MY25; Brazil supplied  
**1.9m**  
(23%)

India was the  
second-largest  
supplier with  
**1.4m bales**

## COTTON IMPORTS RISE: BRAZIL TOPS SUPPLIERS



Domestic production remains  
**153,000**  
bales, limited by  
land, growth period

Other suppliers:  
Benin **1.06m**,  
Cameroon **616,538**,  
US **595,902** bales

Brazilian cotton is  
preferred for price,  
availability, stable  
supply

Cotton imports are  
forecast at **8.4m**  
bales in MY26, up  
**1.4%**

Raw cotton use  
estimated at  
**8.3m bales**  
in MY25,  
rising to  
**8.5m** in MY26

Yarn production expected  
to rise from **1.7m tonnes**  
(MY25) to **1.9m** (MY26)

driven by higher expected imports.

The spinning industry uses raw cotton to produce cotton and blended yarn, with yarn production expected to increase to 1.9 million tonnes in MY26 from 1.7 million tonnes.

Despite rising raw cotton imports and usage, Bangladesh's readymade garment industry is still expected to import more yarn and fabric.

India remains the largest supplier of cotton yarn to Bangladesh due to its large spinning industry, shorter shipment times, and lower logistics costs, while China is the top fabric exporter, followed by Pakistan and India.

# The power of focused growth

AHMED HUMAYUN MURSHED

Andrew Carnegie, the American industrialist and steel tycoon who later devoted much of his wealth to social welfare, once said, "Put all your eggs in one basket and then watch that basket." At first, it may sound like the line of a risk seeker, which is from an entrepreneurship perspective. Carnegie was not promoting recklessness. He was talking about focus, conviction, and belief, the kind that turns small ventures into lasting institutions. Many will follow the words of famous investor Warren Buffett, who advises spreading investments, and that is where the difference between an entrepreneur and an investor lies.

In business, that lesson has never lost its relevance. True growth rarely comes from spreading resources too thin. It comes from concentration, from nurturing what one already understands best and making it stronger, smarter, and more efficient. Sustainable success is not about chasing every opportunity that appears on the horizon. It is about recognising where value truly lies and giving that pursuit complete attention.

Those who built enduring enterprises understood this truth well. If we look at successful firms that grew into groups of multiple ventures, a clear pattern emerges. Almost all began with one strong, focused business, one product, one service, one vision that they believed in completely. They poured every ounce of effort and belief into it until it became strong enough to stand on its own. Only then did they diversify. Diversification is valuable, but it must come at the right time. When it happens too early, it dilutes purpose.

Retained earnings, the profits kept within a business, often decide whether a company grows or simply survives. They are among the most powerful and underappreciated sources of capital. They cost nothing, require no external approval, and signal confidence in the future. When reinvested, they strengthen the organisation from within, improving systems, upgrading machinery, building talent, and expanding capability.

Growth funded from within might seem slower, but it is far more sustainable. Over time, it compounds quietly, turning steady enterprises into resilient institutions.

In Bangladesh, however, the pattern often looks different. Many entrepreneurs

once they begin making profits, prefer to withdraw them and invest elsewhere, often in land or unrelated greenfield projects, simply because someone else succeeded, without truly understanding the market. The reasoning may feel safe, land may seem exciting. But land prices have remained stagnant, and idle cash loses value every day to inflation. A new business without knowledge or skill may result in losses at the cost of the profit-making one. It becomes an expensive gamble.

Meanwhile, the businesses that earned those profits could deliver far higher returns if the same money were reinvested in growth and innovation. The irony is that many owners borrow from banks at high interest to fund expansion while their retained earnings lie untouched in other investments. Over time, the cost of capital becomes greater than the returns it generates. The enterprise begins to weaken quietly even as it appears stable from the outside. Non-performing assets drain the life out of the profit-making one.

Each reinvestment cycle fuels the next, creating a continuous loop of improvement. But when profits are withdrawn too early, that rhythm breaks. Many once leading enterprises in Bangladesh have faced this quiet decline. Years of underinvestment slowly eroded their advantage through blind investments.

Warren Buffett later reinterpreted Carnegie, saying, "Do not put all your eggs in one basket," encouraging investors to diversify their portfolios. His advice, however, mainly applies to investors or mature entrepreneurs. An investor manages risk across many ventures, while an entrepreneur creates value by mastering one. His renowned investments reflect this principle.

Not everyone is suited for focused growth, and blind diversification makes little sense. Sensible asset allocation and diversification matter. But when someone is truly committed to winning a vertical, that focus deserves backing and belief. Focus on the basket and nurture it with care. If we look at China, we can see clearly what focused growth can achieve for businesses.

The writer is co-founder and CEO at Accfintax and associate director at Hoda Vasi Chowdhury and Co

# How Netflix won Hollywood's biggest prize

REUTERS, Los Angeles/New York

What started as a fact-finding mission for Netflix culminated in one of the biggest media deals in the last decade and one that stands to reshape the global entertainment business landscape, people with direct knowledge of the deal told Reuters.

Netflix announced on Friday it had reached a deal to buy Warner Bros Discovery's for \$72 billion.

Although Netflix had publicly downplayed speculation about buying a major Hollywood studio as recently as October, the streaming pioneer threw its hat in the ring when Warner Bros Discovery kicked off an auction on October 21, after rejecting a trio of unsolicited offers from Paramount Skydance PSKY.O.

Details of Netflix's plan and the Warner Bros board's deliberations, based on interviews with seven advisers and executives, are reported here for the first time.

Initially motivated by curiosity about its business, Netflix executives quickly recognized the opportunity presented by Warner Bros, beyond the ability to offer the century-old studio's deep catalog of movies and television shows to Netflix subscribers. Library titles are valuable to streaming services as these movies and shows can account for 80 percent of viewing, according to one person familiar with the business.

Warner Bros' business units - particularly its theatrical distribution and promotion unit and its studio - were

complementary to Netflix. The HBO Max streaming service also would benefit from insights learned years ago by streaming leader Netflix that would accelerate HBO's growth, according to one person familiar with the situation.

Netflix began flirting with the idea of acquiring the studio and streaming assets, another source familiar with the process told Reuters, after WBD announced plans in June to split into two publicly traded companies, separating its fading but cash-generating cable television networks

would undercut its ability to combine the traditional television networks businesses and increase the risk of being outbid for the studio by the likes of Netflix.

Wall Street's main indexes closed slightly higher on Friday.

Around that time, banker JPMorgan Chase & Co was advising Warner Bros Discovery CEO David Zaslav to consider reversing the order of the planned spin, shedding the Discovery Global unit comprising the company's cable television assets first.



from the legendary Warner Bros studios, HBO and the HBO Max streaming service.

Netflix and Warner Bros did not reply to requests for comment. The work intensified this autumn, as Netflix began vying for the assets against Paramount and NBCUniversal's parent company, Comcast.

### STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

Warner Bros kicked off the public auction in October, after Paramount submitted the first of three escalating offers for the media company in September. Sources familiar with the offer said Paramount aimed to pre-empt the planned separation because the split

would give the company more flexibility, including the option to sell the studio, streaming and content assets, which advisers believed would draw strong interest, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Executives for the streaming service and its advisory team, which included the investment banks Moelis & Company, Wells Fargo and the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, had been holding daily morning calls for the past two months, sources said. The group worked throughout Thanksgiving week - including multiple calls on Thanksgiving Day - to prepare a bid by the December 1 deadline.

China's exports topped forecasts in November, driven by a surge in shipments to non-US markets as manufacturers deepen trade ties with the rest of the world in light of President Donald Trump's prohibitively high tariffs.

### STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

The world's second largest economy has ramped up efforts to diversify its export markets since Trump won last November's presidential election, pursuing closer trade ties with Southeast Asia and the European Union, and leveraging Chinese firms' global footprint to establish new production hubs for low-cost access.

China's exports grew 5.9 percent year-on-year, customs data showed on Monday, reversing from a 1.1 percent contraction a month prior, and beating a 3.8 percent forecast in a Reuters poll.

Imports were up 1.9 percent, compared to a 1.0 percent uptick in October. Economists had expected a 3.0 percent increase.

"The tariff cuts agreed under the U.S.-China trade truce didn't help to lift shipments to the US last month, but overall export growth rebounded nonetheless," said Zichun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics. "We expect China's exports will remain

resilient, with the country continuing to gain global market share next year."

"The role of trade rerouting in offsetting the drag from US tariffs still appears to be increasing," she added.

The average US tariff on Chinese goods stands at 47.5 percent, well above the 40 percent threshold that economists say erodes Chinese exporters' profit margins.

Chinese shipments to the US dropped 29 percent in November year-on-year, the data shows, even though the month began with news that the United States and China had agreed to scale back some of their tariffs and a raft of other measures after Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping met in South Korea on October 30.

Exports to the European Union grew

an annual 14.8 percent last month, while shipments to Australia surged 35.8 percent, and the fast-growing Southeast Asian economies took in 8.2 percent more goods over the same period.

That boosted China's trade surplus to \$11.68 billion in November, the highest since June, from \$90.07 billion recorded the previous month, and above a forecast of \$100.2 billion. The trade surplus for the 11 months of the year topped \$1 trillion for the first time.

"Electronic machinery and semiconductors seem to be key," said Dan Wang, China director at Eurasia Group. "There is a shortage in lower grade chips and other electronics, which meant prices jumped, and Chinese companies going global have been importing all kinds of machinery and other inputs from China."

### KEY MEETINGS EYED AMID US-CHINA TRADE UNCERTAINTY

China's yuan firmed on Monday, off the back of the stronger-than-expected export data, with investors also awaiting policy signals from key year-end meetings.

The Politburo, a top decision-making body of the ruling Communist Party, pledged on Monday to take steps to expand domestic demand, a shift analysts say is crucial for weaning the \$19 trillion economy away from reliance on exports.

# India flies into airline turbulence of own making

REUTERS, Bengaluru

The chaos at India's airports stems from more than just IndiGo. The number of flights the airline has been cancelling a day surpassed 1,000 on Friday after executives neglected to plan for tighter pilot rest rules that came into effect at the start of November.

The root cause, though, is that the carrier, operated by S23 InterGlobe Aviation, controls some 65 percent of the skies. That's a problem in any market, let alone one as large as India's - and it comes from a failure to foster enough competition.

The company run by former KLM CEO Pieter Elbers dominates one of the world's fastest growing aviation markets. It ferried 165 million domestic fliers this year, a number expected to nearly double by 2030, per government data.

The country has over 150 airports and hosts the seventh-busiest route in the world between Mumbai and Delhi. IndiGo has built a reputation for running a tight ship with a low-cost model, boasting on-time performance. Its revenue grew 17 percent in the year to March and it's the only profitable airline in the country.

All airlines had nearly two years' notice of the new rules for pilots, which include more weekly rest and capping the number of night landings. Rivals rejigged rosters; IndiGo did not. Instead, it froze hiring, which it has now lifted.

Its response has raised suspicions that it was less a planning lapse and more a wager it could force the regulator's hand. So far, New Delhi's response to the crisis has been to put a few measures on hold and grant IndiGo some two-month exemptions - as well as to cap industry air fares while the disruption continues.

# China's exports top expectations on strong sales to non-US markets

REUTERS, Beijing

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Exports to the European Union grew

A drone view shows ships and containers at the port in Qingdao, Shandong province, China on October 20, 2025.

PHOTO: REUTERS