

## Dollar set for second weekly gain

REUTERS, New York

The dollar gained on Friday after data showed slower than expected US jobs growth, suggesting the Federal Reserve could leave interest rates unchanged later this month.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.4 percent last month from a revised 4.5 percent in November, the US Labor Department reported on Friday, even as employers added 50,000 jobs in the month. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast a gain of 60,000.

The latest job market data appears to give the central bank a bit of breathing room to leave short-term borrowing costs where they are, as Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell last month signaled policymakers are inclined to do at least in the near term.

Financial markets had been bracing for a possible Supreme Court decision that could strike down President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Farmers harvest cucumbers planted about two and a half months earlier at the beginning of Bangla month Kartik. In Poush, the produce is being sold at city wholesale markets for Tk 40 per kg. The photo was taken recently in Char Bukhainagar village of Barishal Sadar upazila.

## BD domain fees reduced by 36%

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) has announced a reduction in registration and renewal fees for two categories of .bd domain names to encourage local use.

According to a statement issued yesterday, the price cut applies to .bd third-level domains and .bd second-level domains, both with names longer than two characters. The company said fees for these categories have been reduced by 36 percent.

For a .bd Third-Level Domain, such as abc.com.bd, the registration fee has been reduced from Tk 1,100 to Tk 700, while the renewal fee has fallen from Tk 1,600 to Tk 1,020.

For a .bd Second-Level Domain, such as abc.bd, the registration fee has been reduced from Tk 2,000 to Tk 1,280, and the renewal fee from Tk 2,500 to Tk 1,600.

Compared with .com domains, .bd domains are generally easier to obtain and more readily available. They also offer greater credibility for Bangladesh-based individuals and organisations, making them particularly suitable for government bodies and established institutions.

A .bd domain helps build a professional and trustworthy image in the local market and enhances acceptance among domestic users. It can improve rankings in Bangladesh-focused search results, and due to local registration policies, .bd domains are considered comparatively more secure.

Value-added tax (VAT) will apply at the prescribed rate. All registrations and usage must comply with guidelines issued by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), as well as tariff-related decisions approved by BTCL authorities.

The offer will remain valid for a limited period.

BTCL expects the price incentive to encourage wider adoption of .bd domains among individuals and organisations, contributing to the strengthening of the country's domestic digital ecosystem.

## Reinvested earnings power FDI surge in Jul-Sept

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh recorded a surge in net foreign direct investment (FDI) during the July-September quarter of 2025, with reinvested earnings emerging as the dominant driver of growth – a development that reflects both investor confidence and limitations in attracting fresh capital.

According to a press release from the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), the latest figures from Bangladesh Bank show that net FDI inflow in Q3 stood at \$315.09 million, marking a staggering 202 percent year-on-year rise.

Of this total, reinvested earnings alone accounted for \$211.47 million, up 190.07 percent from \$72.90 million in the previous year.

In contrast, equity investment – typically seen as a more robust indicator of new investor interest – grew modestly by 31.69 percent, from \$76.79 million to \$101.12 million.

Intra company loans, meanwhile, turned positive after being in the red last year, but remained marginal at \$2.49 million.

The data suggests that while existing foreign investors are showing increased confidence by reinvesting their profits, the country continues

to face challenges in drawing substantial new equity flows from overseas.

"Bida's core work is to improve the business climate and develop a credible pipeline of investment," said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of Bida.

"It is encouraging to see this pipeline begin to convert into realised inflows. The benchmark remains low, but these back-to-back quarterly gains highlight that investors are placing their trust in Bangladesh."

Cumulatively, net FDI for January-September 2025 stood at \$1.41 billion – an 80 percent rise compared to \$780 million in the same period last year. The growth builds on a strong first half, when net FDI reached \$303.27 million in Q2, reflecting an 11.4 percent year-on-year increase.

While the investment pipeline appears strong – surpassing \$1.5 billion according to Bida – analysts caution that political uncertainty in the run-up to national elections could slow momentum in Q4.

A post-election rebound is widely expected, but sustaining the trend will require deeper structural reforms and more targeted investor outreach to attract fresh capital inflows beyond reinvestment.

## Garment accessories and packaging expo begins in Dhaka on Jan 14

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The 15th edition of the "Garments Accessories and Packaging Expo-2026 (GAPEXPO)" is going to be held in Dhaka between January 14 and 17 to showcase garment accessories, fabrics, yarn, and textile machinery from home and abroad.

The exposition will take place at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka, along with another expo, "Garment Technology Bangladesh-2026," said Md Shahriar, president of the Bangladesh Garments Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGAPMEA), at a press conference at La Vinci Hotel Dhaka yesterday.

BGAPMEA will organise the fair jointly with ASK Trade & Exhibition Pvt Ltd, positioning the expo as a comprehensive meeting platform for the promotion, expansion, buyer sourcing, and networking of all stakeholders related to garment accessories and packaging products, raw materials, used and new machinery, apparel, yarn, fabrics, and related items.

In 2006, BGAPMEA organised the first GAPEXPO, where the number of exhibitors was only 36.

Like previous years, this year's fair will be organised across a total of 10 halls, including 4 main halls and additional half halls combined. Approximately 350 exhibitors will participate with 1,500 stalls.

Among them, exhibitors from more than 18 countries will take part, including companies from India, Japan, Vietnam, China, South Korea, Germany, and many others.

For the promotion of GAPEXPO, invitations have been extended

to 2,100 BGAPMEA member companies, more than 4,000 BGMEA member companies, numerous BKMEA member organisations, print and electronic media, as well as representatives from the commerce ministry and other relevant government bodies.

"We expect that this year's fair will attract 30,000-40,000 business visitors, and the total number of visitors is anticipated to be close to 80,000," the BGAPMEA president said in the statement.

**This year's fair will be organised across a total of 10 halls. Approximately 350 exhibitors will participate with 1,500 stalls**

With the objective of ensuring an uninterrupted supply of accessories and packaging products to the ready-made garments export sector, and to safeguard, develop, and expand the interests of accessories and packaging manufacturing industries as exporters, BGAPMEA was established in 1991.

Initially, around 1989, the number of enterprises in this sector was fewer than 50. At present, BGAPMEA has more than 2,100 member companies.

Due to buyers' demand, a wide variety of products are now manufactured in this sector, and currently more than 62 types of products are being produced.

Total investment in the sector exceeds Tk 40,000 crore, which employs more than 700,000 people.

## Qatar, UAE to join US-led effort to bolster tech supply chain

REUTERS

Qatar and the United Arab Emirates will soon join a US-led initiative to secure AI and semiconductor supply chains, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg told Reuters in an interview.

The addition of those two countries is notable given the Middle East's history of political divisions and reflects a US-led effort to bring Israel and Gulf states into the same technology-focused economic framework.

The programme, dubbed Pax Silica, seeks to safeguard the full technology supply chain, including critical minerals, advanced manufacturing, computing and data infrastructure. It is a key pillar of the Trump administration's economic statecraft strategy to reduce dependence on rival nations and strengthen cooperation among allied partners.

"The Silicon Declaration isn't just a diplomatic communiqué," Helberg said. "It's meant to be an operational document for a new economic security consensus."

### BTCL offers

FROM PAGE B1

from 12 Mbps to 25 Mbps under "Sashroyi-25". For educational institutions, the Campus package has seen a major boost, with the Tk 500 plan now offering 50 Mbps, up from 15 Mbps.

Mid-range packages have been enhanced as well.

The Tk 800 plan now provides 50 Mbps instead of 15 Mbps, while the Tk 1,050 package has jumped from 20 Mbps to 100 Mbps. Customers on the

The group includes Israel, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Britain and Australia. Qatar is expected to sign the Pax Silica declaration on January 12, followed by the UAE on January 15.

Unlike traditional alliances, Helberg said, Pax Silica is a "coalition of capabilities," with membership driven by the industrial strengths and companies of each country.

Helberg said he hopes the initiative can help accelerate the Middle East's economic transition away from energy dependence, toward a more diversified, technology-driven economy.

"For the UAE and Qatar, this marks a shift from a hydrocarbon-centric security architecture to one focused on silicon statecraft," he said.

The moves come against the backdrop of The Future Minerals Forum, a government-led global minerals and supply chain conference hosted by Saudi Arabia that will bring together senior officials, industry leaders and investors in Riyadh from January 13-15.

Tk 1,150 plan will receive 120 Mbps, compared with 25 Mbps previously. Higher-tier users will also see gains, with speeds rising to 130 Mbps at Tk 1,300, 150 Mbps at Tk 1,500, and 170 Mbps at Tk 1,700, up from 30 Mbps, 40 Mbps and 50 Mbps, respectively.

The company said the increased bandwidth will support a wide range of digital activities, including online education, remote work, high-definition video streaming and gaming.

## Trade flows thru Ctg

FROM PAGE B1

They called for greater use of the Bay of Bengal's outer anchorage and inland river ports to reduce congestion at the main port, as well as the expansion and modernisation of chemical testing laboratories to speed up clearance and ensure compliance with international standards.

They also urged simplified bank loan procedures and easier access to finance, particularly for traders and industrial entrepreneurs. The establishment of a dedicated zone with comprehensive facilities for small and medium entrepreneurs was proposed as a way to encourage inclusive growth and support local enterprises.

Almas Shimul, additional managing director of GPH Ispat Limited, said establishing Chattogram as a commercial capital would require relocating key government offices, including the Ministry of Commerce, to the city.

He also called for strengthening river, sea and air connectivity and reducing overdependence on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Amirul Haque, managing director of Premier Cement, said waterway transport is significantly more cost-effective and environmentally friendly than road transport.

Without major improvements in logistics and connectivity, he said, Chattogram cannot function effectively as a commercial capital.

Architect Jerina Hossain, general secretary of the Planned Chattogram Forum, criticised the "unplanned infrastructure development" in the city.

She said flyovers and expressways have largely prioritised airport access while undermining existing public transport systems.

Hossain argued that modernising public transport is essential for Chattogram's development, but unplanned flyovers and expressways have reduced footpath space, making effective public transport unworkable without adequate pedestrian infrastructure.

## NBR, BGMEA launch real-time garment export clearance

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has integrated ASYCUDA World with the electronic utilisation declaration (e-UD) system of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to modernise bond management and speed up customs clearance for export-oriented industries.

The interconnection, effective from yesterday, aims to make the verification of utilisation declarations fully online and in real time, the NBR said in a press release.

This move will reduce dependence on paperwork and address long-standing delays in the clearance of bonded raw materials and export consignments, it added.

Before the integration, UD verification largely relied on manual checks and separate confirmation from BGMEA's system, which often created procedural complexities, delayed cargo release, and raised concerns over transparency and accountability, according to the NBR.

The revenue authority said the new system would help reduce revenue risks, strengthen monitoring, and make the clearance process faster and more efficient, while aligning Bangladesh's customs procedures with international standards.

Following the successful completion of a pilot phase, the NBR plans to roll out the e-UD write-off process in stages, further automating bond utilisation and reconciliation.

## bKash lets taxpayers pay large sums via NBR systems

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has rolled out a new large-value transaction facility allowing corporate tax and value added tax payments through the mobile financial service provider, bKash.

NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan inaugurated the service yesterday at NBR's headquarters in Dhaka.

Using an online merchant wallet developed by bKash Limited, taxpayers can now pay withholding tax through the NBR's e-TDS platform, while VAT payments can be made through the Finance Division's A-Challan system.

NBR Member (VAT Policy) Azizur Rahman said that previously, tax payments through the A-Challan system were limited to Tk 3 lakh. The new facility removes this limit, allowing taxpayers to pay unlimited amounts through bKash.

bKash Finance Controller Muhammad Arifur Rahman said that a tax payment can now be completed in less than two minutes using either a bank account or a mobile wallet.

"The move advances the NBR's digitisation drive," said NBR Chairman Khan, adding that the authority aims to shift all tax payments to digital channels to ensure faster processing, greater accuracy and transparency, and lower risk.

She also emphasised the need for quality housing, public transport, green spaces and cultural facilities for entrepreneurs, workers and professionals, noting that the absence of public hearings before approving mega projects has made the city's development process unsustainable.

Professor Muhammad Rashidul Hasan, dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology, said Bangladesh has 592 urban centres, yet 60 percent of the urban population lives in just four cities – around 38 to 40 percent in Dhaka and 12 percent in Chattogram.

He noted wide discrepancies in Chattogram's population estimates, ranging from 34 lakh to 80 lakh. Highlighting its strategic location, port facilities and connectivity, he said expanding the Dhaka-Chattogram highway could further strengthen the city's role as a commercial hub.

Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Shahadat Hossain, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matior Rahman, and representatives from various sectors also attended the roundtable.

## BB appoints

FROM PAGE B1

Hasina, served as the chairman of the bank for years. However, following the political shift, Abdul Aziz assumed the role.

An earlier BB inspection found various irregularities involving the bank's former chairman, Kazi Akram, and his son, former director Kazi Khurram Ahmed. These issues contributed to the bank's financial decline, according to a central bank report.

At the end of September last year, the bank's defaulted loans stood at Tk 5,884 crore, accounting for 29.14 percent of its total disbursed loans. During the same period in 2024, its classified loans amounted to Tk 1,679 crore, or 8.62 percent of total disbursed loans.