

EBL invests Tk 74 lakh in Bhasan Char coastal greening

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Eastern Bank PLC (EBL) has invested Tk 74 lakh to support coastal greening and climate resilience initiatives on Bhasan Char, one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable coastal areas.

Under its corporate social responsibility programme, the bank has partnered with NouKellan Foundation Trading Company Ltd to implement two integrated projects focused on large-scale afforestation and land restoration on Bhasan Char.

The initiatives aim to enhance ecological stability and improve living conditions for around 32,000 residents of the island, according to a press release.

The projects will support tree plantation across nearly 16,500 acres, including 1,702 acres within a flood-control embankment developed under the Ashrayan-3 Project.

To ensure the sustainability of the plantations, soil filling and grass planting will be carried out along the embankment, creating a protective buffer for saplings while strengthening natural defences against climate-induced risks.

At a ceremony held at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of EBL, handed over the project funding cheques to Mohammad Habib Ul Alam, managing director of NouKellan Foundation Trading Company Ltd, at a ceremony at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.



Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of EBL, hands over the project funding cheques to Mohammad Habib Ul Alam, managing director of NouKellan Foundation Trading Company Ltd, at a ceremony at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: EBL

Foundation Trading Company Ltd.

Shaheen said the initiative reflected the bank's commitment to environmental stewardship and community resilience, adding that sustainable afforestation on Bhasan Char would contribute to long-term protection of both livelihoods and the coastal ecosystem.

Habib Ul Alam said the CSR-backed programme would significantly strengthen coastal protection and promote long-term environmental sustainability.

He added that the project would include

coconut tree plantation across a substantial area of Bhasan Char in Hatiya upazila of Noakhali district.

The event was attended by senior officials from both organisations, including Manjur Ahmed, director of finance and marketing, and SM Nurul Alam, project officer from NouKellan Foundation Trading Company Ltd, as well as Md Abdus Salam, head of administration, Md Abdullah Al Mamun, company secretary, and Md Maskur Reza, head of business information systems of EBL, among others.

Bengal Commercial Bank signs deal with RSA Advisory



Tarik Morshed, managing director and chief executive officer of Bengal Commercial Bank, and K Mahmood Sattar, chairman of RSA Advisory, are seen posing with the signed document in the presence of officials from both organisations at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka on January 13.

PHOTO: BENGAL BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bengal Commercial Bank has signed a strategic business advisory agreement with RSA Advisory Ltd to support the sustainable development of its cottage, micro, small and medium enterprise (CMSME) portfolio and ensure long-term financial growth.

The agreement was signed on January 13, at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Tarik Morshed, managing director and chief executive officer of Bengal Commercial Bank, and K Mahmood Sattar, chairman of RSA Advisory, signed on behalf of their respective organisations.

Selim RF Hossain, senior consultant of RSA Advisory Ltd and former managing director of Brac Bank, was present at the ceremony.

Senior officials of Bengal Commercial Bank also attended the event, including KM Awlad Hossain, additional managing director and chief business officer, Md Rafiqul Islam, deputy managing director and chief technology officer, and Md Humayun Kabir, deputy managing director and company secretary, alongside high officials from both organisations.

Southeast Bank, Banani Bidyaniketan sign deal for education finance solution

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Southeast Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Banani Bidyaniketan School and College to provide an integrated education finance and management platform aimed at streamlining fee collection and school banking services.

The MoU was signed recently at the bank's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, the bank will deploy its Total Education Management Solution, branded as SoutheastEduFin, an advanced education management system designed to create a more efficient and digital payment ecosystem for the institution, students and guardians.

Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director of Southeast Bank, and Md Mashirul Rahman, principal of Banani Bidyaniketan School and College, represented their respective organisations at the signing ceremony.

Deputy managing directors Mohammed Rashedul Amin and Md Sekander-E Azam, along with senior officials from both sides, were also



Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director of Southeast Bank, and Md Mashirul Rahman, principal of Banani Bidyaniketan School and College, pose for photographs with the signed documents at the bank's headquarters in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

Bourses gain full power

FROM PAGE B1
years of bank statements rather than records for their entire operational history, Kalam informed.

Measures to reduce duplicative documentation have also been introduced.

In parallel, Kalam said, the BSEC is coordinating with the government

to prevent companies from taking excessive bank loans before listing. Proposals include setting a debt-to-equity ratio, a single borrower limit, and capping the financing period to discourage long-term loans.

The rules also modify the IPO book-building

process, allowing price valuations through any globally accepted method. Previously, restrictive valuation methods deterred high-quality companies from going public.

To enhance investor participation, the lottery system for IPO share

allocation has been reinstated. Previously scrapped in favour of pro-rata allocation, which required a minimum Tk 50,000 investment in the secondary market to qualify, this system now offers investors an equal chance of receiving shares.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
www.police.gov.bd

International Tender Notice

Memo No. 44.01.0000.024.02.002.25.377

Sealed tender is hereby invited from the breeders/principals/suppliers in their official pad for supply of Dogs and Horses as required by Bangladesh Police in fiscal year 2025-2026

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2	Agency	Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
3	Head of procuring entity	Inspector General of Police, Bangladesh.
4	Invitation for	Procurement of Dog
5	Invitation Ref No.	44.01.0000.024.02.002.25/01 (2025-2026)
6	Date	14 January 2026
7	KEY INFORMATION	One Stage Two Envelopes Tendering Method (OSTETM)
8	FUNDING INFORMATION	
9	Budget and source of fund	GOB Revenue
10	Tender publication date	15 January 2026
11	Last selling date	25 February 2026
12	Closing date and time	26 February 2025 at 12.00 hrs
13	Opening date and time	26 February 2025 at 12.30 hrs
14	Name and address of the office	Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000
15	Place of selling/receiving/ opening tender document	Transport Section, Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000
16	Date and time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	09 February 2026 at 15.00 Hrs. Office Room, Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Dhaka
17	INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	i) Up-to-date trade license ii) Up-to-date income tax certificate iii) VAT registration certificate iv) Other requirements described in the standard Tender Document
18	Identification of item	Brief description of goods
19	Package-1	Tender security amount in USD or equivalent
20	Package-2	Price of tender document (BDT)
21		Completion time
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		

Signature
19.01.26
Mohammad Ashraffuzzaman, BPM-Sheba
BP-7705121323
Addl. DIG (Transport)
Bangladesh Police
For Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
Phone: +88 02 223384779

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Project Director Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division Project Department of Environment E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
Memo. No: 22.02.0000.020.14.001.26.10		
Date: 14/01/2026		
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2	Agency	Department of Environment
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5	Invitation For	Computer and accessories and Office equipment
6	Issued Date	14-01-2026
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM); National Competitive Tender (NCT);
8	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget
9	Project/Program Name	Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division
10	Tender Package No.	GD-03
11	Tender Package Name	Computer and accessories and Office equipment
12	Tender Publication Date	15/01/2026
13	Tender Document Last Selling Date	26/01/2026 (at office time)
14	Tender Closing Date and Time	27/01/2026 & 3:00 pm
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	27/01/2026 & 3:30pm
16	Name and Address of the Office of Selling the Tender Document	Room No: 202, 1 st Floor, Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
17	Name and Address of the Office of Receiving & Opening Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division, 1 st Floor, Room-211, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
18	Pre-Tender Meeting Place, Date and Time	N/A
19	Eligibility of Tenderer	As per Tender Documents.
20	Brief Description of Goods	1. Computer and accessories and Office equipment
21	Price of Tender Document	TK.1000/- (One Thousand) Only [non-refundable]
22	Identification of Tender package	Location Tender Security Amount (in Taka) Completion Time
23	1. GD-3	1 st Floor, Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. TK. 70,000/- (Taka Seventy thousand) only 30 days
24	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Samsuzzaman Sarker
25	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division
26	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 88-02-223-375049, E-mail: helpdoepd@gmail.com
		The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject any/all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings

Govt launches shared GPU cloud to boost AI, research

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has launched its first government-run, shareable cloud computing facility powered by high performance graphics processing units (GPUs), aiming to accelerate higher education, research, and machine learning-based skill development.

GPUs are specialised processors designed to handle massive parallel calculations and are particularly efficient for artificial intelligence and deep learning tasks, compared with traditional central processing units used in most computers.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser at the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunication and Information Technology, said the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA) has integrated more than 20 NVIDIA Volta Architecture Tensor Core GPUs into a cloud resource management platform and made the facility operational.

He described it as the first such shared cloud facility in the public sector.

According to the post, the infrastructure will be maintained by the National Data Center team of the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC).

The platform is expected to support a wide range of high performance computing (HPC) activities, including machine learning-based dataset training, threat intelligence analysis and geoscience modelling.

Based on specifications, one GPU can deliver computing power equivalent to around 45 CPUs, giving the platform a combined capability of more than 900 CPU-equivalent computations, the post said.

Overall, the shared cloud is capable of offering up to 2,240 teraFLOPS of deep learning capacity.

A teraFLOPS is a unit that measures computing speed and refers to one trillion floating-point calculations per second, commonly used to describe AI and supercomputing performance.

SAFA Int'l Conference in Dhaka on Jan 17

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) will organise a daylong SAFA International Conference 2026, where a number of foreign delegates are expected to join, including the president of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), the apex body of all accountants in the world.

The conference will be held on January 17 at Le Méridien Dhaka, ICAB President NKA Mobin said at a press briefing at the CA Bhaban yesterday.

He said the future of accountancy lies in the strategic integration of ethical artificial intelligence and sustainability reporting.

Today's technology is not merely supporting development; it is shaping Bangladesh's economic future and a rapidly evolving professional landscape, he said.

The next-generation accountant must therefore master dual competencies—governing algorithmic ethics and validating non-financial impact—to build stakeholder trust and steer capital toward sustainable growth, he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD)
Health Services Division
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Shariati, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
www.cmsd.gov.bd

Corrigendum of IFT

Invitation for Tender (IFT) No. CMSD/GR-2515/ICT/2025-2026/Proc-D-5/29, date: 07-12-2025, was published in The Jugantor and The Daily Star on 08-12-2025. The relevant portion of the IFT and the Tender Document regarding the **Procurement of "Anti-Retroviral Drugs"** is hereby amended as under:

Section	Existing entries	Amended entries
Tender last selling date and time	21/01/2026 up to 10:00am	27/01/2026 up to 5:00pm
Tender closing & opening date and time	21-01-2026 at 11:00am	28-01-2026 at 11:00am

All other terms and conditions of the IFT and relevant portion of the Tender document will remain unchanged.

Mohd. Nayeb Ali
Joint Secretary
Director, CMSD, Tejgaon, Dhaka
Tel: 02 222244087

GD-105

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Noakhali
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7500.000.07.007.25.141

Dated: 13/01/2026

Invitation for Tenders (IFT for Works) e-Tender Notice No. 56/2025-26

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated as below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Procurement method	Name of works	Last selling date & time	Last date & time of tender security submission	Closing date & time
1	1209254	LTM	IRIDPNFL/NOA/SAD/RHB/24-25/W-1965 (a) Maintenance of Baikunthapur Bazar-Nitanandapur Road (Ch. 00m-900m), ID No. 47587543(475875044) (b) Maintenance of Mriddarh- Dr. Hat-Wapda Beri-Dakkhin Nazipur GPS Road (Mukia Madrasa Beriband - Dakkhin Habib Ullar Bari Road (Ch. 870m-2740m) under Sadar Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID No. 47580493 (c) Construction of RCC Box Culvert on 1x2.5m x 2.50 Bazar-Baikunthapur Nitanandapur Road Ch. 195m	28-01-2026 17:00	29-01-2026 13:00	29-01-2026 14:00
2	1209255	LTM	IRIDPNFL/NOA/KAB/RHB/24-25/W-1986 (a) Maintenance of Noor Sonapur Kaderbox Pole-Noor Sonapur GPS (Badru Haider Chowdhury) road (Ch. 00m-700m), ID No. 475904096 (b) Maintenance of Kabirhat-Kalirhat-Munshirhat Road (Ch.00m-3150m) under Kabirhat Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID No. 475904072	28-01-2026 17:00	29-01-2026 13:00	29-01-2026 14:00

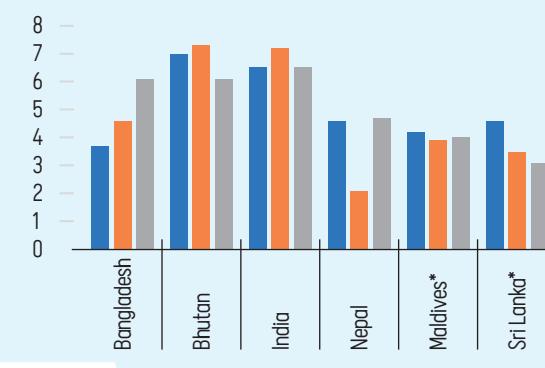
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sheikh Mahfuzul Hossain
Executive Engineer
LGED, Noakhali
Phone: 02334433826
E-mail: xen.noakhali@lged.gov.bd

GD-102

SOUTH ASIAN GROWTH FORECASTS

(In %)*Calender year FY25e FY26 FY27f



SOURCE: WB

World Bank cuts Bangladesh growth

FROM PAGE B1

In South Asia, growth is expected to moderate to 6.2 percent in 2026 before rising to 6.5 percent in 2027, with economies excluding India projected to grow 5 percent next year and 5.6 percent in 2027, aided in part by a recovery in Bangladesh.

“However, the pace of job creation in the region will likely remain subdued,” it noted.

“Risks to the outlook are

tilted to the downside and include further increases in trade restrictions and global trade policy uncertainty, a tightening of financial conditions amid banking sector vulnerabilities, increased social unrest, and extreme weather events,” it added.

Upside potential includes progress in bilateral trade talks, faster technology-led investment, particularly in India, and more stable political environments.

NBR flags gold supply

FROM PAGE B1

importers are required to pay a duty of Tk 20,000 per gold bar, Khan said.

The remarks by the NBR chief come at a time when gold is selling at record high prices of around Tk 234,680 per bhorti -- the highest in Bangladesh -- driven by a surge in the international market.

Bajus President Enamul Haque Khan said the cumbersome import system has pushed up gold prices in the domestic market.

As a result, gold in Bangladesh costs at least Tk 30,000 more per bhorti than in neighbouring India, Singapore, and Dubai, forcing many traders to rely on illegal sources, he said.

Bajus leaders alleged irregularities in the

issuance of import licences, saying that although 18 licences were issued earlier, at least 10 recipients were not genuine traders, while many established jewellers were excluded.

“Licences were given to people who are not involved in the jewellery trade, even to cricketers, while real businessmen were deprived,” said Samit Ghosh Apu, former vice president of Bajus.

They also complained that banks are reluctant to provide loans to jewellery businesses, discouraging formal operations.

Bajus placed a five-point demand, including widening the scope of gold imports, simplifying the import process, and adjusting value-added tax rates in line with neighbouring countries.

Ramadan

FROM PAGE B1

Many, including 143 carrying government-imported fertiliser, were allocated 20-25 days ago and remain stuck. About 300 vessels are still navigating the waterways.

Delays at unloading points are compounded by labour shortages and a lack of storage bags, especially for fertiliser. “The main reason for the crisis is the arrival of a large number of mother vessels at the same time ahead of Ramadan,” Ahmed said.

Previously, BWTCC supervised 1,400 lighter vessels moving imported cargo from the outer anchorage to 59 destinations across the country.

Parvez Ahmed, a leader of the Inland Vessels Owners Association of Chattogram, said over 300 vessels shifted to Mongla, Payra, and Indian coastal routes in the past year due to higher rates and declining trade in Chattogram.

Oil slipped after four days of increases on Wednesday as Venezuela resumed exports and US crude and product inventories rose, though fears of Iranian supply disruptions due to deadly civil unrest loomed over the market.

Brent futures were trading down 38 cents, or 0.6 percent, at \$65.09 a barrel at 0720 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude was also down 38 cents, or 0.6 percent, at \$60.77 a barrel.

REUTERS, Singapore

Oil slipped after four days of increases on Wednesday as Venezuela resumed exports and US crude and product inventories rose, though fears of Iranian supply disruptions due to deadly civil unrest loomed over the market.

Brent futures were

Commercial courts introduced

FROM PAGE B1

“In many cases, especially in disputes involving long-term agreements with the government, foreign investors face delays and uncertainty. Often, we have had to resort to arbitration in Singapore, as domestic options were either not available or not trusted.”

Chowdhury pointed to sectors such as energy, where disputes often arise when contracts signed earlier no longer favour the government, leading to prolonged legal battles.

This uncertainty, she said, has discouraged investment in the past.

If disputes can now be settled within the country through commercial courts, it will build confidence. We also have several pending tax-related cases. If those can be resolved quickly, that is a big plus,” she added.

Under the ordinance, commercial disputes must be filed within 30 days, while proceedings are expected to be completed within 90 days. Chowdhury said the timelines are encouraging, but it all depends on how well this system is executed.

Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), said legal complexity and delays have repeatedly been identified as major obstacles for investors.

“Our legal system has consistently been flagged in global rankings, such as the World Bank's Doing Business Index, as overly complex,” he said. “This has created a challenging environment for investors, especially foreign ones, who often face

lengthy delays and legal uncertainties.”

He said the introduction of commercial courts could help reduce uncertainty and create a more business-friendly environment, provided the system is properly set up and resourced.

“This could open the door for creating a more investment-conducive environment for both foreign and local investors,” he added. “Because, unfortunately, we have seen that almost every dispute eventually ends up in court. In many cases, the legal process is used as a tool to slow down or obstruct business operations.”

Nihad Kabir, former president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), said commercial disputes often take years to resolve in regular civil courts.

“These time-bound proceedings will be a game-changer for commercial litigation in Bangladesh,” said Kabir, who has practised commercial law for 35 years.

She said a quicker resolution could reduce the time required to settle high-value disputes, but noted that outcomes would depend on whether courts receive adequate infrastructure and skilled personnel.

“I hope these will be made available,” she added.

The ordinance requires that commercial disputes arising from business contracts, partnerships, distribution, franchising, licensing and joint ventures be heard exclusively by commercial courts with trained judges and dedicated facilities.

Courts must resolve cases within 30 days of filing. Proceedings may be extended by another 30 days only on justifiable grounds. Written judgments must be delivered within 90 days after hearings conclude.

To reduce formal litigation, the law introduces mandatory pre-suit mediation, requiring parties to attempt settlement through alternative dispute resolution before approaching the court. It also provides for digital case management, strict procedural timelines and the authority to strike out non-maintainable suits at an early stage.

The Supreme Court will publish monthly data on filings, disposals and pending cases in commercial courts and the High Court Division. The information will be made available on the Supreme Court website.

The mediation processes will allow some disputes to be resolved without placing additional strain on the commercial courts, which is appreciable, said Syed Akhtar Mahmood, a former

global lead of the World Bank Group's regulatory reforms and public-private dialogue.

Besides, the Supreme Court will publish case statistics regularly. That will enable us to monitor whether the legislative changes are making a difference on the ground, he added.

Mahmood said, “We often do reforms without putting in place systems to monitor results. This appears to be an exception, and that is good.”

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Kazipur, Sirajgonj
www.lged.gov.bd

Dated: 14-01-2026

Invitation for Tenders (Works) e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-26

Memo No. 46.02.8850.000.014.054.26-777

Dated: 14-01-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works, details are given below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender
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RMG exports to EU, non-traditional markets slip slightly

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Ready-made garment (RMG) exports to two major destinations -- non-traditional markets and the European Union (EU) -- saw a slight decline in 2025 compared with 2024, mainly due to lower demand for locally made garments.

Exports to non-traditional markets, which include all destinations except the EU, the US, Canada, and the UK, fell by 0.82 percent to \$6.25 billion in 2025, according to recently published data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

Exports to the EU also dropped slightly by 0.50 percent to \$19.30 billion compared with the previous year.

Meanwhile, shipments to other key markets grew last year. Exports to the US rose 4.68 percent to \$7.54 billion, while shipments to Canada and the UK increased by 7.23 percent and 1.49 percent, reaching \$1.33 billion and \$4.39 billion, respectively.

Overall, garment exports reached \$38.82 billion in 2025, up 0.89 percent from 2024, according to EPB data.

Local exporters expect a strong recovery in garment exports in 2026, as the global supply chain shows positive signs and Bangladesh prepares for its general election next month. They are hopeful that the business and investment environment will return to normal, and that international clothing brands and retailers will place full-volume orders with the factories.

Gold notches record high

REUTERS

Gold climbed on Wednesday to hit a record, while silver breached the \$90 mark for the first time, as softer-than-expected US inflation readings cemented bets for interest rate cuts amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainty.

Spot gold rose 1 percent to \$4,632.03 per ounce as of 0715 GMT, after hitting a record high of \$4,639.42 earlier in the session. US gold futures for February delivery rose 0.9 percent to \$4,639.50.

Spot silver jumped 3.6 percent to \$90.11 per ounce, having shot up nearly 27 percent so far this year.

POLICY & REGULATION

- Govt to introduce safeguards against harmful pesticide use in haor wetlands
- Local committees to regulate pesticide application
- Bangla instructions on pesticide use to be made mandatory



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

COVERAGE & TIMING

Seven haor districts included in the first phase

Haor region prioritised ahead of the Boro rice season

PESTICIDE USE TRENDS

Move follows excessive pesticide use nationwide

Pesticide consumption rose sharply between 2016 and 2021

IMPACT ON FISH & ENVIRONMENT

Haor fish catches have fallen steeply over the past decade

Fish output dropped by over 60,000 tonnes in ten years

Experts warn pesticide runoff is harming biodiversity and public health

Govt to curb pesticide use in seven haor districts

The initiative aims to protect fish and haor biodiversity

SUKANTA HALDER

The government plans to roll out a targeted initiative in seven haor districts to curb the harmful effects of pesticide use on fish, livestock and biodiversity, according to an internal document from the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

The districts Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Netrokona, Kishoreganj and Brahmanbaria contain most of Bangladesh's haor wetlands and support large-scale Boro rice cultivation.

Confirming the plan, Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter said the haor region was prioritised because, with the Boro season approaching, the ecological risks in these areas were particularly acute.

She noted pesticide use nationwide far exceeds actual agricultural demand, making immediate countrywide enforcement difficult. "Other districts will be included gradually."

The haors supply a large share of the country's Boro rice, making the region critical to national food security.

"Excessive or uncontrolled use of pesticides during the Boro season can leave harmful chemical residues in the rice, which is risky for fish and human health in the future," said Borun Chandra Biswas, deputy director (fisheries resource conservation) at the Department of Fisheries.

Excessive or uncontrolled use of pesticides during the Boro season can leave harmful chemical residues in the rice, which is risky for fish and human health in the future," said Borun Chandra Biswas, deputy director (fisheries resource conservation) at the Department of Fisheries

The initiative comes amid a sustained decline in fish production in the haors, alongside growing concerns over species loss.

Data from the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) and ministry officials show that fish harvests in flooded haor areas fell from about 2.31 lakh tonnes in the fiscal year 2011-12 to roughly 1.28 lakh tonnes in 2023-24, a drop of more than 1.03 lakh tonnes in just over a decade.

The decline has coincided with rising pesticide consumption nationwide. According to the Bangladesh Crop Protection Association, pesticide use increased from 33,370 tonnes in 2016 to 39,540 tonnes in 2021.

Scientists say biodiversity loss in the wetlands is already severe. Saokat Ahmed, a senior scientific officer at the BFRI, said

"around 133 fish species were once recorded in the haor region, but many are now at risk of extinction."

Critically endangered species include Bagha Air, Chenua and Bhangar Bata.

Endangered species include Pabda, Chitol, Rita, Gozar and Koksha Boirali, while Chapila, Foli, Boal, Titputi, Guzi Air and Kuchia are considered vulnerable.

"Both natural and human-induced factors have contributed to the long-term decline in production," Ahmed said.

Adviser Akhter said pesticide use is also undermining soil health, with beneficial organisms such as frogs, earthworms, insects and microorganisms rapidly declining.

Chemicals from agricultural fields flow into haors and other water bodies, causing toxicity that kills fish and aquatic life, disrupts reproduction and degrades ecosystems, she added.

Under the new programme, the government plans to impose stricter controls on pesticide application through district- and upazila-level committees.

The ministry document says pesticide containers will be required to carry clear usage instructions in Bangla, while training and awareness campaigns will be conducted among farmers in haor-dominated areas.

Officials said regulations governing pesticide use already exist, including rules on residual periods -- the mandatory waiting time before crops can be harvested safely.

In practice, however, farmers frequently ignore these guidelines, often harvesting and selling produce on the same day pesticides are applied, largely due to lack of awareness.

Bangladesh has 373 haors spread across 47 upazilas in seven districts, covering nearly 263,000 hectares, according to BFRI data.

Exporting Bangladeshi talent

PARVEZ MURSHED

I have worked for over a decade as a regional business head of a global bank based in Singapore. From my experience, if you walk the floors of any global bank's regional offices in Hong Kong or Singapore, you will find many staff from India, a few from Australia, but hardly any from Bangladesh.

India has a long tradition of exporting talent globally across industries, not just in banking. CEOs of some of the world's top companies, including Google, YouTube, Microsoft and Novartis, are all of Indian origin. Indra Nooyi led PepsiCo globally and transformed the company. In banking, Vikram Pandit, who moved to the US from India at 16, led Citigroup as CEO during the global financial crisis.

Former Pakistani prime minister Shaukat Aziz held a senior role with Citigroup in New York before returning home. The late Anshu Jain, a British Indian, served as global co-CEO of Deutsche Bank.

Among the reasons for the limited global mobility of Bangladeshi talent, education is a primary factor. It would be an understatement to say our education system falls short compared with neighbouring countries. The written and spoken English of our graduates often lacks a strong command of vocabulary and grammar. This can undermine confidence when presenting key topics to international colleagues. Our business schools also do not emphasise essential skills such as storytelling or navigating corporate politics with skill.

Another factor is the limited culture of professionalism in workplaces. Many offices in Bangladesh operate informally, which can hinder professional development. Boundaries between personal and professional life are often blurred.

Simple professional behaviours such as punctuality, completing meetings on time, and starting discussions with a clear agenda are sometimes neglected.

Along with developing professionalism, we have to focus on building the essential skills required to succeed in a global workplace. One such skill is the ability to write professional emails that clearly articulate key points, while also responding to messages on time and acting on them promptly. Navigating different cultures across Asia can be challenging, but it can be achieved by understanding and respecting the diverse cultural practices in the region.

Some meritorious students from Bangladesh go overseas for higher education, which opens a window of opportunity to find employment in those countries after graduation. This window, however, is narrowing in many countries as emerging nativism limits employment and immigration opportunities for foreigners. For top talent working in multinational companies and the banking sector in Bangladesh, the best chance for overseas mobility is to go abroad, leveraging their global networks.

Bangladeshi leaders in these firms need to do much more than their counterparts in neighbouring countries to promote their best talent for overseas postings, whether on short-term or long-term assignments. This approach would allow Bangladesh to export its talent and broaden their exposure in the global marketplace. If these professionals choose to return after their overseas stint, they will bring back global best practices, enriching local workplaces through a reverse brain drain. Our country should be ready to welcome them.

The writer worked as a senior executive at global banks in Bangladesh and Singapore

China's rare-earth exports in 2025 surged to their highest level since at least 2014, even as Beijing began curbing shipments of several medium to heavy elements from April - a move analysts saw as an effort to showcase its leverage over Washington while negotiators wrangled over soybean purchases, a potential Boeing aircraft deal and the fate of TikTok's US operations.

The world's top agricultural importer purchased a record volume of soybeans in 2025, buoyed by a sharp increase in shipments from South America, with Chinese buyers holding off from US crops for much of the year as trade tensions lingered.

Economists expect China to continue gaining global market share this year, helped by Chinese firms setting up overseas production hubs that provide lower-tariff access to the United States and the European Union, as well as by strong demand for lower-grade chips and other electronics.

Beijing, however, has shown signs of recognising it must moderate its industrial largesse if it is to sustain its success, and address the image problem outsized exports are causing.

China ends 2025 with record \$1.2tn trade surplus despite Trump tariffs

REUTERS, Beijing

China on Wednesday reported a record trade surplus of nearly \$1.2 trillion in 2025, led by booming exports to non-US markets as producers looked to build global scale to fend off sustained pressure from the Trump administration.

A push by policymakers for Chinese firms to diversify beyond the world's top consumer market by shifting focus to Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America paid dividends, cushioning the economy against US tariffs and intensifying trade, technology and geopolitical frictions since President Donald Trump returned to the White House last year.

"China's economy remains extraordinarily competitive," said Fred Neumann, chief Asia economist at HSBC. "While this reflects gains in productivity and the rising technological sophistication of Chinese manufacturers, it is also due to weak domestic demand and attendant excess capacity."

Heading into 2026, the challenges for Beijing are aplenty, including

deflecting concerns from an increasing number of global capitals about China's trade practices and overcapacity, as well as their overreliance on key Chinese products.

One of the key questions facing policymakers is for how long the \$1.9 trillion economy can continue to counteract a property slump and sluggish domestic demand by shipping ever cheaper goods to other markets.

"Rising Chinese trade surpluses could raise tensions with trade partners, especially those reliant on manufacturing exports themselves," Neumann said.

The manufacturing juggernaut's full-year trade surplus came in at \$1.189 trillion - a figure on par with the GDP of a top-20 economy globally like Saudi Arabia - customs data showed on Wednesday, having broken the trillion-dollar ceiling for the first time in November.

"With more diversified trading partners, (China's) ability to withstand risks has been significantly enhanced," Wang Jun, a vice minister at China's customs administration, said at a press briefing following the data release.

Outbound shipments from the



Chinese container ship Cosco Shipping Aries is unloaded at a terminal in the Port of Hamburg in Germany. Rising Chinese trade surpluses could raise tensions with trade partners, said an economist.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE