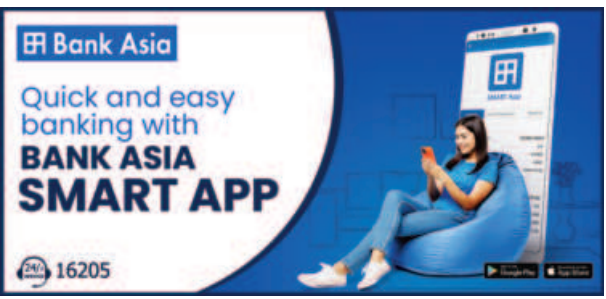


star

BUSINESS



World Bank cuts Bangladesh growth forecast for FY26

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The World Bank (WB) has cut its forecast for Bangladesh's economic growth from its June prediction by 0.3 percentage points for the current fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 amid persistent inflation, falling exports and sluggish investment.

In its Global Economic Prospects report released yesterday, the multilateral lender projected the economy will expand by 4.6 percent in the year ending June 2026.

The revision follows the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) report showing gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.5 percent in the first quarter of FY26, up from 2.58 percent in the same quarter last year, driven by industrial and agricultural activity.

Economists described the growth as a sign of recovery but stressed the challenge lies in sustaining it.

Last month, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also downgraded its forecast, citing weak investment ahead of the general election and slower export growth, projecting GDP growth at 4.7 percent, down from 5 percent in September.

The WB report noted subdued credit demand and slower business activity, but expected the economy to pick up to 6.1 percent in FY27 as private consumption strengthens and inflationary pressures ease.

Reduced political uncertainty after next month's election and the anticipated implementation of structural reforms by a new government are projected to boost industrial activity, public spending, and investment, it also said.

The report said inflationary pressures are anticipated to soften in Bangladesh, leading to monetary policy easing.

"In Bangladesh, the exchange rate has stabilised since mid-2025, partly reflecting the adoption of a more flexible currency regime in May," the WB also said.

The report highlighted some risks. Further trade restrictions or heightened global policy uncertainty could dampen exports and economic activity.

The WB report said although openness to global trade is relatively limited in the region's economies, the risk is higher in those with larger exposure to the United States, including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, than in other regional economies.

Bangladesh's exports fell 2.19 percent year on year in July-December FY26, according to the Export Promotion Bureau.

The WB, meanwhile, also slashed GDP growth projections for Maldives, Bhutan and Nepal for the year 2026 from its forecast made in June last year. It maintained growth projections for India for the year unchanged and revised upwards the forecast for Sri Lanka.

READ MORE ON B3



Ramadan import rush leaves lighter vessels in short supply

Mother ships waiting for 10-20 extra days at outer anchorages for unloading

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

An unusually high number of mother vessels carrying food imports has created congestion at Chattogram port's outer anchorages, causing a severe shortage of lighter vessels and delaying the unloading of cargo.

In recent weeks, the shortage of lighter vessels has worsened. Mother ships carrying commodities such as wheat, lentils, chickpeas, raw sugar, and edible oil are now overstay at anchorages for 10-20 days.

Big traders in the port city said many businesses rushed to ship in food items this year ahead of Ramadan, taking advantage of relaxed import rules and improved dollar stocks. Seasonal importers without their own storage facilities are either taking longer to move goods into the supply chain or leaving cargo on the lighter vessels for extended periods.

"Most of the Ramadan stocks have already been imported and moved to the supply chain," said Satyajit Das Barman, head of business (Grains and Logistics) at TK Group, a major Chattogram-based conglomerate.

As of yesterday, over 90 mother vessels were at Chattogram and Kutubdia anchorages, almost double the usual 40-50. More than half are carrying food commodities, while the remainder transport industrial raw materials such as cement clinker, slag, limestone, ball clay, scrap, coal, and fertiliser.

Shipping agents said many ships are receiving fewer lighter vessels than required, with some left without any allocation on certain days.

At its latest berthing meeting on Tuesday, the Bangladesh Water Transport Coordinating Cell (BWTCC) could allocate only 59 lighter vessels to the same number of

NBR flags gold supply despite low imports

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

National Board of Revenue Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan yesterday questioned how gold remains widely available in Bangladesh's market despite little to no formal imports.

At a meeting with the Bangladesh Jewellers Association (Bajus), he said formal imports are not taking place as expected, even though several initiatives have been taken to formalise the trade and bring discipline to the sector.

"The market is still full of gold, though official data show no significant imports. These issues pose a major obstacle to establishing financial discipline, the rule of law, and good governance in the country," he said at a programme at the NBR headquarters.

He said there was a time when jewellery and gold imports were completely prohibited, yet the metal continued to enter the country through unofficial channels.

"To formalise the trade, the government later introduced a gold policy and created legal import opportunities, including lowering duties," he said.

"Even after that, we see that formal imports are not happening as expected."

He added that some NBR officials might be involved in facilitating illegal imports.

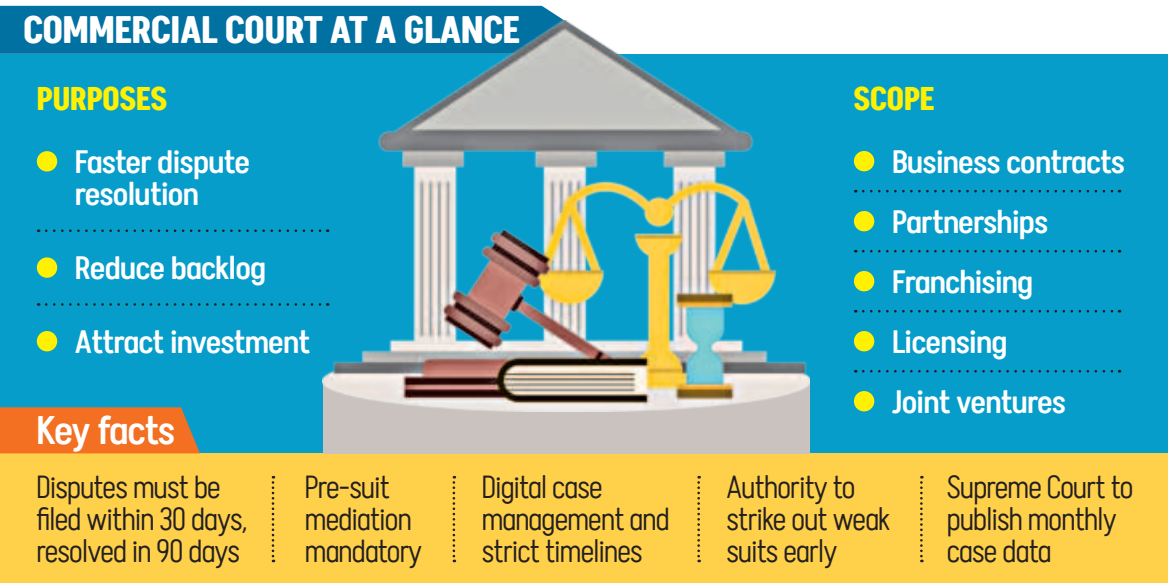
At present, overseas travellers visiting Bangladesh can bring a gold bar of 117 grammes by paying Tk 5,000 per 11.664 grammes, or one bhoiri, as customs tariff under the NBR's baggage rules. The total duty per gold bar stands at over Tk 50,000.

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

READ MORE ON B3

Commercial courts introduced to settle business disputes faster

Ordinance sets strict timelines, dedicated benches, and digital management to tackle slow contract enforcement, case backlog and attract foreign investment



JAGARAN CHAKMA

The government has introduced commercial courts aimed at speeding up business dispute settlements, a move officials and investors say would help improve the country's investment climate.

In this regard, an ordinance was issued by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs on January 1. It came into immediate effect.

Business leaders and legal experts have welcomed the dedicated legal arrangement as a long-overdue reform, especially at a time when weak contract enforcement continues to weaken investor confidence and add pressure to an already stretched civil court system.

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) described the ordinance as a landmark step that responds to a long-standing demand from the private sector for faster and more predictable dispute resolution.

"This ordinance marks a decisive step toward overcoming chronic weaknesses in contract enforcement," said DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed. "We have consistently advocated for the establishment of specialised commercial courts, and this development reflects meaningful progress."

Contract enforcement in Bangladesh has remained slow for years, a problem that frequently features in global assessments of the business environment. According to World Bank data, the country ranks 189th out of 190 economies in enforcing contracts, placing it among the weakest performers worldwide.

According to World Bank data, pending cases have doubled over the past 15 years, leaving disputes worth an estimated \$3.5 billion unresolved. The number of pending cases rose from 4.44 million in September 2024 to 4.65 million by June 2025, highlighting the strain on the judicial system.

Ahmed said the ordinance directly targets the causes of delay through time-bound procedures, stricter case management and limits on adjournments.

He said these weaknesses were not adequately addressed by existing laws such as the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Artha Rin Adalat Act, or the Arbitration Act, 2001.

The chamber urged the government now to focus on implementation, including the creation of well-resourced commercial benches, clear procedural rules, judicial training and effective coordination with arbitration and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

"Efficient commercial dispute resolution is vital to improving the investment climate," Ahmed added. "International experience from countries like India, Singapore, the UK, and Malaysia shows that dedicated commercial courts significantly enhance competitiveness and investor confidence."

If enforced properly, the DCCI believes the ordinance could strengthen contract enforcement, attract foreign direct investment and support Bangladesh's transition towards a more export-oriented and private sector-driven economy.

Foreign investors have also welcomed the initiative. Rupali Chowdhury, president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), said the absence of reliable domestic dispute resolution has long been a concern for international businesses.

"This ordinance, which provides for the establishment of commercial courts and addresses related procedural matters, seems very effective – particularly for foreign investors," she said. "I believe this will expedite dispute resolution significantly."

She said the initiative went beyond a routine legal change and could address uncertainty faced by foreign companies.

READ MORE ON B3

Private sector flourished under Khaleda Zia's leadership

Former FBCCI leaders say

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Top former leaders of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) paid tribute to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, highlighting her key role in developing the private sector and promoting economic liberalisation.

"The private sector flourished under Khaleda Zia's leadership, with policies that empowered entrepreneurs and strengthened business institutions," said former FBCCI president MA Kashem at a doa mahfil held yesterday at the FBCCI office in Dhaka.

"After independence, it was under President Ziaur Rahman and later Begum Khaleda Zia that the business community gained real momentum," he added.

Kashem, also the founder chairman of Southeast Bank, called her legacy "truly unforgettable" and credited her for laying the foundation for today's successes in industry, banking, and education.

Mir Nasir Hossain, another former FBCCI president, described Khaleda Zia as a national leader who went beyond party lines and respected the business community.

Recalling his meetings with her in 2005, he praised her support for economic reforms, particularly the introduction of VAT, which strengthened the country's revenue system.

"Without VAT, our economy would not have reached its current fiscal strength," he said, urging future governments to uphold the policy's principles.

Former FBCCI vice president Abul Kashem Haider expressed concern over the chamber's lack of elected leadership. "Without democratic representation, a truly business-friendly environment cannot be achieved," he said.

He also praised Khaleda Zia's contributions to industrial growth, especially in garments and textiles.

FBCCI Administrator Md Abdur Rahim Khan urged everyone to work toward the peaceful and prosperous Bangladesh envisioned by leaders like Khaleda Zia.

"May Allah grant her the highest place in Jannah," he added.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN



Lighter vessels ferry cargo from mother ships anchored in the Bay. They transport imported goods from Chattogram to ports across the country.

mother ships, leaving at least 30 large vessels without any unloading support.

Cargo agents usually need three to four lighter vessels to unload one mother ship in a day, but the authorities can now provide only one or none for many ships.

The backlog is already pushing up costs. MV Pacific Jesmin, carrying 58,955 tonnes of raw sugar, arrived at the outer anchorage on December 30. Only 27,000 tonnes had been unloaded by yesterday.

Belayet Hossain, proprietor of the ship's local agent Litmond Shipping, said, "If enough vessels were allocated, the ship could finish unloading in 10-12 days, but now it may

need to stay for another 12 days."

Another vessel under the same agent, MV Ince Kastamon, carrying 55,000 tonnes of wheat imported by Abul Khair Group, arrived on January 7 but received one lighter vessel for unloading only during Tuesday's berthing meeting.

Hossain said the ship may take a month to complete unloading, with demurrage adding over \$20,000 a day to import costs.

BWTCC Convener Shafiq Ahmed said 631 lighter vessels transporting imported cargo from Chattogram are currently at 50 different destinations across the country.

READ MORE ON B3



Bourses gain full power in assessing IPOs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has granted stock exchanges a central role in evaluating companies seeking listing on the country's capital market, a role absent in previous years.

Under the amended Public Offer of Equity Securities Rules, stock exchanges now have full authority to visit company facilities and request additional documentation before issuing recommendations on initial public offerings (IPOs). BSEC spokesperson Abul Kalam said at a press briefing yesterday in Dhaka.

Only companies that receive positive feedback from a stock exchange will be considered for IPO approval after scrutiny by the BSEC from now on.

Companies facing a negative recommendation may appeal directly to the commission, which will make the final decision after hearing all parties, the rules also state.

Under the previous rules, many companies got their IPO approvals from the BSEC, ignoring stock exchange recommendations over the last decade. Most of them are performing poorly in the share market currently.

"The changes do not mean that the BSEC is passing its responsibility to the stock exchange. The commission is incorporating a global practice of allowing stock exchanges to make their own decision on which company can be listed in their board," he added.

The amended rules also address long-standing concerns from companies. For instance, firms now need to submit only five

READ MORE ON B2

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 NouKollan 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 NouKollan



Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of EBL, hands over the project funding cheques to Mohammad Habib Ul Alam, managing director of NouKollan 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 NouKollan 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.

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 Mashiur 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

present.

As part of the partnership, Southeast Bank will offer a comprehensive suite of digital financial solutions to the educational institution.

SoutheastEduFin will cover core administrative and academic functions, including tuition fee management, attendance tracking, grade management, payroll processing and structured communication among teachers, students and parents.

The system will allow tuition fees to be paid through multiple channels, such as the bank's branches and sub-branches, internet banking, mobile applications, mobile financial services and other integrated digital platforms, reducing manual processes and improving payment efficiency.

In addition, the bank will extend its school banking initiative, Taroka, to students of Banani Bidyaniketan School and College.

The programme offers student savings accounts with low initial deposits, no maintenance charges and competitive interest rates, with the aim of encouraging savings habits and improving financial literacy from an early age.

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.



Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director of Southeast Bank, and Md Mashiur 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

2 Agency

3 Head of procuring entity

4 Invitation for

5 Invitation Ref No.

6 Date

Ministry of Home Affairs

Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Inspector General of Police, Bangladesh.

Procurement of Dog

44.01.0000.024.02.002.25 /01 (2025-2026)

14 January 2026

KEY INFORMATION

7 Procurement method

One Stage Two Envelopes Tendering Method (OSTETM)

FUNDING INFORMATION

8 Budget and source of fund

9 Tender publication date

10 Last selling date

11 Closing date and time

12 Opening date and time

13 Name and address of the office

GOB Revenue

15 January 2026

25 February 2026

26 February 2025 at 12.00 hrs

26 February 2025 at 12.30 hrs

Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

Place of selling/receiving/ opening tender document

Transport Section, Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000

14 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

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15 Eligibility of 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

16

Identification of item

Tender security amount in USD or equivalent

Price of tender document (BDT)

Completion time

Package-1

Dog

3,500.00

4,000.00

180 days

Package-2

Horse

3,200.00

4,000.00

180 days

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17 Name of official inviting tender

Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman, BPM-Sheba

18 Designation and address of the official inviting tenderer

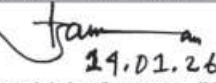
Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000

19 Contact detail of official inviting tender

Phone: +88 02 223384779, E-mail: addldigtrans@police.gov.bd

20 Special Instruction

a No tender will be received after the deadline of submission
b The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all/ any tender or annul the tender process without causing any reason
c The Procuring Entity also reserves the right to increase or decrease the quantity of tender item.
d The bidders must abide by the decision of the HOPE
e The procurement process will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 & PPR-2025


24.01.26
Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman, BPM-Sheba
BP-7705121323
Addl. DIG (Transport)
Bangladesh Police
For Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
Phone: +88 02 223384779

GD-108

Government of Peoples 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

2 Agency

3 Procuring Entity Name

4 Procuring Entity District

5 Invitation For

6 Issued Date

7 Procurement Method

8 Budget and Source of Funds

9 Project/Program Name

10 Tender Package No.

11 Tender Package Name

12 Tender Publication Date

13 Tender Document Last Selling Date

14 Tender Closing Date and Time

15 Tender Opening Date and Time

16 Name and Address of the Office of Selling the Tender Document

17 Name and Address of the Office of Receiving & Opening Tender Document.

18 Pre-Tender Meeting Place, Date and Time

19 Eligibility of Tenderer

20 Brief Description of Goods

21 Price of Tender Document

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Department of Environment

Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division

Dhaka

Computer and accessories and Office equipment

14-01-2026

Open Tendering Method (OTM);
National Competitive Tender (NCT);

Development Budget

Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division

GD-03

Computer and accessories and Office equipment

15/01/2026

26/01/2026 (at office time)

27/01/2026 & 3:00 pm

27/01/2026 & 3:30pm

Room No: 202, 1st Floor, Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

Office of the Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division, 1st Floor, Room-211, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

N/A

As per Tender Documents.

1. Computer and accessories and Office equipment

TK.1000/- (One Thousand) Only [non-refundable]

22

Identification of Tender package

Tender Security Amount (in Taka)

Completion Time

1. GD-3

1st Floor, Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

TK. 70,000/- (aka Seventy thousand) only

30 days

23 Name of Official Inviting Tender

Md. Samsuzzaman Sarker

24 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

25 Address of Official Inviting Tender

Department of Environment, E-16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

26 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

GD-104

Md. Samsuzzaman Sarker
Project Director
Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division
Department of Environment

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

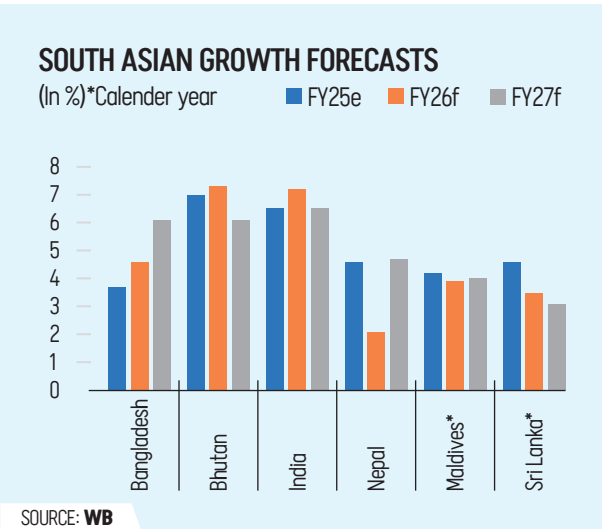
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) will organise a daylong SAFA International Conference 2026, where a number of foreign delegates are expected to join, including the president of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), the apex body of all accountants in the world.

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.



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 bhoori – 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 bhoori 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.

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 investors, 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
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD)
Health Services Division
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, 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 Jungator 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 & opening 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. 475875433(475875044)) (b) Maintenance of Mriddharit- Dr. Hat-Wapda Beri-Dakkhin Nazirpur GPS Road (Mukia Madrasa Beriband - Dakkhin Habib Ullar Bari Road (Ch. 870m-2740m) under Sadar Upazila, District: Noakhali, ID No. 475874093 (c) Construction of RCC Box Culvert on 1x2.5mx2.50 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 (Badrul 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

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
Dhaka South City Corporation
নগর ভবন, ঢাকা

ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৭১৮০-৮১, ৯৫৫৭১৮৪, ৯৫৫৭১৮৬-৮৯, ৯৫৫৮২৫৫-৫৯, ৯৫৫৮৩৫৭-৬০, www.dscc.gov.bd
স্মারকঃ ৪৬.২০.৭.০০০.১২.০০.৫৬.২০২৬

পুনঃ দরপত্র নোটিশ

বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কাজের গতিশীলতা ও মানোন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা প্রাপ্তির লক্ষ্যে নতুন নিবন্ধন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর আওতাধীন এলাকায় নিয়োজিত ০৫টি ওয়ার্ডের (ওয়ার্ড নং- ৪৪, ৬৯, ৭০, ৭২ ও ৭৫) প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য অগ্রাহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত অনুসরণপূর্বক আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ক) প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলীঃ

৯. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান কার্যক্রম অনলাইনে সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নগর ভবন ও আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয় থেকে সরাসরি আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়/বিক্রয় এবং জমা প্রদান করা যাবে না।
১০. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের জন্য ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের চলতি হিসাব নং-২০০০১৭৮৩৯, সোনালী ব্যাংক, নগর ভবন শাখায় ১০,০০০/- (টাকা দশ হাজার মাত্র) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা প্রদান করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
১১. ওয়েবসাইট <https://dscc.gov.bd> হতে নিবন্ধন আবেদনপত্র ও প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলী/TOR (Terms of Reference) ডাউনলোড পূর্বক উল্লিখিত নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী আবেদনপত্র যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে চাহিদাকৃত কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাবের অনুকূলে প্রযোজ্য সকল ডকুমেন্টস দাখিল করতে হবে।
১২. নিবন্ধনের জন্য আর্থিক প্রস্তাবে উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের সমপরিমাণ অর্থ মেয়র/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডারটি (মূলকপি) প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তার দস্তর, নগর ভবন, ঢাদসিক বরাবর জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে পে-অর্ডারটির স্ক্যান কপি অনলাইনে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।
১৩. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ই' এর সাথে কারিগরি প্রস্তাব মূল্যায়ন সংক্রান্ত প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদি সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
১৪. স্বাক্ষরিত আর্থিক প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ঈ' এর সাথে সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের ব্যাংক রশিদ এবং নিবন্ধন মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার জমা প্রদানের রশিদ জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আর্থিক প্রস্তাব গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
১৫. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব পৃথকভাবে সংযুক্ত করে ই-মেইলসমূহে cwmo@dscc.gov.bd, administrator@dscc.gov.bd, ceo@dscc.gov.bd প্রেরণ করতে হবে।
১৬. ইতিমধ্যে যে সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদান করেছেন, তাদের পুনরায় আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদানের প্রয়োজন নেই। এক্ষেত্রে শুধুমাত্র নিবন্ধন ফরম পূরণসহ চাহিত তথ্যাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।

খ) আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের সময় নিম্নে উল্লেখ করা হলোঃ

আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	আবেদনপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়
তারিখঃ ১৫/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ সময়ঃ বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	তারিখঃ ২০/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ সময়ঃ দুপুর ২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ নোটিশে উল্লেখিত সময়ের পরে কোন আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান গ্রহণযোগ্য বিবেচিত হবে না।

মোঃ মাহাবুবুর রহমান তালুকদার
এয়ার কমডোর
প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তা
বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা বিভাগ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
ফোনঃ ০২২২৩৩৫০৩৭৫

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৬৯/২০২৫-২৬

জিডি-১০৯

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.

Haors fill with water during the monsoon, allowing free movement of fish across vast wetlands. In the dry season, the land supports grazing livestock and rice cultivation. But Biswas said pesticide runoff has become a major concern.

"Around 25 percent of pesticides applied in fields are washed away by rainwater into

nearby open water bodies," he said, "with an estimated 15-20 percent remaining as residues."

The impact is especially significant in the haor ecosystem, which supports about 22 percent of the country's livestock and 24 percent of its ducks. Roughly 30 percent of total fish production in the seven haor-dominated districts comes from haor wetlands alone, Biswas said.

"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 Bhangana 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," Ahamed 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 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 \$19 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

world's second-biggest economy grew 6.6 percent in value terms year-on-year in December, compared with a 5.9 percent increase in November. Economists polled by Reuters had expected a 3.0 percent increase.

Imports were up 5.7 percent, after

a 1.9 percent bump the month earlier and also beat a forecast for a 0.9 percent uptick.

"Strong export growth helps to mitigate the weak domestic demand," said Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.



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

"Combined with the booming stock market and stable US-China relations, the government is likely to keep the macro policy stance unchanged at least in Q1."

China's yuan, held steady following the upbeat data even as equity investors welcomed the forecast-beating numbers. The benchmark Shanghai Composite index and blue-chip CSI300 index both rose more than 1 percent in morning deals.

The Asian powerhouse economy's monthly trade surpluses exceeded \$100 billion seven times last year, partially underpinned by a weakened yuan, up from just once in 2024, underscoring that Trump's actions have barely dented China's broader trade with the wider world even if he has curbed US-bound shipments.

Exports to the US slumped 20 percent in dollar terms in 2025, while imports from the world's top economy were down 14.6 percent. Chinese factories managed to make inroads in other markets, with exports to Africa jumping 25.8 percent and those to the ASEAN bloc of Southeast Asian nations up 13.4 percent. EU-bound shipments grew 8.4 percent.

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.