

Call grows for single regulator for LPG sector

Operators juggle 26 licences, causing delays and costs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Industry leaders, energy experts, and policymakers have called for a single, centralised regulatory authority to manage Bangladesh's fast-growing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sector. With LPG consumption expected to more than double by 2030, stakeholders say a unified regulator is crucial to improve efficiency, ensure safety, and support sustainable growth for a sector serving over 1.5 crore households. "Without a single, centralised regulator, the LPG sector's rapid growth will not be sustainable, and Bangladesh's energy security will remain at risk," said M Tamim, vice-chancellor of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), while presenting the keynote at a roundtable on "Regulatory

challenges in the LPG market." The event was organised by the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh in cooperation with Energy and Power Magazine at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka yesterday. Tamim pointed out that LPG operators must obtain up to 26 separate licences and approvals from multiple entities, including the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, the Department of Environment, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, and the Department of Explosives. "This fragmented system causes overlapping inspections, unnecessary delays, and high compliance costs — over Tk 1.5 crore per year for some companies,"

he said, adding that such challenges discourage new entrants and put strain on smaller operators. He proposed consolidating all LPG-related regulatory functions under a single body, possibly under the BERC. Licences could last five to 10 years with annual inspections, and the approval process should be fully digital to streamline operations, improve safety monitoring, and clarify accountability. Jalal Ahmed, chairman of BERC, stressed the importance of urgent regulatory reforms and better coordination to tackle ongoing sector challenges, including supply disruptions. LPG imports fell by 163,000 tonnes in October–December 2025 compared to the previous year, he said, citing international supply issues and a lack of

reliable data as key concerns. "Data gaps remain a serious problem. We now collect information directly from the NBR to ensure accuracy," Ahmed said. "This crisis is a learning moment. We must act quickly to avoid future disruptions," he added, reaffirming BERC's commitment to efficiency, monitoring, and public service. Mohammad Amirul Haque, president of the LPG Operators Association, urged the government to establish a single, effective regulatory authority and allocate dedicated land for LPG infrastructure development. Criticising delays caused by multiple regulatory bodies, he said, "We need clarity. One regulator must be assigned to this industry — not five. Otherwise, investment will stall."

Depositors

FROM PAGE B1 including long waits, crowded branches and fragmented repayments, raise questions about the effectiveness of regulatory enforcement.

Following widespread irregularities and loan scams under the previous government, the interim administration implemented a merger initiative to consolidate five shariah-based banks. The lenders are - First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, and EXIM Bank.

The resulting institution, Sammilito Islami Bank PLC, received Tk 20,000 crore in paid-up capital from the government.

Under the merger plan, depositors of the affected banks began receiving repayments in phases from the start of the new year. However, depositors were never supposed to receive their hard-earned money in such fragmented instalments.

Depositors chose these banks believing they were financially sound, only to

discover through forensic audits that the institutions were in poor condition.

This raises the question: who bears responsibility for the deception suffered by depositors?

The finance adviser has said that actions will be taken against these auditors who portrayed these banks as being in good health despite their poor condition. But timelines and implementation of those actions remain unclear.

In light of losses incurred by the merging banks, the BB, on January 14, instructed the five lenders that deposit balances be recalculated based on their position as of December 28, 2025.

The regulator also announced that depositors will not receive any profit for 2024 and 2025.

BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur yesterday at a press briefing emphasised that the decision aligns with shariah principles, under which no profit is distributed in the event of losses.

Digital dream, paper reality

FROM PAGE B1 The white paper attributes part of this imbalance to what it terms the "Gopalganj factor". Two upazilas in Gopalganj district — Sadar and Kotalipara — ranked among the 10 most targeted areas nationwide.

In Tungipara, inspectors found overlapping infrastructure, with multiple SOF-funded projects installed at the same locations, contrary to the fund's objective of expanding access to unserved areas.

The commission also documented attempts to rename SOF-funded "Smart Classrooms" after political figures, describing such efforts as attempts to politicise publicly financed welfare initiatives.

7 PROJECTS, LITTLE IMPACTS

Between 2018 and 2021, seven major SOF-funded projects were approved, with a combined cost exceeding Tk 2,000 crore. These included fibre-optic backbone expansion by BTCL, satellite-based connectivity through Bangladesh Satellite Company Ltd (BSCL), mobile broadband initiatives, and education digitisation programmes.

Across all seven projects, the commission found no formal assessment of outcomes. "None of the 7 projects reviewed involved an impact study. There was no stakeholder feedback recorded either," the white paper states.

The report detailed project-specific weaknesses. BTCL's fibre-optic initiative aimed to lay more

than 10,000 kilometres of cable, but without effective partnerships with local internet service providers, much of the backbone capacity remained underutilised.

BSCL's VSAT-based connectivity for remote islands was hindered by high operating costs and the absence of trained local technicians to maintain equipment.

An education digitisation project distributed laptops and interactive boards to 650 primary schools, including schools without electricity or trained teachers, while digital content was procured at inflated prices from politically connected vendors, according to the taskforce.

OVERSIGHT FAILURES, PROCUREMENT VIOLATIONS

The white paper identifies governance failures as a central cause of poor outcomes.

The SOF Management Committee, chaired by the post and telecom minister, operated with what the report calls an "exceptionalism" that allowed projects to bypass standard government scrutiny.

Such exceptionalism of SOF projects' governance is also a key reason for their vulnerability in terms of conception, implementation and impact framework, it noted.

Investigators also documented violations of Public Procurement Rules, weak auditing practices, and widespread non-compliance.

In one BSCL project, a major contract was split

equally between two bidders, violating procurement rules that require awarding contracts to the lowest responsive bidder.

In several cases, project documents were prepared within seven working days at the request of the minister, leaving little scope for feasibility analysis or cost-benefit assessment.

Because SOF projects are excluded from the Annual Development Programme, they were not monitored by the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division or audited by the audit directorate.

This structural exclusion, the taskforce argues, allowed mismanagement to persist unchecked.

The report also notes that while major telecom operators comply with SOF contribution requirements, there is widespread default among smaller internet service and international gateway operators.

As a result, the actual fund balance is significantly lower than it would be if all 3,000+ licensed entities were fully compliant.

PROPOSED REFORMS

As per the white paper, the SOF has been characterised by "delayed activation, underuse, and missed development opportunities".

While thousands of crores of taka have been spent, the digital divide remains a chasm for the villagers in Dinajpur and other remote regions who still wait for the connectivity they were promised over a decade ago.

To prevent further misuse, the white paper recommends a restructuring

of the SOF framework.

Proposals include performance-based funding; mandatory political neutrality clauses prohibiting the use of funds for politically branded initiatives or partisan constituencies; compulsory impact studies greater inclusion of private sector instead of funnelling state-owned entities like BTCL; third-party evaluations; allowing watchdogs to verify that the promised internet services are actually delivered; and greater participation by local stakeholders in both implementation and oversight.

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser with executive authority over the post and telecommunication ministry, said the government is aligning the SOF framework with the white paper's recommendations.

A revised SOF management policy, previously drafted but withheld, will now be issued after incorporating the taskforce's guidance. "We have instructed that all recommendations and guidelines given by the white paper committee be accommodated, and that a revised SOF policy be issued accordingly," Taiyeb told The Daily Star.

He added that new inspection mechanisms, including three-stage inspections and third-party physical verification, have already identified problems such as cable theft and battery damage linked to outdated equipment.

Garment exporters

FROM PAGE B1 Inflation in major economies has cooled, and supply chains are stabilising after years of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, which had dampened apparel demand worldwide.

According to exporters, Bangladesh's position in global sourcing has strengthened further due to tariff differences in the US market.

The reciprocal tariff on Bangladesh's garments currently stands at 20 percent, lower than rates imposed on some competitors, including India and China, where duties have climbed close to 50 percent.

Even so, shipments to the US, Bangladesh's largest single country export destination, slowed during the peak months of September to November last year, when orders usually rise ahead of the Christmas season.

Exporters linked the slowdown to a front-loading of shipments earlier in the year.

Between January and April last year, before revised tariff rates took effect, the average duty on Bangladeshi garment exports to the US was around 16.5 percent.

Anticipating higher tariffs later, exporters rushed consignments during that period. Many US retailers then pared

back imports in the second half of the year as inventories piled up.

Tariff uncertainty eased after negotiations with Washington. The reciprocal duty was scaled down to 20 percent, restoring a degree of predictability for buyers and suppliers.

Against this backdrop, apparel manufacturers are upbeat about the 2026 export outlook.

MA Jabbar, managing director of DBL Group, said the formation of an elected government would help rebuild confidence across the supply chain, from factory owners to global retailers and investors.

DBL exported \$506 million worth of garments in 2025 and is targeting about 10 percent growth in 2026, after exports slipped from \$520 million in 2024.

Industry leaders, however, also said that political stability alone will not guarantee a sustained rebound.

Humayun Rashid, chairman of Energypac Fashions Ltd, said persistent challenges in energy supply, port and logistics efficiency, banking sector health and international connectivity continue to weigh on competitiveness.

He added that concerns over Bangladesh's global image also remain an issue for some buyers.

Addressing ease of doing business is critical if the sector is to turn this short-term recovery into long-term growth, Rashid said.

Govt to guarantee

FROM PAGE B1 The board reviewed Boeing's proposal dated November 24, 2025, along with a revised draft agreement submitted on December 20, 2025, before granting policy-level approval on December 30.

Biman has faced a severe fleet shortage in recent years after failing to manage aircraft availability through leasing, disrupting existing routes and delaying the launch of new services.

Aviation analyst and former Biman board member Kazi Wahidul Alam said aircraft purchases usually require a down payment of about 10 percent of the total price, usually arranged through banks.

"Only after the down payment is made and the aircraft purchase agreement is signed does the order become officially confirmed," he said. Recalling Biman's 2007 deal with Boeing, he said the signing process was complex. "Initially, the plan was to sign the agreement in Dhaka. Later, we were required to go to the US Department of Commerce to finalise it," he said.

In November last year, ambassadors and high commissioners from France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Union also urged the government to consider Airbus aircraft for Biman at a joint press conference in Dhaka.

Alam, however, said, "Relying solely on a single manufacturer undermines commercial competitiveness."

Airbus, Europe's largest aerospace company, has urged Biman to assess aircraft purchases based on commercial and technical merit rather than political considerations, amid reports that Bangladesh has agreed to buy Boeing aircraft as part of a trade arrangement with the United States aimed at easing additional tariffs.

Wouter van Wersch, executive vice-president for international at Airbus, told The Daily Star in December last year that Biman's aircraft decision should be based on offers, not politics.

"We want Biman to take the decision based on fact, based on commercial, technical and capacity-building value," he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Ref No. DSHS/e-Tender/Outsourcing/2025-26/61

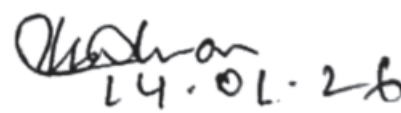
Date: 14/01/2026

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Superintendent, Shariatpur District Sadar Hospital, Shariatpur for the procurement of:


Tender Id	Name goods	Tender/proposal publication date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
1213872	Procurement of Outsourcing for the f.y 2025-2026 at District Sadar Hospital, Shariatpur.	15/01/2026 12:00	29/01/2026 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>), for pursuer. e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.


14.01.26

Dr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman
Superintendent
District Sadar Hospital
Shariatpur

GD-110



ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ওজোপাডিকো)
West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী এর দপ্তর, বিক্রয় ও বিতরণ বিভাগ-১, ১নং শের-এ বাংলা রোড, খুলনা-৯১০০
ফোন: ০২৪৭৭৭২৪৬৬৮, E-mail: wzkhulna@gmail.com

Memo No. 27.22.4751.101.55.001.26.27

Date: 14.01.2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender for the Executive Engineer's Office, Sales and Distribution Division-01, WZPDCL, Khulna is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of following works:


SI	Tender ID	Invitation Reference	Name of Tender
1.	1192486	27.22.4751.101.55.002.25.3091 Date: 06.10.2025	Changing of broken poles, straightening of inclined poles, standardization of non-standard lines & other associated works of 11KV Haji Mohsin & 11KV Customghat Feeder under Sales & Distribution Division-1, WZPDCL, Khulna.

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

To submit e-Tenders, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Tel: 02477-724668 E- mail- wzkhulna@gmail.com


Md. Murshid Alam
Executive Engineer
S&D-1, WZPDCL, Khulna

GD- 116


Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
Rangamati District, Rangamati
E-mail: dphe.rangamati@gmail.com

Memo No. 46.03.84.00.061.26-41

Date: 15/01/2026

Invitation for e-Tender Notice

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementation agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
3	Project/program name	Chattogram Hill Tracts Inclusive and Resilient Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project.
4	e-Tender IDs & Package	1193926 (W-01/RHDC)
5	Description of works	Construction of New Surface Water Intakes, New Water Treatment Plant and 13 Nos. Production Tube Well and Rehabilitation of Existing Intakes and Existing Water Treatment Plant with O & M at Rangamati.
6	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Parag Barua, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Rangamati District, Rangamati. Tel: 0351-63372
7	This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested Firm/Contractor can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	


Parag Barua
Executive Engineer, DPHE
0351-63372

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