

Implement national logistics policy fast: businesses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Businesses, especially exporters and stakeholders in the logistics sector, have urged the authorities to move decisively towards implementing the National Logistics Policy 2025 by laying out a clear execution roadmap.

The appeal was made at a focus group discussion (FGD) on logistics sector challenges and opportunities, organised by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at the Westin Dhaka yesterday.

Key stakeholders across the logistics ecosystem, including representatives from readymade garments, freight forwarding, inland container depots, shipping lines, airlines, and courier services, attended the discussion.

A 1 percent reduction in logistics costs could increase exports by around 7 percent, particularly as Bangladesh approaches graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category, said M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh.

Referring to the Chittagong port labour strike, he noted that logistics disruptions can severely impact the national economy. Logistics infrastructure and port capacity expansion will be crucial to supporting the projected gross domestic product (GDP) of \$760 billion by 2030, he added.

He also identified major implementation gaps in the National Logistics Policy, including government monopolies in rail and air cargo, weak inter-ministerial coordination, and the absence of a central logistics authority.

AmCham Bangladesh President Sved Ershad Ahmed said that while Bangladesh's logistics sector has evolved, it continues to lag behind regional competitors and remains poorly understood domestically.

He added that the global logistics



An expert says a 1 percent reduction in logistics costs could increase exports by around 7 percent.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

landscape is being rapidly reshaped by forces such as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, decarbonisation and fuel transitions, geopolitics, regionalisation, and supply chain resilience, stressing the need to bridge existing knowledge and capacity gaps to better support the country's growing trade and investment needs.

Nusrat Nahid Babi, senior transport specialist for South Asia at the World Bank, highlighted that Bangladesh's logistics reform momentum since 2022 must be reaffirmed by the new

government through clear priorities and high-level consensus.

She outlined a phased reform agenda structured around five thematic pillars: policy and procedural simplification; multimodal logistics infrastructure and connectivity; skills and institutional capacity development; supply chain digitalisation; and investment in logistics.

Md Moinul Huq, country officer at Citibank NA Bangladesh, said there is an urgent need for customs authorities to operationalise provisions of the Customs Act 2023 by clearly defining electronic

document submission and payment modalities.

Mahbubul Anam, managing director of CF Global, stressed the importance of cost rationalisation, capacity expansion, efficient courier services, and robust contingency arrangements to support time-sensitive shipments, particularly as e-commerce driven demand for express logistics continues to grow.

Officials from the US embassy in Dhaka, including Commercial Counsellor Paul Frost and Agricultural Attaché Erin Covert, were also present at the session.

WTO must 'reform or die': talks facilitator

AFP, Geneva

Successfully reforming the WTO is a matter of life and death for the organisation, warns the facilitator of talks on revamping the global trade body.

The World Trade Organization regulates large swathes of global trade but is handicapped by a rule requiring full consensus among members, and a dispute settlement system crippled by the United States. Reform will be at the heart of the WTO's ministerial meeting in Cameroon next month.

The Geneva-based organisation faced structural and geopolitical obstacles long before US President Donald Trump returned to the White House last year, dramatically ratcheting up global trade tensions.

"We need to reform," Norway's ambassador to the WTO Petter Olberg told AFP in a recent interview. "Reform or die."

Olberg said he was preparing a "reform work plan, which we will ask (trade ministers) to endorse" in Yaounde during the March 26-29 meeting.

Many of the WTO's 166 members agree with Olberg on the importance of significantly overhauling the organisation.

"The WTO is at a critical and, in fact, an existential juncture," he warned at the end of January.

The WTO was created in 1995 but is based on a trading system established shortly after the end of World War II.

The need for a revamp has been discussed for years, and was formally

recognised by the organisation's 2022 ministerial conference.

But the discussions have intensified significantly since Trump returned to power, snubbing agreed trade rules and wielding giant tariffs against foes and friends alike.

"Everyone realises there's a sense of urgency that wasn't there before," Olberg said. "This time... we have to do it."

The tariff issue, he stressed, "is not the whole story, but it certainly contributes to this sense of urgency".

"Many, if not all countries are affected by this, small or big."

At the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala pointed out that the trade agreements announced by the Trump administration have not been notified to the WTO, as required to ensure they conform with the organisation's rules.

This has raised concern that the deals could potentially violate the WTO's so-called "most-favoured nation" (MFN) principle, which aims to extend any trade advantage granted to one trading partner to all others, in a bid to avoid discrimination.

The United States itself indicated to the WTO last December that it considers the principle "unsuitable for this era", particularly given "some countries' unwillingness to pursue and uphold fair, market-oriented competition" and "insistence on maintaining economic systems that are fundamentally incompatible with WTO principles".

BYD designing new model for India

AFP, Dubai

China's BYD, the world's top electric car-maker, is preparing a new model for India as it looks to continue its rapid growth overseas, executive vice president Stella Li told AFP on Tuesday.

Engineers at BYD's headquarters in Shenzhen, southern China, are working on the design, she said, although the launch date remains unclear.

"India is a market for us but we need to put more effort," Li said at the World Governments Summit in Dubai.

BYD, which began life as a battery company, sold 2.26 million electric vehicles last year, overtaking Elon Musk's Tesla as the world's top manufacturer.

The Chinese company now plans to "introduce a different model fitted for India", Li said, without giving further details.

"My team is working on that, but there is still some work to do," she said. She denied a report that BYD is planning a car assembly plant in India.

Nvidia nears deal to invest \$20b in OpenAI

REUTERS

Nvidia is nearing a deal to invest roughly \$20 billion in OpenAI as part of its latest funding round, a person familiar with the matter told Reuters on Tuesday.

ChatGPT maker OpenAI is looking to raise up to \$100 billion in its latest funding round, valuing it at about \$830 billion, Reuters had reported last week.

Companies including Amazon and SoftBank Group Corp are racing to forge partnerships with OpenAI, betting that closer ties with the artificial-intelligence startup would give them a competitive edge in the AI race.

The Nvidia-OpenAI deal is not finalised yet, the source said.

Bloomberg News reported earlier in the day that Nvidia was nearing a deal with OpenAI.

Interim govt

FROM PAGE B1

the entire national health budget for the current fiscal year.

Asked what assurance there was that the next government would act on the recommendations, Ahmed said they would leave behind both the funds and the proposals.

"I hope it will be implemented successfully."

Responding to a question on why the government was not issuing a gazette notification immediately in line with the pay commission proposals, he said the process was not straightforward.

"To issue a gazette, you have to clearly mention

Gold climbs back near \$5,100

REUTERS

Gold prices bounced back to hover near \$5,100 on Wednesday, underpinned by safe-haven demand as renewed US-Iran geopolitical tensions added to bullion's appeal a day after it posted its best day in more than 17 years.

Spot gold was up 2.9 percent at \$5,082.94 per ounce, as of 0813 GMT, after surging nearly 6 percent on Tuesday, its biggest daily gain since November 2008. Bullion scaled a record high of \$5,948.82 last Thursday.

US gold futures for April delivery climbed 3.4 percent to \$5,103.50 per ounce.

The US military on Tuesday shot down an Iranian drone that "aggressively" approached the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier in the Arabian Sea, the US military said.

Gold is bouncing back from a low of \$4,403.24 touched on Monday after its biggest two-day sell-off in decades.



"After such a sharp rally, a correction was expected, it was not surprising and with gold coming back up, the fundamentals have not changed much," ANZ analyst Soni Kumari said, adding that the geopolitical and economic backdrop remained mostly unchanged.

Goldman Sachs said on Wednesday that it saw significant upside risk to its \$5,400 year-end forecast for gold on central banks maintaining their recent pace of accumulation alongside private investors stepping up gold ETF purchases.

"Going ahead ... we are expecting the same \$5,600 levels (for gold) by the end of the first half or April-end while prices will continue to rise thereafter and our year-end target is \$6,000/oz," said Jigar Trivedi, a senior research analyst at IndusInd Securities.

Spot silver rose 6.1 percent to \$90.34 an ounce. It touched a record high of \$121.64 on Thursday but fell to a month-low at \$71.33 on Monday having registered a record single-session price wipe-out of 27 percent on Friday.

Bangladesh to sign

FROM PAGE B1

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), to widen its footprint in Asian, African and Latin American markets.

Until now, the country has only signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan in 2020. This EPA with Japan marks its first full-fledged trade deal.

Dhaka and Tokyo had been progressing towards this deal since 2022, when then prime minister Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh was open to negotiating free trade agreements, including with Japan.

Subsequently, a joint study group was formed. Talks gathered pace in July 2023, with both sides signalling their intention to sign the EPA by late 2025 or early 2026, ahead of Bangladesh's LDC graduation.

Momentum picked up after the Advisory Council gave its nod on January 22 this year, following Japan's approval of the draft in December.

Similarly, M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, called the agreement an excellent development.

Last month, Japan also reaffirmed at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)

that it would continue duty-free market access for Bangladesh for three more years, up to 2029.

Regarding the EPA with Japan, analysts say this sends a message about the country's readiness to engage with major economies and trading blocs.

Abdur Razzaque, chairman of local think tank Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), called the deal a positive signal but stressed that its success would depend on execution.

"It is a positive signal for Bangladesh to the foreign investors as it is a testimony that Bangladesh is capable of signing the deal even with Japan," he said, adding that the country should actively attract Japanese investment, especially in export-oriented sectors such as man-made fibre industries.

Brent crude futures were up 15 cents, or 0.2 percent, at \$67.48 per barrel at 0730 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude was up 28 cents, or 0.4 percent, at \$63.49 per barrel.

Both benchmarks rose nearly 2 percent on Tuesday as the military incidents increased fears that a conflict could disrupt oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz or output from Iran.

Oil extends gains

REUTERS, Singapore

Oil prices extended gains on Wednesday after the US shot down an Iranian drone and armed Iranian boats approached a US-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz, rekindling fears of an escalation in tensions between Washington and Tehran.

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Maddhapara Granite Mining Company Limited (MGMCL)

(A Company of Petrobangla)
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Ref: 28.17.0000.000.533.13.0001.19.21-02; Date: 25/01/2026

Date: 29-01-2026

Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Publication date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1	1220043	Hiring the services of three No. Pay loader and Two No. Excavator for two years in order to deliver the stone (Crushed & Boulder) to Truck and Rail wagon within the MGMCL mine area.	29-01-2026 at 8:00pm	22-02-2026, 05:00pm	23-02-2026, 12:00pm	23-02-2026, 12:00pm

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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 05:00pm on 22/02/2026.

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

29-01-2026

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e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concerned that the following International Tender has been published through e-GP portal:

SL	Tender ID	Description of Goods	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Document Last Selling Date & Time	Last Date & Time for Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01.	1193619	Procurement of Different Sizes & Capacities of Rotary Gas Meter (105 Nos).	05.02.2026 10:00	31.03.2026 16:00	01.04.2026 14:00	01.04.2026 15:00	01.04.2026 15:00

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. The interested person/firms/supplier may visit the web site www.eprocure.gov.bd to get details of the tender.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 05:00pm on 22/02/2026. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and also from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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