

Govt stops tobacco cultivation in Halda river basin

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The interim government has completely halted tobacco cultivation this year in Manikchhari upazila of Khagrachhari district in the Halda river basin area.

According to a press release issued yesterday, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock said coordinated efforts by the district and upazila administrations and the Department of Fisheries ensured the cessation of tobacco cultivation this year.

Last year, 11 tobacco farmers in the region cultivated the crop on nearly 20 acres of land, according to official records.

Experts say excessive use of pesticides in farming and tobacco cultivation in the Halda river basin is a major cause of water pollution in the Halda river, the country's only natural carp breeding ground and a fisheries heritage site.

Authorities expressed hope that the halt in tobacco cultivation would have a positive impact on conserving the Halda



FILE PHOTO: JOYANTI DEWAN

Tobacco plants used to grow on farmland in the Gorokhan area of Manikchhari upazila in Khagrachhari, part of the Halda river basin, where cultivation of the crop had raised concerns over water pollution and biodiversity. The government has completely halted tobacco cultivation this year in these areas.

river's fish resources and biodiversity, the release said.

On November 5 last year, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock amended the existing gazette on the Halda river fisheries heritage and issued a notification declaring tobacco cultivation prohibited in the Halda river basin area.

Later, at the Khagrachhari district law and order committee meeting on December 21, 2025, a decision was taken to adopt necessary measures to stop tobacco cultivation and illegal sand extraction in the Halda river basin.

In line with the decision, the Manikchhari upazila fisheries office and the upazila administration contacted tobacco farmers, informed them about the government notification, and advised them not to plant tobacco seedlings.

Tobacco seedlings are usually planted in December and January. The Department of Agricultural Extension is currently encouraging farmers in the area to cultivate alternative crops such as mustard, maize, and vegetables.

BB officials protest delay in autonomy decision

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) officials yesterday held a protest rally on the central bank premises, expressing dissatisfaction over the non-approval of the proposed amendment to the Bangladesh Bank Order during the tenure of the interim government.

The demonstration was organised under the banner of the Bangladesh Bank Officers' Welfare Council, an association representing central bank officials.

At the rally, the officials demanded the resignation of Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed for scrapping the proposal aimed at strengthening the central bank's autonomy.

Speaking at the programme, AKM Masum Billah, president of the organisation, said the amendment proposal to the Bangladesh Bank Order was sent to the finance ministry in early October.

However, it was rejected without following proper procedure. When the current adviser served as governor, he supported the proposal. But recently, he informed the governor through a letter that it was no longer necessary.

"Due to this dual stance, we are demanding his resignation, even if it is for a single day," he said.

BB holds policy rate at 10%

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In the Monetary Policy Statement, the BB reduced the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate, at which commercial banks park excess liquidity with the central bank, by 50 basis points to 7.5 percent.

Amid weak private-sector credit growth, the adjustment is intended to discourage banks from holding funds at the BB and encourage lending to the private sector.

Credit to the private sector fell to a historic low of 6.1 percent in December, while public-sector lending rose to 28.9 percent. However, the projection for private-sector credit growth was at 7.2 percent and public-sector growth at 20.5 percent.

Mansur noted that government borrowing heavily influences the money market, tightening liquidity and keeping interest rates high, which crowds out private-sector lending.

"Total credit has grown, but a large portion has gone to the government rather than the private sector, creating distribution pressure," he said.

In the Monetary Policy Statement, the BB projects public-sector credit growth

to reach 21.6 percent in the second half of FY26, driven by pre-election fiscal spending and post-election administrative expenditures during the government transition.

Besides, the government's budget target of borrowing Tk 1,18,000 crore from the banking system was factored into this projection.

The governor said domestic credit expansion is strong, but private-sector lending could have grown faster if government borrowing were lower.

Mansur said persistent government demand in the money market keeps pressure on overall demand and prevents interest rates from falling rapidly.

He said high rates, though restrictive, have helped stabilise the exchange rate and supported foreign reserve accumulation.

"Earlier, Bangladesh repeatedly failed to meet IMF reserve targets, but since August 2024, all quarterly targets have been achieved or even exceeded, even before receiving IMF funds," Mansur said.

Gross foreign exchange reserves stood at \$34.06 billion yesterday, up

from around \$26 billion a year earlier. Under IMF calculations, reserves were \$29.47 billion according to the BPM6 model.

The policy statement noted that economic activity remained broadly stable, supporting a positive growth outlook. "However, political developments, soft industrial output, persistent inflation, and global headwinds may undermine growth prospects," it added.

Inflation has moderated, but at a slow pace, suggesting expectations are not yet firmly anchored around the target. "This development underscores the need for continued policy tightening, which should cool inflation further by the end of this fiscal year," the statement said.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, told The Daily Star that the policy rate alone cannot curb inflationary pressure, given supply-chain constraints and other factors.

He said that most loans in Bangladesh are corporate, with only 10 percent in retail, so interest rate hikes do not affect

consumers immediately. Private-sector loan demand would not rise sharply even after the election.

Birupaksha Paul, professor of economics at the State University of New York in Cortland, said the 10 percent repo rate remains appropriate but is contributing to cost-push inflation.

"Private credit growth was 6.1 percent in December 2025 and is projected to be 8.5 percent in June 2026. While that part is tightened with the aim of reducing inflation, public-sector credit growth, projected at 21.6 percent, will be the main driver of sustained high inflation."

He noted that the projection is ambitious, given that public-sector credit reached 28.9 percent in December 2025. Additional spending on new pay scales could make reducing it to around 22 percent difficult.

Paul, a former chief economist of BB, added that the economy may gain momentum after the election, but its strength will depend on improvements in law and order.

Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute, said the BB's

cautious stance is justified as inflation remains stubbornly high. The recent rise in prices appears partly driven by electoral dynamics, which boost consumption ahead of national elections.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said contractionary monetary policy is appropriate given persistent inflation, but fiscal policy also needs tightening, and market monitoring should be strengthened.

She added that a prolonged tight stance is unfavourable for investment, but controlling inflation must take priority.

In a reaction, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed concern over the BB's decision to maintain a contractionary stance solely to control inflation.

"The reality, however, tells a different story. Despite prolonged tight monetary conditions, inflation has not been effectively contained, proving that this tool has largely failed while inflicting serious damage on productive economic activities," the chamber said.

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The agreement enables skilled workers, including doctors, nurses, caregivers, and domestic helpers, to access Japanese employment markets, Adviser Bashir Uddin said.

Japanese investors are already establishing language training centres in Bangladesh to prepare workers for these opportunities.

The commerce adviser expressed optimism that students and professionals will be able to access opportunities in the G-7 nation, potentially creating a new avenue for foreign remittances.

The services component of the agreement also tilts in Bangladesh's favour. Bangladesh secured access to 120 Japanese sub-sectors

while opening 98 sub-sectors across 12 sectors to Japanese investment.

The EPA's timing proves crucial as Bangladesh prepares to graduate from LDC status later this year, which typically triggers loss of preferential trade terms. While Japan has separately extended existing LDC benefits for Bangladeshi goods until 2029, the EPA provides a more permanent framework for market access.

The deal represents Bangladesh's first comprehensive bilateral trade agreement with a major developed economy, following a more limited preferential trade arrangement with Bhutan in December 2020. It reflects the government's strategy to secure

preferential access with key trading partners before losing LDC privileges, with similar negotiations underway with other major economies to maintain export competitiveness in the post-LDC era.

The agreement awaits ratification by Japan's parliament, the Diet, which is expected within the next few days as the general election in Japan was held February 8, said the commerce adviser.

The adviser also said seven rounds of negotiation were held to sign the agreement between the two countries. State Minister for Foreign Affairs in Japan HORII Iwao signed the agreement on behalf of Japan while Bashir Uddin signed on behalf of Bangladesh.

Japan EPA to cost Bangladesh

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
Plot -F-4/B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.asset-dte.gov.bd
Memo No: 57.03.0000.051.07.881.25-491 Date: 05 February, 2026

3rd Corrigendum of REQUEST FOR BIDS (Package No: CP-GD-34)

Assignment Title	Last Date of Submission (Updated)	Last Date of Opening (Updated)	Tender Validity Period (Updated)
Supply, installation and commissioning of Full Mission Engine Room Simulator, Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator & High Voltage Simulator for Ship Building and Marine Technology of Institute of Marine Technologies	14:00 hour BST (GMT+6:00), 25 February 2026	14:30 hour BST (GMT+6:00), 25 February 2026	25 July 2026

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours i.e. 09:00 to 17:00 hours (GMT+06:00).

Mir Zahid Hasan
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
ASSET Project
Telephone: 880-02-41024953
E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd

Moody's maintains

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the policy priorities set afterwards.

"While the ready-made garment sector has been resilient to disruptions so far, we expect ongoing political and social unrest to subdue business sentiment."

Inflation is projected to stay elevated at 8.3 percent, constraining the central bank's ability to ease its policy rate, which has been held at 10 percent since October 2024, it said in an outlook on Bangladesh's banking system.

The 12-month average inflation stood at 8.66 percent in January this year, well above the Bangladesh Bank's (BB) target to bring it down to 7 percent. In these circumstances, the central bank has kept its monetary policy hawkish for the rest of the fiscal year, announcing that it would maintain the rate unchanged until next June.

Moody's warned that banks' asset quality and profitability will deteriorate as businesses face the dual challenges of sluggish demand and high costs caused by supply chain disruptions.

The report highlights a sharp deterioration in loan quality as many borrowers continue to face stress amid weak economic conditions.

Bangladesh's non-performing loan (NPL) ratio surged to 35 percent by June 2025, up from 9 percent at the end of 2023, following tighter classification rules.

"Asset quality will deteriorate as economic conditions remain weak," Moody's said, warning of a further build-up of soured loans due to the phased rollout of International Financial Reporting

Standard (IFRS 9) from September this year.

The agency said profitability will decline as NPLs swell.

"Loan-loss provisions will increase significantly across the system in 2026 as existing reserves are insufficient to cover last-growing NPLs," it said.

Both state-owned and private Islamic banks remain undercapitalised, reflecting weak governance and poor underwriting standards.

The outlook, however, said liquidity conditions are relatively stable, supported by deposit growth and remittance inflows.

It notes that the loan-to-deposit ratio fell slightly to 79 percent as of the end of June 2025 from 82 percent a few months ago.

"Financially stronger banks will continue to attract deposits as customers move to safer institutions, while it will take time for weaker ones to regain confidence and rebuild their deposit bases," Moody's said.

It added that the BB injected Tk 52,500 crore in emergency liquidity last June to shore up confidence.

Reserves cross

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remittance inflows and improved reserves to buffer against external shocks.

Bangladesh's gross reserves had crossed \$48 billion in August 2021 for the first time. They later declined due to a sharp spike in imports following the removal of Covid-19 curbs and rising global commodity prices amid the Russia-Ukraine war.

By May 2024, overall dollar holdings had fallen to \$24 billion.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Sirajganj District, Sirajganj
E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd
Memo No. 46.03.8800.061.16.005.23-125 Date: 09.02.2026

Invitation for e-Tender Notice (05/2025-26)

Sl. No.	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
1	Implementing agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
2	Project/program name	Revenue Budget
4	e-Tender IDs	1226073, 1226074, 1226075, 1226077, 1226078, 1226079, 1226080, 1226081, 1226082, 1226083
5	Description of works	Construction of Community Toilet with Running Water Supply & Construction of Twin Pit Latrine at different upazila of Sirajganj District under Rural Sanitation Project.
6	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Name: Md. Rokoujjaman, Executive Engineer, Sirajganj District, Sirajganj. Tel. No. 02-588831838, E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd
7	This is e-GP L1M tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	Name: Md. Rokoujjaman, Executive Engineer, Sirajganj District, Sirajganj. Tel. No.: 02-588831838, E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd

GD-285

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage)
Bangladesh Railway, Kamalapur, Dhaka
www.railwaydhaka.gov.bd
Memo No. BR/DCD/FY26/eGP/Advertisement-1 Date: 8 February 2026

e-GP Tender Notice

e-GP Tender is invited in National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the goods and related services/works and physical services mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package description	Tender closing/opening date & time
1	1224652	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-02 Refilling of fire extinguisher cylinder with necessary repair/replacement of pressure gauge, hose pipe, safety lock, clamp and other accessories as required	23-Feb-2026 11:00:00 hrs
2	1225940	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-46 Procurement of toner-cartridge and ink for printers and photocopy machines	23-Feb-2026 11:00:00 hrs
3	1225943	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-47 Procurement of office stationery items including A4 and Legal size papers, carbon sheets, maintenance registers, log books etc.	23-Feb-2026 11:00:00 hrs
4	1226503	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-12 Procurement of (1) Toilet door hinge 300 Nos; (2) Main door hinge 200 Nos; (3) Corridor hinge = 300 Nos; (4) Hinge for gangway bridge plate = 400 Nos; (5) Hinge for center table 3"x2" = 300 Nos; (6) Bracket for angle cock = 100 Nos; (7) Union parts for air brake vertical pipe 50 Nos; (8) Union parts for Indonesian coaches train pipe = 50 Nos; (9) Air brake vertical pipe (OD: 35 mm, ID: 27mm, Wall thickness: 4 mm) = 80 RFT; (10) Latches turn-over single with bracket SS = 200 Nos.	23-Feb-2026 11:00:00 hrs
5	1226477	BR/DCD/FY26/OTM/GR-19 Procurement of (1) Chlorine granules = 100 kg; (2) Superior quality graphite powder flakes = 25 kg; (3) Train pipe (1.25"x3 mm) = 280 RFT; (4) Vbeo joint complete SS for air brake coach = 100 Nos; (5) SS bracket for main door of Korean MG coach = 200 Nos.; (6) Bolster lifting lock plate = 200 Nos.	23-Feb-2026 11:00:00 hrs

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.
All potential and interested tenderers are requested to register in National e-GP System.

এস (২৬) (১৭৬)

Rasel Alam
18-02-2026
Rasel Alam
Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Carriage)
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka
Email: dmcenwda@railway.gov.bd

GD-292

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Moulvibazar
www.rhd.portal.gov.bd
Memo No. 35.01.5800.446.07.002.26-253 Date: 09-02-2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)-Corrigendum-1

This is to notify all concern that the following tender corrigendum have published through e-GP portal.

Tender ID, Package No. & Date of Publishing	Name of Work	Procurement Method	Last selling date	Corrected Last selling date	Closing and Opening date & time	Corrected Closing and Opening date & time
1218909 PMP-Road-Major-04/Re-Tendered/EE/MRD/OTM/2025-2026 25-01-2026	Periodic Maintenance Programme Providing with DBSWC at Ch. 20+550 (Motigonj) to 25+100, Ch. 26+100 to Ch. 33+350, Ch. 33+850 to Ch. 34+500 & Ch. 35+137 to Ch. 39+000 (Mokambazar), Partial Strengthening Work at Ch. 20+550 to Ch. 20+200, Ch. 21+175 to Ch. 21+375, Ch. 22+200 to Ch. 22+350, Ch. 32+550 to Ch. 32+700, Ch. 36+300 to Ch. 36+360 & Ch. 37+200 to Ch. 37+300 and Sign-Signal, km Post etc. of Mirpur - Sreemongal - Moulvibazar - Sherpur (N-207) Road under Road Division, Moulvibazar During the year 2025-2026.	OTM	11-02-2026, Up to 17:00	18-02-2026, Up to 17:00	12-02-2026, At 12:30	19-02-2026, At 12:30

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 (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Moulvibazar.

Further information's and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk: www.eprocure.gov.bd/)

(Md. Kayzar Hamid)
19-02-2026
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GD-288