



Kumar Sanu Hawlader applies varnish to harmoniums made of segun wood (teak) at his workshop in Andakul village of Nesarabad (Swarupkathi) in Pirojpur recently. The harmoniums are sold to Dhaka traders at wholesale prices ranging from Tk 25,000 to Tk 1 lakh.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

India hosts AI summit

AFP, New Delhi

A global artificial intelligence summit kicked off in New Delhi on Monday with big issues on the agenda, from job disruption to child safety, although some attendees warned the broad focus could make concrete commitments from world leaders less likely.

While frenzied demand for generative AI has turbocharged profits for many tech companies, anxiety is growing over the risks that it poses to society and the environment.

The five-day AI Impact Summit aims to declare a "shared roadmap for global AI governance and collaboration".

It is the fourth annual gathering addressing the problems and opportunities posed by AI, after previous international meetings in Paris, Seoul and Britain's wartime code-breaking hub Bletchley.

Touted as the biggest edition yet, the Indian government is expecting tens of thousands of visitors from across the sector.

That includes 20 national leaders and 45 ministerial-level delegations, who will rub shoulders with tech CEOs including Sam Altman of OpenAI and Google's Sundar Pichai.

"The AI Impact Summit will enrich global discourse on diverse aspects of AI, such as innovation, collaboration, responsible use and more," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on X.

It is "further proof that our country is progressing rapidly in the field of science and technology," and "shows the capability of our country's youth", added Modi, who will inaugurate the event later on Monday.

At the busy conference site, panels and roundtables were held on topics ranging from how AI can make India's treacherous roads safer to how South Asian women are engaging with the technology.

But whether Modi and the likes of France's Emmanuel Macron and Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will take meaningful steps to hold AI giants accountable is in doubt, said Amba Kak, co-executive director of the AI Now Institute.

"Even the much-touted industry voluntary commitments made at these events have largely been narrow 'self regulatory' frameworks that position AI companies to continue to grade their own homework," she told AFP.

The Bletchley gathering in 2023 was called the AI Safety Summit, but the meetings' names have changed as they have grown in size and scope.

At last year's AI Action Summit in Paris, dozens of nations signed a statement calling for efforts to regulate AI tech to make it "open" and "ethical".

The United States did not sign, with Vice President JD Vance warning that "excessive regulation... could kill a transformative sector just as it's taking off".

The Delhi summit has the loose themes of "people, progress, planet" - dubbed three "sutrass". AI safety remains a priority, including the dangers of misinformation such as deepfakes.

US trade deal overshadows

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Citing the section on economic and national security, BRAC Executive Director Asif Saleh, in a Facebook post, said, "This is the most important and controversial part of the agreement, as it raises questions about 'sovereignty'."

The section adds, "The United States shall work with Bangladesh to streamline and enhance defence trade." On the nuclear restriction, Saleh said, "This could create risks for Bangladesh's energy security."

The deal also opens the door for US direct investment to "explore, mine, extract, refine, process, transport, distribute and export critical mineral resources".

In addition, Bangladesh is required to purchase \$3.5 billion worth of American agricultural products. This includes at least 700,000 tonnes of wheat annually for five years, at least \$1.25 billion or 2.6 million tonnes of soy and soy products, and cotton.

Bangladesh shall also need to buy 14 Boeing aircraft initially and \$15 billion worth of liquefied natural gas (LNG) over 15 years, apart from increased purchases of US military equipment and limits on defence equipment purchases from certain countries.

"It appears more like an imposed purchasing obligation than free trade," said Saleh. "Regardless of Bangladesh's actual needs or capacity, it effectively ensures profits for US companies."

Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at local think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said bulk commodities in Bangladesh are usually imported by private sector businesses, not the government.

If traders can source goods more cheaply elsewhere, he asked, why would they buy from the United States?

In that case, Rahman said the government may have to offer incentives to persuade private importers to purchase American products, adding to fiscal pressure.

In an interview with The Daily Star last week, Professor Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), said that Bangladesh could be compelled to buy more expensive goods even when cheaper alternatives are available.

"If we find a cheaper source elsewhere, we may not be able to choose it," he said. "This will put additional pressure on our foreign exchange."

"How are we going to finance aircraft purchases and energy imports? There is a risk of increased reliance on foreign loans," Raihan said.

Anwar ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, said the agreement indicates that Bangladesh should reduce its dependence on China for raw materials.

The deal also contains a provision on Rules of Origin. It says that if the benefits of the agreement accrue substantially to third countries or their nationals, either party may establish Rules of Origin to reflect the intention of the agreement.

Parvez said the third country clause should have been defined more clearly.

The agreement has not been made public, with officials citing a non-disclosure provision. Amid growing concern, the Chief Adviser's

Office said in a statement that it had inserted "an exit clause" into the deal. "There was no scope for any country to terminate the agreement," it added. The statement did not clarify whether Bangladesh exports would again face a 37 percent tariff, up from 19 percent, if the agreement were terminated.

BB defers

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After the session, Arief Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson of BB, told The Daily Star that the agenda was meant only to update board members on the progress of the digital bank initiative.

"There was no issue of approval, as the matter has not yet reached that stage," he added.

Earlier in the day, officials representing the Bangladesh Bank Officers' Welfare Council raised objections against the governor, accusing him of a "hasty" move to grant digital bank licences.

The council held a press conference to protest the decision.

Its leaders said that following the 13th national election on February 12, the process of swearing in newly elected representatives and forming a new government is still underway.

"At this moment, the governor has called an emergency board meeting to issue a digital bank licence. Granting such a licence urgently during a transitional period could raise questions about the transparency and neutrality of the central bank's operations," said Golam Mostafa Sraon, general secretary of the council.

Development

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For Islam, the health shortfall is particularly worrying given Bangladesh's demographic outlook.

He warned, "Within 15 to 20 years, Bangladesh will gradually transition into an ageing society. Without adequate investment in health infrastructure and human resources, fiscal pressure will intensify."

He urged authorities to view health spending through an economic lens, noting that Bangladesh maintains a low ratio of nurses and support staff compared to doctors.

"Expanding this workforce would improve service delivery while generating jobs. Health investment is not just social spending, it is also an economic strategy," he said. However, Islam said

ADP implementation may accelerate under the newly elected political government.

A modest uptick in January offered limited encouragement. The month recorded 3.64 percent implementation of the revised ADP, marginally up from 3.55 percent in January 2024.

"As an elected party, the BNP will have to deliver on its pledges, including job creation, expanding health services, and reducing out-of-pocket costs," Islam said.

Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, concurred that a full-fledged political government could help strengthen ADP spending by accelerating nationwide development activities.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Mathematics, HEAT-ATF W3(a) PIN: 13186
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Date: 16/02/2026

e-Tender Notice (Open Tender Method)

e-Tenderer are invited on the National e-GP Portal for following procurements. Interested tenderers are requested to visit <https://www.eprocure.gov.bd> website for details.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Ref No.	Name of works	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
01	1226170	RU-MATH-ATF-PIN_13186/35-2026	Procurement of laboratory Equipment	26/02/2026 11:00am	26/02/2026 04:30pm
02	1226329	RU-MATH-ATF-PIN_13186/36-2026	Procurement of Electronics Goods for Office and LAB	26/02/2026 11:00am	26/02/2026 04:00pm
03	1226382	RU-MATH-ATF-PIN_13186/41-2026	Procurement of ICT Equipment for LAB	26/02/2026 11:00am	26/02/2026 07:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks tender last selling time.

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

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GD-313

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Ministry of Social Welfare
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website: www.jpuf.gov.bd

Memo no: 41.02.0000.006.00.009.2026.95 Date: 16.02.2026

e-GP Tender Notice

package: (a) JPUF.2025-26.130.2025-08

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

Sl	Retender ID	Name of package	Tender Publication date and time	Last date and time for tender selling	Last date and time for tender security submission	Tender closing date and time
1	1226825	Procurement of food and food contingency of the children with disabilities (Protibondhi Shishu Nibash)	17-Feb-2026 16:15	02-March-2026 12:00	02-March-2026 12:10	02-March-2026 12:15

This is an online e-GP tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hardcopy will be accepted.

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 banks' branches up to date and time mentioned in the notice.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The authority reserves the right to accept any tender to annul the tender process or to reject any or all tenders at any time prior to contact award without assigning any reason thereof.

Sona Mani Chakma
16.02.2026
(Sona Mani Chakma)
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GD-315

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.11.1600.002.31.99.26.15 Dated: 16-02-2026

e-Tender Notice-CE/2025-26/Cantonment/01

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

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Procurement method	Tender document last selling /downloading date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
1	CCC/ Cantonment /25-26/01	Development work inside Chattogram Cantonment: (1) Development of Cantonment main road inside Chattogram Cantonment (2) Development of MR Chowdhury Firing Range Road inside Chattogram Cantonment (3) Construction of Boundary wall at Majhghona & Islampur area inside Chattogram Cantonment	1200091	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	05-Mar-2026 12:00	05-Mar-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. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd>).

CCC-PRD-98/25-26 (5"x4)

Md. Anisur Rahman
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GD-318