Star BUSINESS

BBS conducts country's first labour demand survey

Findings due by June

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is conducting the country's first Labour Demand Survey 2025 to generate demand-side labour data and guide employment, training and skills development policies. The data are now being processed, with findings expected by June.

"We are now processing the data. Once completed, the much-anticipated findings will be unveiled by June," said a senior BBS official involved with the survey.

The survey, conducted in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), covered 2,000 industrial establishments nationwide -- each employing more than 10 workers -- between October and November last year.

For decades, labour market analysis in Bangladesh has focused mainly on supply-side data, including workforce characteristics, employment status and unemployment rates.

However, policymakers and industry leaders have long pointed out the absence of systematic data on employers' actual needs in skills, occupations and workforce planning. The new survey aims to address this data gap.

KEY SECTORS AND SCOPE

The survey will generate detailed statistics on labour demand across seven priority sectors: textiles; ready-made garments (RMG); leather and leather products; pharmaceuticals; accommodation and food services; information and communication technology (ICT); and financial and insurance activities.

The RMG industry, the country's largest export earner, employs millions and plays a key role in industrial growth.

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Iran war could raise Bangladesh's trade costs

Shipping disruptions, cargo rerouting, and rising freight and insurance costs are set to increase business expenses

WAR THREATENS TO PUSH UP TRADE COSTS

AIR CARGO DISRUPTION

| Six Middle East carriers halt cargo carrying from Dhaka airport | Over 1,200 tonnes of garment items stranded there | Exporters shifting to China, Malaysia, Hong Kong routes at higher cost |

ENERGY RISK
90% of Bangladesh's oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz

Closure could disrupt supply, raising production costs

SEA FREIGHT REROUTING
- Bangladesh tranships via Colombo, Singapore, Malaysia
- Europe and US-bound cargoes normally use Suez Canal
- Reroute via Cape of Good Hope adds around 5,000 km
- Increased fuel costs drive up freight rates

BUSINESSES SAY
- Freight, insurance and energy costs rising
- Buyers may seek discounts or cost-sharing

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and
SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh will face higher import and export costs if the US and Israel's war against Iran prolongs, as shipping and airfreight charges have already started to rise, and cargo is being diverted along longer shipping and air routes.

Industry insiders say importing raw materials such as cotton and other factory inputs from the US and Europe might become more expensive, possibly driving up production costs at local mills and factories.

Since the war began on Saturday, at least six international airlines, including Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Air Arabia, have suspended cargo operations from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), according to Kabir Ahmed, former president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association.

He said airlines that are still flying from Dhaka are carrying limited cargo, leaving more than 1,200 tonnes, particularly garments, stranded at the airport.

According to Ahmed, exporters may have to reroute shipments via China, Malaysia, and Hong Kong to reach Europe and the US, which is likely to increase costs.

Bangladesh usually uses Colombo, Singapore, and Port Klang in Malaysia as feeder ports. Smaller vessels carry cargoes from Chattogram to those seaports and feed large READ MORE ON B3

DSE posts worst single-day fall in six years

The drop came following Iran's threat to close the Strait of Hormuz

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), one of the country's two premier bourses, suffered its steepest single-day fall in six years yesterday, as investor panic deepened over conflict in the Middle East following Iran's warning of attacks on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical maritime trade routes.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the DSE, plummeted 209 points, or 3.77 percent, to 5,325 on the day. The last time the index fell harder in a single session was on March 9, 2020, when it plunged 279 points.

The DS30, the blue-chip index, dropped 85 points, or 4 percent, to 2,050. Turnover rose 13 percent to Tk 885 crore. Among traded issues, 31 advanced, 349 declined, and 11 remained unchanged.

The declining trend extended to the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), where the CASPI, the port city bourse's main index, dropped 414 points, or 2.6 percent, to 15,085. At the CSE, 45 stocks rose, 153 fell, and 16 remained unchanged.

"The market tumbled mainly due to panic centring on the Iran conflict," said Kazi Monirul Islam, CEO of Shanta Asset Management. READ MORE ON B3

TOP STOCKS THAT DRAGGED THE MARKET DOWN

COMPANY NAME	CONTRIBUTION TO THE DECLINE (POINTS)
BATBC	22
Robi	15
BRAC Bank	13
Square Pharma	7
Islami Bank	6

SOURCE: **AMARSTOCK**