

Same fields, same labour, never the same pay

FROM PAGE 3
percent in 2000 to 78 percent in 2022 before falling to 56 percent in 2024.

Currently, around 3.08 crore people are engaged in agricultural activities — including fisheries, livestock, and forestry — with women accounting for 1.72 crore of the workforce.

Even as women take on a larger share of farm work, the persistent wage gap continues to undermine their economic empowerment and influence in household decision-making.

Since February, potato harvesting has been in full swing across the northern districts.

Visits to Bogura, Joypurhat, and Gaibandha found thousands of women working alongside men in the fields. Yet the wage gap remains stark.

Female labourers earn Tk 300 to Tk 350 a day for harvesting potatoes, compared to Tk 700-Tk 800 for men.

Male farmers often justify the disparity by arguing that men work longer hours or perform heavier tasks.

Abdul Hamid, 42, a farmer from Rajosh village who hired 15 women and 10 men for harvesting, said, "During Ramadan, women leave by 3:30pm for household chores, while men work from 7:00am until evening."

For women labourers, however, the pay gap feels deeply unfair.

Data from the Gaibandha District

Statistics Office show there are 68,345 female labourers in the district, of whom 63,952 work in agriculture. The average daily wage for women is Tk 350, compared to Tk 500 for men.

In Bogura, 1,56,876 women are employed in agriculture, earning Tk 400 a day, while men earn Tk 600.

The BBS Labour Force Survey 2024 also highlights the disparity: rural women working in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry earn an average monthly income of Tk 8,301, compared with Tk 12,354 for men.

Riktu Prasad, general secretary of the Gaibandha branch of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said while women in formal offices may receive equal pay, rural women often work twice as hard for half the wages.

The relatively low cost of female labour is one reason for the increase in women's participation in agriculture, she added.

"Equal status and wages cannot be ensured without a broader social movement involving all organisations, not just women's rights groups," she said.

In Bogura's rice and major husking mills, many women work alongside men drying and boiling paddy, but still earn significantly less.

Helena Begum, 45, who works at a rice mill in Adamdighi upazila, said she earns Tk 200 a day plus a few kilogrammes of broken rice.

In contrast, Rashidul Islam, a male worker at another mill, said he earns Tk 1,000 a day during peak season and Tk 500 in the off-season.

Layek Ali, president of Bangladesh Auto and Major Husking Mill Owners Association, said the number of women working in husking mills has fallen from around 2,00,000-2,50,000 in the past to 20,000-25,000 due to the rise of automated rice mills.

On wage discrimination, he said women are often hired on a contractual basis, and the absence of a fixed minimum daily wage allows disparities to persist.

"If a daily wage is officially declared, the gap between men and women will narrow," he said.

Sharmin Neelormi, a professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, said, "Men's participation in agriculture has been declining over the years, and although women's overall participation in the sector has also fallen slightly, the trend is different for the 15-29 age group."

"For women in this age band, participation has actually increased." She said the trend raises concerns about the quality of jobs young women are entering.

"This age group is crucial for a country seeking to benefit from its demographic dividend. But if young women continue to move into low-remunerative, low-

skill jobs, the question is, where will the demographic dividend come from?" she said.

Neelormi added that the wage gap between men and women in agriculture has narrowed somewhat in recent years, partly due to increasing mechanisation.

"When machines such as threshers are used, the operator — whether male or female — tends to receive similar pay. As manual labour declines with the adoption of technology, the wage gap gradually narrows," she said.

"However, unskilled labour remains dominant in the sector, which is why the wage gap has not disappeared entirely," she said.

She also cautioned that mechanisation could introduce new inequalities.

"Women generally have less capacity to invest in technology, which means their share in ownership of such assets is likely to remain lower," she added.

In a study, Prof Sadika Haque of agricultural economics at Bangladesh Agricultural University said the increased share of women in the labour force does not necessarily mean gender equality or real empowerment.

Although women have legal land rights, they often cannot exercise control over property due to prevailing social norms and attitudes, she said.

"It is necessary to ensure women's access to and control over resources," she added.

Amend RTI Act before passing ordinance

FROM PAGE 3
We want further consultation so that the amendments we proposed are incorporated," she said.

Shaheen also called for the immediate formation of the Information Commission, saying its prolonged absence had created a serious gap in citizens' access to information.

She added that appointments to the commission must be transparent and based on competence and independence.

Shaheen also said women's access to information remained weak and should be made easier.

Itekhazuzzaman said Bangladesh had made little progress in implementing the RTI law over the past 16 years under an authoritarian system that kept the commission ineffective.

He said the interim government also failed to set a better example and left the commission

uninformed despite having the opportunity to strengthen transparency in governance.

Referring to past appointments, he said many commissioners had spent their professional lives keeping information secret, which undermined the purpose of the institution. "If the leadership of the commission itself is influenced by partisan considerations, it becomes difficult to expect an environment where the right to information can be effectively practised," he said.

He also said the law should be amended to bring the private sector and political parties under its scope.

He added that the status and benefits of commissioners should be fixed by law, with the chief information commissioner equivalent to the Appellate Division and other commissioners equivalent to the High Court Division.

MRDI Executive Director Hasibur Rahman said the Information Commission had remained absent since the July-August political changes, leaving more than 1,000 complaints pending.

He said the amendment ordinance introduced only limited changes, although some provisions strengthened the law. However, several key proposals remained unaddressed. These included adding "note sheet" to the definition of information, reviewing Section 7 of the law, and bringing local government bodies, private entities operating under government contracts or licences, and political parties registered with the Election Commission under the law's scope.

He also proposed introducing a time-bound process for appointing commissioners so that vacant posts in the Information Commission are filled within a specified period.

Replying to a question,

he said the RTI Forum wants a representative nominated by the forum to be included in the search committee for appointing commissioners.

Nagorik Uddyog Chief Executive Zakir Hossain proposed that major government projects hold public hearings every six months so that citizens, journalists and other stakeholders could review progress and raise questions.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies Executive Director Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed said private sector entities receiving government incentives, loans, or other benefits funded by taxpayers should also be brought under the RTI law.

Sujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said the right to information is vital for a democratic state and that political parties should be brought under the law so that citizens can access information about their finances and operations.

Visible on the street, not in policymaking

FROM PAGE 3
women and girls. According to figures he shared, 2,808 incidents of violence were recorded in 2025, including 786 cases of rape or gang rape.

The data also showed that 72 percent of ever-married women have experienced intimate partner violence, while between 63 and 78 percent face online harassment.

With around 51 percent of girls married before the age of 18 and only seven women directly elected to parliament, Tonmoy stressed the urgent need for a citizens' platform where marginalised voices can directly engage in discussions on rights and institutional reform.

Banasree Mitra Neogi, director of rights and governance programmes at MJF, said the country's struggle for independence was fundamentally a fight for rights, voice and dignity.

She urged citizens to move beyond merely asking questions and instead examine whether genuine equity is being achieved.

Emphasising the deeper meaning of rights, she called for greater public awareness of how these

rights are denied in everyday life and insisted that both social and institutional barriers to equality must be challenged.

Dr Ainoon Naher, professor of anthropology at Jahangirnagar University, said the fight for equality cannot be limited to legal provisions or age thresholds alone.

"Child marriage, rape, and discrimination are deeply rooted in patriarchy. Society as a whole must move together to challenge regressive norms," she said.

Echoing this concern, Jinat Ara Haque, chief executive of WE CAN Bangladesh, said girls must be raised to believe their futures extend beyond early marriage.

She stressed that dignity and personal agency should come before social pressure.

Advocate Susmita Chakma, a human rights activist from Rangamati, said child marriage and violence have worsened in many areas over the past two years.

She noted that legal awareness remains weak at the grassroots level, while lengthy and complex legal

procedures in rape cases continue to hinder justice, particularly for indigenous women seeking equal treatment under the law.

Khandaker Jahurul Alam, executive director of CSID, spoke about the discrimination faced by women with disabilities.

He said they are often treated as symbolic figures rather than rights-holders and face exclusion from public spaces as well as vulnerability to harmful practices such as dowry-related abuse and abandonment.

The town hall meeting also served as a civic platform for representatives from Dalit communities,

Settle July Charter

FROM PAGE 4
Monju called for a political compromise to resolve the current crisis.

He noted that Bangladesh's political history shows governments elected with large majorities often face strong public backlash and are forced to step down before completing their terms.

Photographer Shahidul

ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and gender-diverse groups.

Participants described what they termed the "layered realities" of exclusion, citing the humiliation faced by transgender people and the lack of effective legal protection for women in remote areas such as Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

The session concluded with a call from MJF for International Women's Day to move beyond symbolic observance and toward the concrete implementation of laws and meaningful inclusion of women in public decision-making.

Alam said the referendum verdict should be respected in the interest of democracy.

The government should accept the result, he said, warning that ignoring the people's mandate would undermine democratic principles.

The programme was moderated by Fahim Masrur, co-coordinator of the forum.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Finance
Financial Institutions Division
Commercial Bank Branch
(www.fid.gov.bd)



Sammilito Islami Bank PLC.

(A Shariah-Based State-Owned Commercial Bank)

No. 53.00.0000.312.11.0002.25-117

Date: 08-03-2026

Appointment of Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) for Sammilito Islami Bank PLC.

Sammilito Islami Bank PLC Bangladesh's largest and newly constituted state-owned Islamic bank has been established to strengthen financial inclusion, support socio-economic development, and deliver modern Shariah-compliant banking services nationwide. With a focus on good governance, technology adoption, financial stability, and strong Shariah adherence, the Bank seeks a visionary and highly competent leader for the post of **Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO)**.

1. Educational Qualifications

- Postgraduation or Master's degree preferably in Economics, Finance, Accounting, Banking, Management or Business Administration from any recognized university.
- Additional qualifications such as CFA, FCA, CMA, CPA, ACCA, AIBB, and internationally recognized Islamic finance certifications (e.g., CIPA, CSAA) will be considered added advantages.
- No third division/class/equivalent grade at any stage of academic life.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

The MD/CEO shall serve as the chief executive of the institution and will lead the transformation of **Sammilito Islami Bank PLC**. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Strategic & Institutional Leadership

- Formulate and execute the bank's medium and long-term Shariah-based strategic direction.
- Develop a strong institutional structure capable of delivering modern Islamic financial services across all segments.

Operational Oversight & Organizational Integration

- Lead and coordinate all operational wings including corporate, SME, retail, treasury, agricultural, international trade and digital banking.
- Prepare and finalize the full set of Service Regulations, Human Resource Rules, Disciplinary Rules, and Operational Manuals tailored for a fully Shariah-compliant bank.
- Design and implement human resource integration plans, ensuring fair harmonization of grades, pay structure, seniority, and placement for employees absorbed from the merged Islamic banks.
- Oversee merger-related activities, including system integration, core banking harmonization, branch network consolidation or rationalization, documentation migration, asset review and customer communication.
- Ensure effective post-merger stabilization and change-management across the organization.

Shariah Governance & Product Innovation

- Strengthen Shariah governance by ensuring effective functioning of the Shariah Supervisory Board, Shariah audit, research, and compliance.
- Design and introduce innovative, competitive and fully Shariah-compliant banking products, including deposit schemes, investment contracts, treasury instruments and digital Islamic banking solutions.
- Promote staff capacity-building in Islamic banking principles, standards and practices.

Financial Integrity & Risk Management

- Maintain sound asset quality, liquidity and capital adequacy across all business lines.
- Strengthen early-warning systems, recovery of non-performing assets and risk governance frameworks including IT and cybersecurity.
- Ensure transparent, accurate and Shariah-compliant financial reporting.

Regulatory, Government & Stakeholder Relations

- Ensure full compliance with Bangladesh Bank regulations, Government directives and Shariah governance requirements.
- Represent the bank before regulators, development partners, auditors, rating agencies and all relevant stakeholders.

3. Experience Requirements

Candidates must have:

- Minimum 20 (twenty) years of experience in the banking sector including experience as a chief executive officer of a bank or at least 2 (Two) years of Experience in a position immediately below chief executive officer of a bank.
- Substantial expertise in Islamic banking operations, Shariah governance, Islamic accounting, profit-distribution mechanisms and Islamic risk management.
- Significant experience in organizational transformation, digital banking or post-merger integration will be an advantage.
- Additional experience in working with or contributing to recognized international Islamic finance organizations such as IFSB, AAOIFI, ISDB, CIBAFI, IILM or other comparable global or regional Islamic banking bodies.
- Experience in bank Merger & Acquisition, system integration and regulatory coordination will be considered positively.

4. Age Limit

- Minimum: 45 years
- Maximum: 60 years on the date of advertisement.

5. Tenure of Appointment

- Initial contractual appointment for 03 (Three) years.
- Renewal may be considered on satisfactory performance.

6. Integrity & Disqualification Criteria

The candidate must:

- Not be a loan defaulter or involved in financial irregularity, fraud, forgery, regulatory non-compliance or unethical conduct.
- Not have any criminal conviction or unresolved legal dispute with any bank/financial institution.
- Fulfil Bangladesh Bank's Fit & Proper requirements (BRPD Circular No. 05/2024, Circular Letter No. 12/2024 and subsequent circulars).
- Demonstrate strong ethical standards, Islamic values, leadership integrity and competence in AML/CFT and cyber-risk governance.

7. Selection Procedure

- Applications will undergo preliminary screening based on eligibility, academic record, experience and Shariah compliant banking expertise.
- Shortlisted candidates will go through a documentary evaluation and interview following the standards defined in the approved policy.
- Final selection will be made based on combined assessment, background verification and Bangladesh Bank Fit & Proper clearance.

8. Compensation Package

A competitive and performance-based compensation package will be offered in line with the Bank's approved policies for the post of MD/CEO.

9. Application Procedure

Applications in sealed envelopes must be addressed to:

Secretary, Financial Institutions Division, Ministry of Finance, Room No. 326, Bhaban No. 7, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.

The application must include:

- A detailed and updated Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- A cover letter clearly outlining the candidate's suitability for the role including overall work experience, experience in Shariah-compliant banking, explanation of strategic leadership capabilities and adherence to sound risk-management principles along with all necessary supporting documents.
- Attested copies of academic & professional certificates/transcripts.
- Copy of National ID.
- One recent passport-size colour photograph.

A soft copy (PDF) must be emailed to: ds.cbb@fid.gov.bd

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

10. Application Deadline: 25 March 2026 (Before 5:00pm).

08.03.26

Afroza Akter Riba

Deputy Secretary

Financial Institutions Division

Email: ds.cbb@fid.gov.bd

Mobile: 01795-724915

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