

Star BUSINESS



Hormuz crisis strands country's food exports to Middle East

AT A GLANCE

Goods stranded at Chattogram, Sri Lanka ports

Exporters fear mounting losses



Demurrage and depot charges rising

\$40-45m food export at risk

Cash flow and profitability under pressure

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh's processed food exports to key Middle Eastern markets have come to a standstill as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran have halted shipments, leaving containers stranded and exporters fearing mounting financial losses.

Containers loaded with snacks, spices and other food products are either stranded or unable to be shipped. Companies warn that prolonged disruptions could affect cash flow, inventory management and profitability.

Bangladesh exports a wide range of products to the Middle East, industry insiders say, including beverage items, spices, biscuits, puffed rice, chana-chur (Bombay mix), noodles, mustard oil, and other snacks.

The companies' major markets in the region include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Exports of Square Food & Beverage Ltd to the Middle East have been disrupted since the conflict began, leaving several containers stranded and causing financial losses, said Md Parvez Saiful Islam, chief executive officer (CEO) of the company.

"The crisis in the Middle East started on February 28. From March 1, all the containers that we had handed over to freight forwarders for shipment got stuck," Islam told The Daily Star.

According to him, around 11 containers of the company's products are currently unable to be shipped.

"If the containers cannot be shipped, we may eventually have to bring the goods back. Since the products are already packed and loaded, storage and other charges will keep increasing," he said.

The company is now in discussions with shipping lines to determine whether the containers will be shipped or returned.

The inability to fulfil export orders is

the main problem, he said.

Square Food & Beverage exports products such as spices, chana-chur and mustard oil to Middle Eastern markets.

The stranded consignments alone are worth about \$800,000, he added.

Some export shipments of PRAN-RFL Group to Middle Eastern markets have been caught in transit, while others could not be shipped due to uncertainty surrounding maritime routes, said Kamruzzaman Kamal, marketing director of the company.

According to him, some of the company's goods are currently at Chattogram port, while others have already reached a Sri Lankan transhipment port from where they were supposed to move through the Strait towards Gulf markets.

"Our feeder vessels carry the containers to those ports, and from there the cargo is loaded onto mother vessels for onward shipment," Kamal said.



However, shipments moving through that route are now facing uncertainty. "So those goods have not yet moved forward," he added. Kamal cautioned that the disruption could lead to business losses if it continues for long.

Bombay Sweets has also halted exports to its main Middle Eastern markets since tensions first emerged, said Khurshid Ahmad Farhad, general manager of the company.

"We have not been able to export goods worth even a single taka this month," Farhad told The Daily Star.

READ MORE ON B2

War on Iran rattles Bangladesh dollar market

Cautious banks trade greenback at higher rates amid fears of rising import bills and slower remittance inflows

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The US dollar exchange rate against the taka held almost flat through late February before beginning a slow, gradual climb into March.

The shift in the curve comes as taka started to weaken with the beginning of the US-Israel's war against Iran in March and the subsequent conflicts across the Middle East, mainly because cautious banks began trading the greenback among themselves at higher rates.

This latest fall of taka has revived memories of the 2022-23 currency stress.

At that period, heavy import bills, rising global commodity prices amid the Russia-Ukraine war, and slower remittance inflows and export earnings coincided with a rapidly depleting foreign currency reserve.

This time, however, the forex reserve stands at a much more comfortable level and dollar flow to the local market remains almost normal. But banks have shifted into a cautious mode triggered by the war in the Middle East.

The commercial lenders fear a prolonged war could again push up import bills, while a large share of expatriate Bangladeshis in the Gulf might send less money home.

"Many banks have taken a cautious approach due to the uncertainty ahead," said Mati ul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank. "However, the real impact will be understood after about a week."

Yesterday, the weighted average interbank exchange rate stood at Tk 122.69 per dollar, up from Tk 122.58 a day earlier, according to the Bangladesh Bank (BB).

The rate was Tk 122.49 on Monday and Tk 122.43 on Sunday, according to BB data.

A top official of an import-dependent industrial group based in Chattogram told The Daily Star that banks have not yet faced a real shortage of US dollars, but some are "trying to create an artificial crisis".

He said banks are demanding between Tk 122.90 and Tk 123 per dollar when opening letters of credit (LCs). The rate is even higher in the case of forward sales, he added.

A forward dollar sale is a binding contract to sell dollars at a fixed price on a future date, regardless of the market rate at that time.

Yesterday, state-run Sonali Bank quoted Tk 122.75 per dollar for spot selling, while its spot buying rate ranged between Tk 121.68 and Tk 121.80. Private commercial BRAC Bank quoted Tk 122.95 per dollar for selling and Tk 121.95 for buying.

Dhaka Bank quoted Tk 122.99 per dollar for bills for collection selling and Tk 121.50 for buying yesterday. Mercantile Bank offered the dollar at Tk 122.90 for selling and Tk 121.60 for buying.

Mercantile Bank MD Hasan said that since the flow of dollars had been strong for quite some time and the market remained liquid, banks had not worried much about making

payments.

However, they now need to plan ahead because of rising uncertainty, he said, adding that dollar inflows are not evenly distributed across banks, which may prompt some lenders to slightly raise their rates.

"Still, the situation has not become very unstable yet. Conditions could deteriorate if the war continues for long," said Hasan.

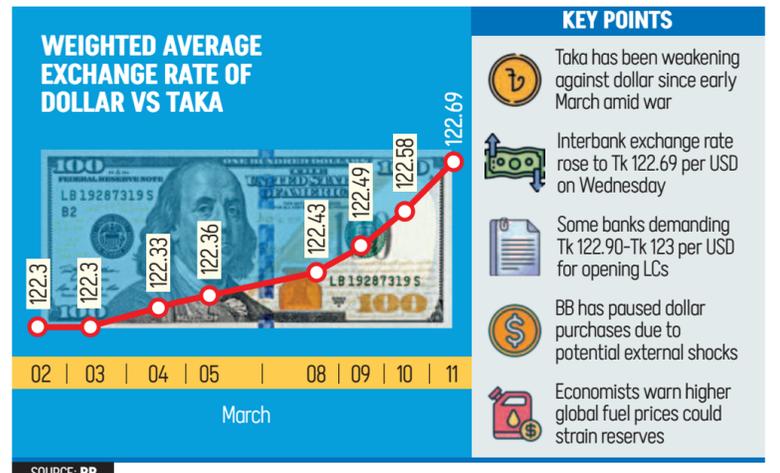
Meanwhile, BB officials said the central bank has stopped intervening in the market,

reserve as tensions in the Middle East could trigger fresh economic shocks.

They said rising global fuel prices linked to the crisis could increase the country's import bill and eventually put pressure on the foreign exchange reserve.

The economists urged the central bank to explore alternative funding sources to settle fuel import payments instead of depending on the reserve.

M Masrur Reaz, chairman and chief



SOURCE: BB

meaning it is no longer supplying dollars from its stocks to support the taka. As a result, the currency has started to weaken.

They also noted that fuel prices in the international market have risen sharply, which could push up import costs and lead to volatility in the foreign exchange market in the coming days.

Considering that potential impact, BB has also stopped purchasing US dollars from the market, they added.

The central bank bought more than \$5 billion from the foreign exchange market in FY26 as of March 2. The purchases helped lift the country's foreign exchange reserve.

Forex reserve stood at \$34 billion as of Sunday, according to BB. However, the reserve stood at \$29.38 billion based on the IMF calculation.

Between FY21 and FY25, BB sold more than \$25 billion from its reserve to meet import payments for fuel, fertilizer and food.

After the war broke out, the new BB governor hinted that the regulator could provide dollar support from the reserve to import fuel if needed, officials said. But leading economists at a meeting last week advised the governor to remain cautious about spending from the

executive officer of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, a private sector economic and investment advisory platform, was among the economists who met the governor.

He told The Daily Star yesterday that the situation could deteriorate sharply if the Middle East war lasts for a month.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fuel prices have already increased significantly, he said, adding that this will push up import costs in the coming days.

"Due to this possibility, the price of the US dollar is also rising. It may increase further in the future because higher import costs will put additional pressure on foreign currency."

Reaz said the current fuel rationing should continue. Besides, the government needs to estimate how much fuel will be required and what the cost will be over the next six months and one year, he said.

Based on that assessment, loans could be sought from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or other multilateral lenders, said the economist. "The borrowed funds should be used to import fuel. In addition, projects that are currently stalled should be restarted quickly so that foreign funding can flow into the country."

Three more LNG cargoes to be bought at double Dec prices

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh will purchase three more cargoes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) on the spot market from South Korean and UK-based companies at more than double the price paid in December, as the government moves to prevent a looming energy crisis.

The cabinet committee on public purchase approved the deal yesterday. The three shipments are expected to arrive between April 5 and April 13.

UK-based TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd will supply one cargo at \$21.58 per MMBtu (Million Metric British Thermal Units), while South Korea-based Posco International Corporation will provide two cargoes at \$20.76 per MMBtu.

The government will spend around Tk 2,660 crore on these deliveries, adding pressure on the fiscal budget.

Earlier, state-run Petrobangla secured two emergency LNG cargoes for March deliveries from the spot market at nearly three times December prices due to supply uncertainties caused by rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

One cargo was purchased from US-based Gunvor at \$28.28 per MMBtu, a 183 percent increase over December rates, while a second shipment from Vitol cost \$23.08 per MMBtu, according to Petrobangla officials.

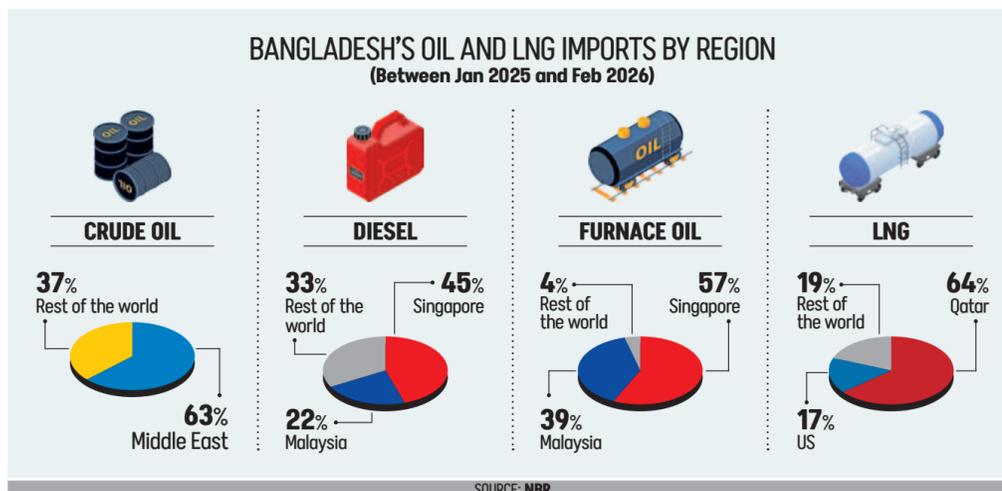
Previously, the government had approved LNG purchases at \$9.99 per MMBtu in December and \$11.97 per MMBtu in July, highlighting how sharply spot-market prices have risen. This situation highlights how vulnerable South Asian markets are to global price swings when shipping routes face disruption.

"We had to pay a steep premium because suppliers were increasingly reluctant to submit bids," a Petrobangla official said on condition of anonymity. "The ongoing Middle East crisis has reduced the number of participants willing to make short-term deliveries to this region."

LNG prices, which had been gradually falling, spiked last week due to the US-Israel war on Iran. Bangladesh had to turn to the spot market after failing to attract bidders for two consecutive days, even at more than double the usual rate.

READ MORE ON B3

How dependent are we on Middle East oil, gas?



SOURCE: NBR

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

It has been 12 days since the US-Israel war on Iran pushed the Middle East into turmoil, raising fears of a global energy crisis. Many countries, including Pakistan, have taken austerity measures, such as introducing a four-day workweek for public employees and announcing holidays for schools beginning March 16.

In Bangladesh, the government has begun rationing fuel supply to avoid a shortage, as the country meets 95 percent of its oil and 30 percent of its gas requirements through imports. Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar are two key sources.

Now, fears are growing over the adequate supply of fuel as Iran has blocked the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil travels, demanding that the US and Israel stop the attack on Iran. Long queues of bikes and cars have been visible at filling stations in Dhaka, for more than a week. There is no sign of them shortening.

This raises the question: What is the stake of the Middle East in the global energy market?

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) says five of the world's top 10 oil producers are from the Gulf region - Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Kuwait. These five countries produced 26.61

million barrels per day (bpd) in 2023, out of total global output of 101.81 million bpd. That means the region accounts for more than one-fourth of daily global oil production.

How much does Bangladesh import from the region?

SAUDI ARABIA, THE UAE MAJOR SUPPLIERS OF CRUDE

Customs data showed that Bangladesh imports crude and refined fuel oil from a range of countries, including Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar in the Middle East, as well as Singapore, Malaysia and India, to meet its annual demand of roughly 70 lakh tonnes.

READ MORE ON B3

War may push up logistics costs for apparel: DCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Export-driven industries in Bangladesh, particularly the readymade garment (RMG) sector, face rising logistics costs, supply chain delays, and shipping risks due to the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) said yesterday.

In a press release, the chamber expressed grave concern, noting that the tension is already causing turbulence in global energy markets, trade routes, and financial systems. As a highly import-dependent economy, Bangladesh is vulnerable to these external shocks.

International oil prices recently surged beyond \$100 per barrel before dropping below \$90, as supply disruptions hit the Middle East.

The DCCI estimated that every \$10 increase in global oil prices could raise Bangladesh's monthly import bill by approximately \$70-\$80 million, further widening the trade deficit.

The conflict has also disrupted major shipping routes, especially the Strait of Hormuz, which handles nearly 20 percent of global oil and gas supply. Prolonged interference here could significantly increase freight rates, insurance premiums, and delivery times for Bangladeshi trade.

Domestically, exports have been declining for the past seven months due to political and economic challenges.

While short-term relief has come with over 10 vessels carrying LNG, LPG, diesel, and other fuels arriving at Chattogram Port recently, the DCCI warned that the situation remains highly unpredictable.

READ MORE ON B3

Prime Bank hosts session on inclusive banking in Savar

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC yesterday organised a session, titled "From Access to Empowerment: Advancing Banking for Persons with Disabilities", in collaboration with Team Inclusion Bangladesh in Savar, Dhaka, as part of its efforts to build a barrier-free and inclusive banking ecosystem.

During the event, chequebooks and debit cards were distributed among visually impaired customers, enabling them to conduct financial transactions independently.

The bank also facilitated instant account opening for individuals with different physical challenges, helping integrate them into the formal financial system.

MM Mahub Hasan, senior vice-president and head of financial inclusion and school banking at Prime Bank PLC, and Md Jahirul Islam, founder and executive director of Team Inclusion Bangladesh, attended the event and appreciated the initiative.

In his address, Hasan said inclusive banking is a responsibility rather than a choice.

"Our initiative to introduce wheelchair friendly cash service counters in newly opened and renovated branches has also been widely appreciated."

"In addition, the Sign Language Video Call Service for



MM Mahub Hasan, senior vice-president and head of financial inclusion and school banking at Prime Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph with participants of the session, hosted by the bank and Team Inclusion Bangladesh in Savar, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

hearing- and speech-impaired customers launched by Prime Bank received a national fintech award last year," he added.

Islam said the bank's inclusive approach — combining financial literacy, technology and accessible infrastructure — sets an important benchmark for the

banking industry.

Among others, Kazi Reshad Mahboob, senior vice-president and head of consumer protection and service quality, and Md Shakhawoat Houssain, head of the Hemayetpur branch, were also present.

Gold edges up

REUTERS

Gold edged higher on Wednesday on safe-haven demand and as a retreat in oil prices calmed inflation worries, reviving expectations for potential Federal Reserve rate cuts this year as investors awaited US CPI data that may offer more cues.

Spot gold was up 0.1 percent at \$5,198.29 per ounce, as of 0641 GMT. US gold futures for April delivery fell 0.7 percent to \$5,206.40.

Oil prices dropped below \$90 per barrel amid reports that the International Energy Agency proposed the largest release of oil reserves in its history to curb surging prices.

"With these (inflation) concerns having eased... hedging and safe-haven attributes (of gold) have once again come to the fore. So, I think from current levels we remain optimistic," said Nikos Kavalis, Singapore managing director of Metals Focus.

The US and Israel pounded Iran with what the Pentagon and the Iranians on the ground called the most intense airstrikes of the war, despite global markets betting that Trump will seek to end the conflict soon.

The war has effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas, stranding tankers for more than a week and forcing producers to halt output as storage fills, driving energy prices soaring.



Syed Mohammad Mosaddeq Billah, chairman of the shariah supervisory committee of the NRBC AI-Amin Islamic Banking Window, inaugurates the bank's new service, titled "Digital Donation Box", at its head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: NRBC BANK

NRBC Bank launches digital donation box

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRBC Bank PLC's AI-Amin Islamic Banking Window has launched a new service, titled "Digital Donation Box", to encourage charity and promote cashless transactions.

Through Bangla QR, any amount of money can be donated from various bank apps and mobile banking apps to the digital donation boxes of mosques, madrasas, orphanages and other charitable organisations.

Syed Mohammad Mosaddeq Billah, chairman of the shariah supervisory committee of the NRBC AI-Amin Islamic Banking Window, inaugurated the service at the bank's head office in Dhaka

recently, according to a press release.

During the event, it was announced that under the Shariah-based AI-Amin Islamic Banking services, NRBC Bank facilitates the opening of accounts for various charitable institutions such as mosques, madrasas, orphanages and other non-profit organisations at its branches.

QR codes are being provided using the account numbers opened in the names of these institutions.

Speaking at the event, Md Touhidul Alam Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank, said the Digital Donation Box will enable people to contribute to charitable causes in an easy, secure and transparent manner.

Eastern Bank provides Tk 46 lakh aid to Friendship

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Eastern Bank PLC (EBL) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Friendship, a non-governmental organisation in Bangladesh, to expand access to essential healthcare and safe drinking water for vulnerable communities across the country.

Under Friendship's Char Surgery Access Programme, the partnership will bring specialist surgical care to isolated river island communities in northern Bangladesh. More than 1,000 surgeries are planned under the initiative, aiming to restore sight, mobility, dignity and quality of life for patients who often have little or no access to specialised medical treatment.

Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of Eastern Bank PLC, and Runa Khan, founder and executive director of Friendship, signed the MoU at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Later, Shaheen handed over a cheque of Tk 46 lakh to Khan, marking the start of the collaboration. Speaking at the event, Shaheen said Friendship plays an instrumental role in humanitarian service through its fleet of floating hospitals.

He added that EBL is pleased to support initiatives that address healthcare gaps while helping communities adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Khan said the partnership combines two



Runa Khan, founder and executive director of Friendship, receives an aid cheque worth Tk 46 lakh from Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of Eastern Bank PLC, at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: EASTERN BANK

urgent priorities for vulnerable communities: access to essential surgical care and safe drinking water.

By addressing both, she said, the initiative will improve health and quality of life while strengthening resilience among communities facing exclusion and climate vulnerability.

Muhammed Shameem Reza, senior director of, legal and chief financial officer of the NGO; Kazi Amdadul Hoque, senior director and head

of strategy, planning and climate action; Rafi Abul Hasnath Siddique, deputy director for health; and Enamul Haque, assistant director partnership development; attended the event.

Ziaul Karim, head of communications and external Affairs of the bank; Md Abdullah Al Mamun, company secretary; Major (retired) Md Abdus Salam, head of administration; and Md Maskur Reza, head of business information systems, among others, were also present.

Citizens Bank signs deal with BREB

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Citizens Bank PLC has recently signed an agreement with the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB).

Under the agreement, Citizens Bank PLC will facilitate the collection of electricity bills for Palli Bidyut Samities operating under the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board through its branches and sub-branches across the country.

Md Mostafizur Rahman, deputy managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, and Md Masud Parvez, director (finance) of the Directorate of Financial Monitoring (northern region) of the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board, signed the agreement at the BREB head office in Nikunja-2, Dhaka, according to a press release.

Alamgir Hossain, managing director of the bank, and Najmus Sayadat, member (finance) of BREB, attended the signing ceremony.

Md Abdul Latif, deputy managing director of the bank, and Md Idris, controller (finance and accounts) of BREB, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Md Masud Parvez, director (finance) of the Directorate of Financial Monitoring (northern region) of the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board, and Md Mostafizur Rahman, deputy managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, exchange signed documents of the agreement at the BREB head office in Nikunja-2, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK

Hormuz crisis

FROM PAGE B1

"We halted shipments on the very first day the tensions started. None of our containers remains stuck because we did not release them from the factory."

However, he said many exporters who had already shipped goods are now facing difficulties at Chattogram port.

"Some containers are stuck at the port. In some cases, shipping lines are charging demurrage. In other cases, goods are being stored at depots and accumulating additional charges," he added.

Farhad said those who shipped goods without calculating the risks are now facing the biggest problems.

Referring to export data from the Export Promotion Bureau, he estimated Bangladesh's processed food exports to the Middle East at \$40 million to \$45 million annually. The entire agriculture sector fetched around \$65.24 million in the last fiscal year.

Farhad also noted the

large value difference between products.

"For example, a container of spices may be worth about \$100,000, while a container of chips may be worth only around \$5,000," he said.

Quamrul Hassan, chief business officer of ACI Consumer Brands, said the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz has effectively halted exports to several Gulf markets.

"If the Strait of Hormuz is closed, it naturally affects markets like Dubai, Qatar and Kuwait. Most shipments to those countries pass through that route," Hassan told The Daily Star.

ACI exports products such as biscuits, puffed rice and flattened rice to the region, which sell well during Ramadan. "Right now, no one is able to send shipments," he said.

Exports to the region are usually based on advance orders placed by importers. "When exports stop, sales stop. And when sales stop, losses increase," Hassan added.

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Memo No: 35.01.5400.442.07.006.26-377 Date: 11-03-2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is being in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Madaripur for the procurement of:

Sl No	Tender ID	Name of work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1.	1240521 e-GP/48/EE/MRD/MP-Major/2025-2026	Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP-Major-Road) Providing Widening, Strengthening flexible Pavement, DBS Base Course, DBS Wearing Course, Protective work & Other ancillary works from Ch. 88+325 (Shimultola) to 94+700 (Amgram) of Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Mawa-Bhanga-Barishal-Patukhali (N-8) National Highway Road under Road Division, Madaripur during the FY 2025-2026.	08-Apr-2026 17:00	09-Apr-2026 14:00	09-Apr-2026 14:00
2.	1240522 e-GP/49/EE/MRD/MP-Major/2025-2026	Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP-Major-Road) Providing Strengthening flexible Pavement, DBS Base Course, DBS Wearing Course, Protective work, U-Drain & Other ancillary works from Ch. 78+150 (Borotola) to Ch. 88+325 (Shimultola) of Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Mawa-Bhanga-Barishal-Patukhali (N-8) National Highway Road under Road Division, Madaripur during the FY 2025-2026.	05-Apr-2026 17:00	06-Apr-2026 17:00	06-Apr-2026 17:00

1. This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP portal.

2. To submit e-Tender registration in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

3. For further information, Please contact e-GP helpdesk. (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Najmul Hasan
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Memo No. e-Tender/PWD/Raj/25-26/2826 Date: 11-03-2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

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

Tender ID No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time
1243100	Remaining construction work of 2nd Floor & 3rd Floor Kalukhali Police Station (Including Civil, Sanitary and Electrification) having 06 Storied Foundation in Rajbari District.	08-04-2026 5:00pm

These are online tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System.

The fee for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.

Further information and guide are available in the National e-GP System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

S.M. Towhidul Islam
S.M. Towhidul Islam
Executive Engineer
Rajbari PWD Division, Rajbari

GD-562

BGMEA wants single-digit interest rates for exporters

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment exporters have urged the central bank governor to bring export loan interest rates down to single digits and provide easier loan conditions for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

They emphasised that if incentive funds are not released promptly and regularly, many factories may soon be forced to shut down, which would negatively impact the labour market, according to a statement from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) issued yesterday.

In a meeting with Md Mostaqur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank (BB), BGMEA leaders said that due to liquidity shortages, many factories are struggling to pay workers' wages and utility bills, including electricity.

Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of BGMEA, led the business delegation. He stated that due to instability in the global economy and various domestic constraints, the country's garment industry is currently going through a difficult period.

The leaders strongly urged the continuation and enhancement of policy support measures, particularly an increase in cash incentives, to help safeguard the industry during this critical period and encourage the

emergence of new entrepreneurs.

They proposed increasing the special cash incentive rate from 0.30 percent to 1 percent, raising the alternative cash incentive rate (in place of bonded warehouse and duty drawback facilities) from 1.5 percent to 2 percent, and increasing the incentive for SMEs from 3 percent to 4 percent.

Additionally, they proposed reducing the interest rate on packing credit (PC) to 7 percent, increasing the Pre-shipment Credit Refinance Scheme from Tk 5,000 crore to Tk 10,000 crore, and extending the tenure of this fund until 2030.

Although many banks have rescheduled loans, they are not providing the necessary working capital, which is hampering both the smooth operation of factories and the timely repayment of loans, they said.

The central bank governor assured that effective measures would be taken on matters within the jurisdiction of the BB, according to the BGMEA statement.

Regarding cash incentives, he firmly stated that no application will remain pending from now on and that, to ease liquidity constraints for exporters, arrangements will be made to disburse monthly cash incentives within the same month.

Banks allowed to offer loans against govt bonds

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has allowed banks to offer loans to clients against Treasury Bonds (T-bonds) held under lien, according to a circular issued yesterday.

A lien is a legal right or claim that a lender has over an asset (the T-bonds) belonging to a borrower.

The move comes after banks expressed interest in offering credit facilities backed by T-bonds, as bonds placed under lien have now been recognised as eligible collateral.

The central bank said that before extending any overdraft or term loan, the relevant T-bonds must be duly marked as "lien" by the lending bank.

Under the directive, lenders may finance up to 75 percent of the bond's face value.

However, the outstanding loan amount must not, under any circumstances, exceed the face value of the bond due to the accumulation of interest or profit, charges, or fees, the BB added.

The regulator further stipulated that the tenure of the loan facility must not exceed the maturity period of the bond. It also prohibited banks from extending any form of financing or facility intended to facilitate the purchase of T-bonds.

RMG exports to emerging markets fall 6% in Jul-Feb



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment exports from Bangladesh to non-traditional markets declined by 6.34 percent year-on-year to \$4.24 billion in the July-February period of the current fiscal year.

Every market other than the European Union (EU), the UK, Canada, and the US is considered non-traditional or emerging for Bangladesh.

The total market share of garment exports to non-traditional markets stood at 16.44 percent during this time, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

In the same period, Bangladesh's total RMG exports reached \$25.8 billion, registering a 3.73 percent year-on-year fall.

The EU remained Bangladesh's largest export destination for RMG, accounting for 49.18 percent of total exports in this category.

Export earnings from the bloc stood at \$12.69 billion, registering a year-on-year decline of 5.49 percent.

The US retained its position as the second-largest market, with RMG exports amounting to \$5.03 billion during the period. This represented 19.50 percent of total RMG exports, though shipments fell by 0.74 percent year-on-year.

Exports to Canada and the UK showed positive momentum. Apparel exports to Canada grew by 3.08 percent in July-February to reach \$871.58 million, representing a 3.38 percent share.

Shipments to the UK slightly increased by 1.22 percent to \$2.97 billion, accounting for an 11.5 percent share.

The knitwear segment recorded a 4.56 percent fall to \$13.68 billion, while woven exports fell by 2.79 percent to \$12.10 billion during the same period.

BB asks bankers to avoid cars, use public transport

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks should take precautionary steps to reduce electricity and fuel consumption in their offices, Bangladesh Bank (BB) has urged, in view of ongoing global geopolitical uncertainties that could disrupt energy supplies.

Through a circular issued yesterday, BB instructed banks to adopt a series of energy-saving measures at their head offices, branches, and sub-branches to ensure efficient use of electricity and fuel.

The directive noted that the current global situation has created risks of disruptions in international fuel supply chains, raising concerns about potential energy shortages. To address the situation and ensure optimal use of

national resources, the government has already taken several austerity measures, it added.

As part of these measures, banks have been asked to limit the use of electrical equipment, including lighting, fans and air conditioners inside their offices. Maximising the use of daylight was encouraged.

The central bank further instructed banks to maintain air conditioner temperatures at no lower than 25 degrees Celsius.

To reduce fuel consumption, banks have been advised to limit the use of vehicles and adopt cost-saving measures in both personal and institutional travel.

Officials have also been encouraged to use public transport or car-sharing where possible.

Three more LNG cargoes

FROM PAGE B1

This comes amid ongoing uncertainty over timely shipments from Qatar, as Gulf shipping remains heavily disrupted. Tehran has threatened to "set fire" to vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Bangladesh meets nearly 30 percent of its gas demand through imported LNG, while domestic output

continues to fall short of the total requirement of about 2,650 mmcf (million cubic feet per day).

The country also spends around \$1 billion annually to import over 6 million tonnes of petroleum, mostly sourced from the Middle East, with more than half of LNG imports in 2025 passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

In other approvals, the government yesterday cleared the purchase of 3.10 lakh litres of rice bran

oil and palm oil. Indonesian bidder Powerhouse General Trading will supply 1.30 lakh litres of palm oil, while local suppliers will provide rice bran oil.

Additionally, the cabinet committee on public purchase approved the buying of 240 megawatts of electricity from a gas-based power plant of the Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh at a cost of Tk 23,880 crore, with a tariff rate of Tk 3.3664 per kilowatt-hour.

War may push

FROM PAGE B1

If the conflict escalates, the chamber predicts a series of macroeconomic challenges, including higher electricity production costs, inflation driven by transport hikes, and potential interruptions in remittance flows from the Middle East.

To mitigate these risks, the DCCI urged the government to build strategic fuel reserves, diversify energy import sources, and maintain close coordination between financial institutions and the business community.

How dependent are we

accounting for 30 percent.

Eastern Refinery Limited processes the imported crude, refining it into 13 petroleum products, including diesel, petrol, octane and jet fuel.

While crude imports remain concentrated among these four countries, the sourcing of refined products shows a different trend.

PETROL, DIESEL, FURNACE OIL. Bangladesh imported 3 lakh tonnes of petrol during the same period -- between January 2025 and March 2026.

Only five percent, or around 36,000 tonnes, came from the Middle Eastern countries Oman and Qatar, while the largest share was sourced from Singapore, which supplied around 1.15 lakh tonnes, accounting for about 38

percent of total petrol imports.

For diesel and furnace oil, Bangladesh relied heavily on Singapore and Malaysia, with no supplies sourced from Middle Eastern countries.

Of the 39.07 lakh tonnes of diesel imported, Singapore provided 17.5 lakh tonnes, or 45 percent, while Malaysia supplied 8.76 lakh tonnes, or 22 percent.

Similarly, furnace oil imports reached 17.43 lakh tonnes, with Singapore accounting for 10.19 lakh tonnes, or 57 percent, and Malaysia contributing 6.81 lakh tonnes, or 39 percent.

Meanwhile, diesel imports from India are rising, increasing from 70,055 tonnes in 2024 to about 122,000 tonnes in 2025. The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) plans to import more

than 100,000 tonnes from India this year.

To facilitate these imports, BPC regularly imports refined products from Numaligarh Refinery Limited. Beyond the rail transport used since 2016, the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline now carries fuel from Numaligarh to Parbatipur in Dinajpur.

LNG AND LPG During the same period, the country imported 25.86 lakh tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Of this, 16.52 lakh tonnes, or 64 percent, came from Qatar.

Additionally, about 4.36 lakh tonnes, or 17 percent, were imported from the United States. The remaining LNG was sourced from Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, Angola, Malaysia, and Australia.

In the case of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), the country was previously heavily dependent on the Middle East, but recently its reliance on the United States has been increasing.

Over the past 14 months, Bangladesh imported 15.87 lakh tonnes of LPG, of which 11.07 lakh tonnes, or 69 percent, came from Middle Eastern countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Oman.

Meanwhile, 3.40 lakh tonnes, or 22 percent, were imported from the United States. However, following the recent trade agreement between the US and the Bangladesh government, dependence on the Middle East has begun to decline.

In the last two months alone, 62 percent of the total 1.73 lakh tonnes of LPG imports came from the United States.



Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
Kotbari, Cumilla
www.bard.gov.bd

No. 47.63.0000.000.033.07.0004.24/528 Date: 11.03.2026

e -Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Goods & Works as stated below:

Sl. No.	Nature of Procurement	Description	Tender ID No.	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Method of Tender
01.	Goods	Supply & Installation of AC for Hostel No 2, 3, 5, 6.	1243128	11-Mar-2026 21:30:00	25-Mar-2026 14:30:00	OTM
02.	Goods	Supply & Installation of Generator, Switch Gear & Main Cable for Hostel.	1243134	11-Mar-2026 21:25:00	25-Mar-2026 14:30:00	OTM
03.	Works	Electric wiring, underground cable & related works for Hostel No 3, 5, 6.	1243137	11-Mar-2026 21:20:00	25-Mar-2026 14:35:00	OTM
04.	Works	Water proofing treatment & related works at FQ: 18-23 (Re-tender)	1243164	11-Mar-2026 21:15:00	25-Mar-2026 14:25:00	OTM

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 Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any Branches of registered Bank within closing date and time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


(Irin Parvin)
 Director (Administration)
 BARD, Kotbari, Cumilla.

GD-571



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Industrial Police-2, Gazipur



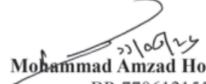
Memo No 568/E. Date 11/03/2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender will be invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for supply of the following goods.

Tender ID No.	Description	Publication date and time	Online tender closing & opening date and time
1243008	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-10 Procurement of fortified Soyabean Oil for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter). FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243165	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-11 Procurement of high quality Lentil for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter). FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243202	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-12 Procurement of fire wood for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter). FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243256	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-13 Procurement of Pilau Rice for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter). FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243309	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-14 Procurement of wheat crushing for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter) FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243364	IP/e-tender/2025/25 GD-15 Procurement of Transportation for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter) FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00
1243416	IP/e-Tender/2025/25 GD-16 Procurement of Loading/Unloading Labour for Ration store IP-2 Gazipur (4th Quarter) FY-2025-2026 (01 Apr/2026 to 31 Jun/2026)	12-Mar-2026 09:00	25-Mar-2026 15:00

This is 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 document form the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited through online to registered bank branch. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Mohammad Amzad Hossain, PPM
 BP-7706121558
 Superintendent of Police
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GD-572



The northern districts produced 20.24 million kilogrammes of processed tea last year. This exceeded the official target by 1.52 million kilogrammes and marked the highest output since tea cultivation began there in 2000.

PHOTO: MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Trump touts US oil refinery deal with India's Reliance

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump on Tuesday said Indian energy giant Reliance Industries was backing a deal to build the first new major oil refinery in the United States in half a century.

Trump made the announcement via his Truth Social platform, saying the company America First Refining would construct the new facility at the Port of Brownsville, Texas.

"This is a historic \$300 billion dollar deal – the biggest in US history," Trump wrote, framing the project as a cornerstone of his energy agenda, but offering no details on the plan.

"Thank you to our partners in India, and their largest privately held Energy Company, Reliance, for this tremendous investment," he said, without specifying the company's commitment.

Reliance is India's biggest privately held conglomerate and its Jamnagar refinery is the world's largest.

The America First Refining website says the company is a project of Element Fuels, which first announced plans in 2024 to build a Brownsville refinery at cost of between \$3-\$4 billion.

The facility would be the first refinery built on the Gulf of Mexico since the 1970s, and the only one designed to process 100 percent American shale oil, the company said.

Oil prices seesaw

REUTERS

Oil prices rebounded on Wednesday as markets doubted whether the International Energy Agency's reported plan for a record release of oil reserves could offset potential supply shocks from the US-Israeli conflict with Iran.

Brent futures traded up 59 cents, or 0.7 percent, at \$88.39 a barrel by 0727 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded 98 cents higher, or 1.2 percent, at \$84.43 a barrel.

Both contracts extended losses in early Asian trade, after plunging more than 11 percent on Tuesday, despite US crude prices leaping 5 at the market's opening.

The IEA's proposed drawdown would exceed the 182 million barrels of oil that IEA member countries put onto the market in two releases in 2022 when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the WSJ said, citing officials familiar with the matter.

In a note to clients, Goldman Sachs analysts said that a stockpile release of that size would offset 12 days of the investment bank's estimated 15.4 million barrel-per-day Gulf exports disruption.

The US and Israel pounded Iran on Tuesday with what the Pentagon and Iranians on the ground called the most intense airstrikes of the war.

The US military also "eliminated" 16 Iranian mine-laying vessels near the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, the US Central Command said, as US President Donald Trump warned any mines laid in the Strait by Iran must be removed immediately.

Some analysts were sceptical about the IEA's proposal and its impact on oil prices.

"Moves like IEA SPR release are not the solution to the crisis. How oil prices will evolve will depend on the duration of the Iran war," said DBS energy sector team lead Suvro Sarkar.

Near-term upside price risks will be "reined in through periodic strategic signalling moves like we have seen over the past couple of days to calm markets down", Sarkar added.

Tea production in the north reaches all-time high

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT,
Thakurgaon

Tea production in five northern districts reached a record high in 2025, accounting for about 21 percent of the country's total output.

In the recently concluded season, the country produced around 94.9 million kilogrammes of tea.

Of that, more than 20 million kilogrammes came from Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat, according to the Bangladesh Tea Board.

Output was not the only plus side. The average auction price of processed tea also rose, reflecting improvements in quality from the plains.

The rise in auction prices also pushed up the value of raw tea leaves, giving farmers a better return.

Growers say that if this momentum continues, tea cultivation in the region could expand further.

According to the Bangladesh Tea Board, the region produced 20.24 million kilogrammes of processed tea last year. This exceeded the official target by 1.52 million kilogrammes and marked the highest output since tea cultivation began

there in 2000.

The previous record was set in 2023, when production reached 17.95 million kilogrammes and accounted for 17 percent of the national total.

Currently, the five northern districts have 12 registered and 18 unregistered large tea gardens, each covering more than 25 acres. There are also 2,225 registered and 6,146 unregistered small gardens with less than 25 acres each.

The cultivation area in 2025 expanded by more than 73 acres year-on-year.

Of the total area, 9,819.73 acres lie in Panchagarh, 1,457 acres in Thakurgaon, 124.82 acres in Lalmonirhat, 130 acres in Dinajpur and 67.92 acres in Nilphamari.

RECOVERING FROM A DECLINE

The area under tea cultivation has fluctuated in recent years. Tea gardens covered 12,132 acres in 2023 but fell to 11,527 acres in 2024 after growers suffered losses due to low prices for raw leaves. Many farmers, unable to bear the losses, uprooted their tea bushes.

The situation improved in 2025. Cultivation expanded again to around 11,600 acres after the tea board took steps to restore confidence among growers in the crop.

Officials began investigating the

earlier decline and found several costly practices. Many growers were applying fertiliser seven or eight times a season instead of the recommended maximum of three. Some factories were also using excessive electricity because of inefficient processing.

These practices drove up production costs for both farmers and factory owners.

Growers were advised to follow proper fertiliser schedules and prune tea bushes regularly, as leaves older than four years reduce the production of fresh shoots.

At the factory level, officials also found that some processors had been skipping the withering stage. This forced machines to run for 17 to 18 hours a day.

After factories resumed proper withering, the same volume of tea could be processed in seven to eight hours, cutting costs and improving quality, officials said.

CONFIDENCE RETURNS WITH HIGHER PRICES

Amir Hossain, an official at the Tea Board regional office in Panchagarh, said tea from the district fetched an average auction price of Tk 242 per kilogramme in 2025, up from Tk 162 in 2024.

Raw leaf prices also climbed. In 2024, the district tea leaf price fixation

committee set the rate at Tk 18 per kilogramme, but it later dropped to between Tk 8 and Tk 10 during the year.

In 2025, although the official price remained Tk 18, growers were able to sell leaves for as much as Tk 38 per kilogramme as demand strengthened.

Encouraged by higher auction prices and lower production costs, factory owners raised the purchase rate for raw leaves. This helped restore growers' confidence in tea cultivation.

To support the growing industry, the country's third tea auction centre opened in Panchagarh in September 2023, operating on an online platform. So far, 52 tea processing factories have received approval, including 30 in Panchagarh and one in Thakurgaon.

Humayun Khaled, a small grower from Roseya village at Atwari upazila of Panchagarh, cultivates tea on 1.5 acres. He said he earned a profit of Tk 2 lakh in the season that has just ended after suffering losses for three consecutive years.

"Interestingly, I did not take proper care of the field out of frustration. Now that the sector is showing signs of recovery, I will nurture the plants properly and hope the same plot will bring a profit of around Tk 4-5 lakh a year," he said.

How the broadcasting industry can generate Tk 5,000cr for NBR



TARIQ ALAM

Bangladesh is one of South Asia's largest television-consuming markets, yet its broadcasting and digital content distribution industry remains structurally underdeveloped and weakly monetised, depriving the state of an estimated Tk 5,000 crore in annual revenue.

In many parts of the market, foreign television channels are carried without regulatory or commercial authorisation, subscribers are under-declared, unlicensed OTT and internet platforms distribute live channels and illegal internet-enabled boxes flood the market.

The result is systemic revenue leakage across the broadcasting value chain, distorted competition within the industry and significant lost revenue for the National Board of Revenue.

At the root of the problem are longstanding failures in traceability, commercial discipline and enforcement at the content distribution layer.

A significant portion of the cable television ecosystem still operates through informal and non-digitised subscription collection practices with limited subscriber count traceability,

enabling chronic under-declaration of subscribers and revenues.

Despite its formal role, the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh has been unable to ensure consistent compliance, transparent subscriber reporting or effective market discipline among its members.

The lack of transparency has made effective auditing, commercial settlement with broadcasters and tax compliance extremely difficult, undermining both the sustainability of the broadcasting sector – particularly for compliant operators – and public revenue collection.

At the same time, a growing number of unlicensed OTT applications and internet service provider (ISP) platforms have in recent years streamed full linear local and foreign television channels and live programmes in clear violation of the licensing framework governing broadcast distribution.

This has amounted to large-scale digital piracy that has eroded monetisation and distorted fair business competition. Yet the legal position has never been ambiguous.

The Cable Television Network Operation Act, 2006 restricts the distribution of linear channels to licensed feed, cable and direct-to-home (DTH) operators. The failure has not been legislative; it has been the lack of enforcement of existing law.

Globally, the broadcasting industry is evolving into a hybrid ecosystem where cable, DTH and internet-based platforms operate together to deliver content to viewers.

OTT services are an important part of this transformation and are increasingly used by licensed broadcasters and distribution operators worldwide. In many mature markets, Pay-TV growth has slowed as

digital distribution expands.

Bangladesh, however, presents a very different dynamic. With more than 90 per cent of cable distribution still non-digitised, the market remains largely informal.

Proper digitisation and enforcement could therefore unlock Bangladesh as the fastest-growing Pay-TV market in the world.

The challenge, therefore, is not technological innovation, but

framework could transform the sector into a regulated, investable industry that benefit viewers, broadcasters, operators and the state.

At the same time, several reforms are essential.

First, any service that provides linear television channels or live programmes to the public, whether by cable, satellite or the internet, is performing a broadcasting function and must be licensed by the information and

their services across internet-based platforms as part of their authorised distribution network. Digital access to content will continue to expand, but within the established licensing framework.

Third, carriage of foreign pay channels without commercial authorisation must be treated as what it is: unauthorised distribution and commercial piracy.

Collecting subscription fees for channels without broadcaster consent is not a commercial dispute – it is piracy. Enforcing this principle would stabilise broadcaster revenues and restore commercial discipline to the market.

Fourth, the distribution of linear channels, live programmes and associated media rights should occur exclusively through entities licensed by the MoIB.

Allowing unlicensed entities to act as content traders or de facto distributors has distorted the domestic broadcasting market and weakened regulatory coherence.

A clear licensing boundary does not restrict legitimate rights ownership; it ensures that distribution occurs within a transparent and accountable legal framework.

Fifth, enforcement must move upstream to the point of entry of unlawful activities.

Blocking the IP feeds of unauthorised OTT and ISP platforms distributing linear channels, alongside stronger customs controls on the import of internet-enabled set-top boxes configured with piracy applications – including the blacklisting of non-compliant importers – would significantly strengthen upstream enforcement.

In addition, internet-enabled set-top boxes should be classified as



ensuring that identical distribution activities – regardless of technology – operate within the same legal and commercial framework.

The draft Broadcasting Ordinance, 2026 expected to be enacted as the Broadcasting Act, 2026, provides an important opportunity to address these structural weaknesses.

If strengthened and implemented alongside the Cable Television Network Operation Act, 2006 and the Bangladesh Cable Television Network Operation and Licensing Rules, 2010 (as amended in 2023), this

broadcasting ministry (MoIB).

Enforcing this existing legal framework would close the regulatory gap that has allowed unlicensed OTT and ISP platforms to openly distribute linear channels outside the intended existing structure.

Second, cable digitisation must be mandated within clear timelines.

Addressable digital systems are essential for subscriber transparency, tax compliance and effective regulatory oversight.

As viewing habits evolve, MoIB licensed service providers may deliver

broadcasting or telecommunication equipment for licensing and customs purposes and require appropriate approval from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

These structural reforms must operate alongside the strong punitive powers already contemplated in the draft Broadcasting Ordinance/Act, 2026, including licence suspension, financial penalties and seizure of illegal equipment.

If implemented without dilution, this framework could underpin a Tk 20,000 crore formal Pay-TV and regulated digital broadcasting industry, delivering more than Tk 5,000 crore annually to the NBR through VAT, income tax, customs duties and associated fiscal flows.

It would also increase satellite utilisation and strengthen revenues for the Bangladesh Satellite Company while supporting the role of the BTRC in addressing internet-based piracy.

Importantly, this revenue uplift does not depend on new taxes or higher consumer prices; it depends on formalisation, transparency and enforcement of existing law supported by the strengthened framework.

Formalisation would improve content and service quality, strengthen consumer protection, attract foreign investment, promote fair competition and create sustainable employment across the media value chain.

Bangladesh does not lack viewers, content or technology. What it lacks is a fully equipped legal framework and decisive, coordinated enforcement. The opportunity is clear and the time to act is now.

The author is a strategic consultant across technology, media and infrastructure industries