

Dhaka to showcase South Asia's pharma strength

Exhibition begins on March 29

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka is set to host one of South Asia's largest pharmaceutical manufacturing exhibitions as the 17th Asia Pharma Expo 2026 & Asia Lab Expo 2026 opens at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal from March 29 to 31.

Organised by the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), the three-day event continues a 23-year legacy of promoting innovation, collaboration, and industrial advancement in the country's fast-growing pharmaceutical sector, according to a press release.

More than 400 companies from over 20 countries are expected to participate, showcasing technologies in pharmaceutical

processing and packaging, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and excipients, laboratory and analytical instruments, cleanroom and HVAC systems, water management, and turnkey project solutions.

Following the inauguration, the exhibition will remain open to trade visitors throughout the three days, offering opportunities for sourcing, networking, technology assessment, and business expansion.

The organisers expect this year's edition to build on the momentum of the 2025 expo, which drew around 14,500 trade visitors.

The upcoming event aims to deepen international engagement and facilitate technology transfer within Bangladesh's expanding pharmaceutical manufacturing ecosystem.

Since the launch in 2003, Asia Pharma Expo and Asia Lab Expo have positioned themselves as dedicated platforms covering the full pharmaceutical manufacturing supply chain.

The exhibitions bring together entrepreneurs, researchers, and corporate decision-makers to explore advancements in machinery, raw materials, packaging, and laboratory technologies.

Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry has emerged as a key contributor to the national economy, meeting about 98 percent of domestic demand and exporting medicines to 157 countries, including the US, the UK, Germany, and Canada.

Valued at more than \$3.5 billion, the sector is projected to exceed \$6 billion by 2026, with an annual growth rate of 15 to 18 percent.

Nagad pays Tk 13.82cr to Postal Department under revenue deal

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Nagad Limited has disbursed Tk 13.82 crore to the Bangladesh Post Office as part of a revenue-sharing agreement, representing the postal authority's share of earnings between January 2024 and June 2025.

Afzal Ahmed, chief financial officer of Nagad Limited, handed over the cheque to Kazi Asadul Islam, director general of the Department of Posts, at Dak Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Nagad bears all operational and technological investment costs, while the Department of Posts receives 51 percent of the revenue without making any financial contribution. Nagad retains the remaining 49 percent.

Since its launch in 2019, Nagad has shared Tk 14.61 crore with the Post Office

at different times.

Islam said the platform has boosted competition in the sector and encouraged cashless transactions, contributing to the growth of the financial services industry.

He added that the Post Office currently receives around Tk 13-14 crore annually, which could rise significantly in the future.

Md Motasem Billah, administrator of Nagad, said the platform has promoted financial inclusion and continues to support government programmes and digital transactions across the country.

Among others, SM Haroonur Rashid, additional director general of the Department of Posts; Md Nahim Uddin, associate administrator; and Md Samsul Islam, chief corporate affairs officer of the MFS provider, along with senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Dollar regains ground

REUTERS, London

The dollar regained some ground on Tuesday as investors remained sceptical of a swift resolution to the war in the Middle East, even though US President Donald Trump delayed the bombing of Iranian power stations and energy infrastructure.

Trump on Monday said that the US and Iran had held "very good and productive" conversations about a "complete and total resolution of hostilities in the Middle East". Iran denied it had engaged in any direct negotiations.

Trump's comments were "giving a breather to volatility at least, but it's difficult to see that this is going to trigger a risk-on trend", said Rodrigo Catril, currency strategist at National Australia Bank.

Gold prices steady

REUTERS

Gold prices steadied on Tuesday after falling nearly 2 percent earlier in the session, as investors weighed conflicting signals on a potential de-escalation in the US-Israeli war on Iran, and its impact on the outlook for inflation and interest rates.

Spot gold was up 0.1 percent at \$4,411.28 per ounce as of 11:04 GMT, after falling to \$4,097.99 per ounce in the previous session, its lowest since November 24.

US gold futures for April delivery added 0.1 percent to \$4,412.70.

SOME STABILITY FOR NOW

"The market is in a wait-and-see position. Considering that oil prices are a bit lower, this is reducing these rate hike expectations somehow and that's giving some stability to the gold price now," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo.

International Brent crude prices plunged 13 percent on Monday after Trump ordered a five-day delay to attacks on Iran's power plants, but traded moderately higher on Tuesday as Iran denied it had talks with the United States to end the war in the Gulf.

The rise in energy prices caused by the war has increased inflation concerns and made higher interest rates globally more likely. While gold is considered an inflation hedge, high interest rates reduce the non-



A shop attendant displays pairs of gold bracelets for Chinese weddings at a store in Hong Kong, China. PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE

yielding asset's appeal, and the metal has fallen around 18 percent since the war began.

Iran launched waves of missiles at Israel on Tuesday, the Israeli military said.

San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank President Mary Daly said on Monday that unless the Iran conflict is resolved quickly and the Fed can "look through" a temporary increase in oil prices, it is unclear what the central bank's next move on interest rates will need to be.

However, analysts say there are

broader factors that should still support gold prices this year.

"Structural drivers for the gold rally over the recent years, debt issues, political pressure on the Fed to cut rates, high inflation, low interest rates, and a weaker dollar, these factors are still there. Nothing has changed on that side," Staunovo added.

Elsewhere, spot silver rose 0.9 percent to \$69.77 per ounce. Spot platinum added 1.3 percent to \$1,906.80 and palladium lost 1 percent to \$1,419.25.

Trade deals, LDC deferment top agenda

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Ministers from across the world will attend the conference to discuss challenges facing the multilateral trading system and decide on the WTO's future work. The conference will be chaired by Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, Cameroon's minister of trade.

The opening session begins at 10am tomorrow with welcome remarks by the chair, the WTO director-general, and guests, including heads of state or government. This will be followed by a ministerial breakout session covering WTO foundational issues.

Friday's breakout sessions will focus on WTO reform, with each session facilitated by a minister. A plenary session on WTO reform will be held at the end of the day.

Saturday will begin with an update on dispute settlement reform, followed by ministerial sessions on fisheries subsidies, incorporation of the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, the e-commerce work programme and moratorium, agriculture, and development, including LDC issues.

The final day will begin with a heads of delegation meeting at ministerial level in preparation for the closing session, scheduled for midday.

Most listed firms pay

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Exchange (DSE) shows that the benchmark index, DSEX, fell by about 13 percent during the last fiscal year.

The number of beneficiary owner (BO) accounts also dropped by 5 percent to 16.67 lakh, according to the Central Depository Bangladesh Limited (CDBL).

Despite overall weak performance, some companies continue to perform strongly and provide handsome dividends. Fifteen companies declared dividends of more than 50 percent, most of them following good corporate governance and efficient management.

Among the top dividend payers, Meghna Petroleum Limited announced a 200 percent dividend,

Jamuna Oil Company Limited 180 percent, Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC 175 percent, and Padma Oil Company Limited 160 percent. Square Pharmaceuticals PLC provided a 120 percent dividend, while Eastern Cables Limited and Eastern Lubricants Blenders Limited each declared 80 percent.

Other high-paying companies include United Power Generation & Distribution Company Limited at 65 percent, IBN Sina Pharmaceutical Industry PLC 64 percent, Renata PLC 55 percent, Mobil Jamuna Lubricants Limited 52 percent, Kohinoor Chemical Company (Bangladesh) Limited 50 percent, BSRM Limited 50 percent, BSRM Steels Limited 50 percent, and Runner Automobiles PLC 55 percent.

Bangladesh faces

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International Energy Agency (IEA) data shows that renewables' share of the energy mix has stagnated at around 2 percent between 2020 and 2023, with little increase in 2024.

According to the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), just 1,446.3 MW of capacity was added between December 2008 and December 2025.

Dhaka, meanwhile, is advancing 41 proposed new LNG power plants at an estimated cost of \$50 billion. This would add 35 GW of capacity, tripling current capacity, and would be largely reliant on imported LNG.

"The funds spent absorbing volatile prices are a missed opportunity for Bangladesh to finance renewable energy, which would insulate the country from future crises," the ZCA report argued.

Policy interventions could provide immediate relief. IEEFA analysis suggests that cutting import duties on solar panels and inverters could unlock crucial rooftop projects.

"A single 1 MW rooftop plant could save around \$180,000 in imported fuel costs each year and insulate Bangladesh from a cycle of future fossil fuel price shocks," the IEEFA said.

Eurozone business activity slows amid Middle East war

AFP, Brussels

Business activity in the eurozone slowed in March after the war in the Middle East drove energy prices higher and disrupted global supply chains, a closely watched survey showed Tuesday.

The HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) published by S&P Global, an important gauge of the overall health of the economy, registered a significantly lower figure of 50.5 this month, down from 51.9 in February.

A reading above 50 indicates growth, while a figure below 50 shows contraction.

"The flash Eurozone PMI is ringing stagflation alarm bells as the war in the Middle East drives prices sharply higher while stifling growth," Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said.

"Firms' costs are rising at the fastest rate for over three years amid the surge in energy prices and choking of supply chains resulting from the war," he added.

The European Union has also warned of the risk of stagflation - a troublesome blend of high inflation and anaemic growth.

Energy prices have soared since the United States and Israel's war against Iran triggered Tehran's retaliation that disrupted oil deliveries through the Strait of Hormuz.

The key survey also found manufacturers reporting the "most marked lengthening of suppliers' delivery times in over three-and-a-half years".

Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.
(A Company of Petrobangla)
(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)

গ্যাস ব্যবহারে সশ্রদ্ধা হোন এক সময়মত গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন

বিনা কারণে গ্যাসের ফ্লা জ্বালিয়ে রাখা আর বিপদকে ডাকা একই বিষয়

Ref Ref.No: 28.16.9100.097.07.002.26/238 Date: 24-03-2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have published through National e-GP portal: <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>

SL. No.	Tender ID, Package No & Date of Publishing	Name of the Goods	Tender Last Selling and Closing Date & Time
01.	Tender ID : 1240169 Reference No : 28.16.9100.097.07.002.26/01 Date of Publication : 24 March, 2026	Procurement of Laptop, Desktop Computer and Computer Accessories	Tender Document Last Selling Date & Time : 06 April 2026; 15:00 Tender Closing Date & Time: 07 April 2026; 15:00 Tender Opening Date & Time: 07 April 2026; 15:00

The interested Tenderer may Visit the web site <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> to get the detailed tender notice and to purchase the tender document.
This is an OTM 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.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-Gp System portal/e-GP help desk: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd

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GD-646

Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation Project
Sub-project Title: Quality Enhancement of Undergraduate and Graduate
Program: Improvement of Teaching-Learning at Undergraduate and Graduate courses of the Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology. (PIN: 12004)
Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology
University of Dhaka
44-50, Hazaribagh, Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh

Ref. No. DU/12004/G-2 Date: 24.03.2026

Re-Tender Notice

Re-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

Re-Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
1211543	DU/12004/G-2	Procurement of ICT equipment, Teaching and Learning Materials for office, classrooms and laboratories	07/04/2026 14:00	07/04/2026 16:00	07/04/2026 16:00

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The fees for downloading the Re-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman
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And
Director, Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology
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