



Middle East conflict disrupting garment production

Says BGMEA president

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The ongoing Middle East conflict is severely disrupting production in the garment sector due to energy shortages, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Mahmud Hasan Khan said yesterday.

He made the statement at a meeting with Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir at the minister's office in Dhaka, where he led a BGMEA business delegation.

Khan said the sector is facing a crisis due to global economic instability, the impact of the Middle East conflict, and severe gas and electricity shortages in the country, according to a BGMEA statement after the meeting.

He also said rising raw material prices and higher production costs have further worsened the situation.

In such a difficult time, strong policy support from the government and a business-friendly environment are essential to stay competitive in the international market, he added.

Khan also spoke about the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC), saying it was formed mainly to address future industry challenges, including monitoring building, fire, and electrical safety standards.

However, he said that social compliance issues such as wages and trade unions are not within its core responsibility.

Khan added that expanding its role into these areas would create extra administrative and financial burdens on the industry, which is not desirable.

He also stressed that any decision in this regard must be made in line with stakeholders' views and national laws, the statement read.

During the meeting, the BGMEA chief called for an amendment to the current import policy to simplify the import of raw materials on a free of cost (FOC) basis.

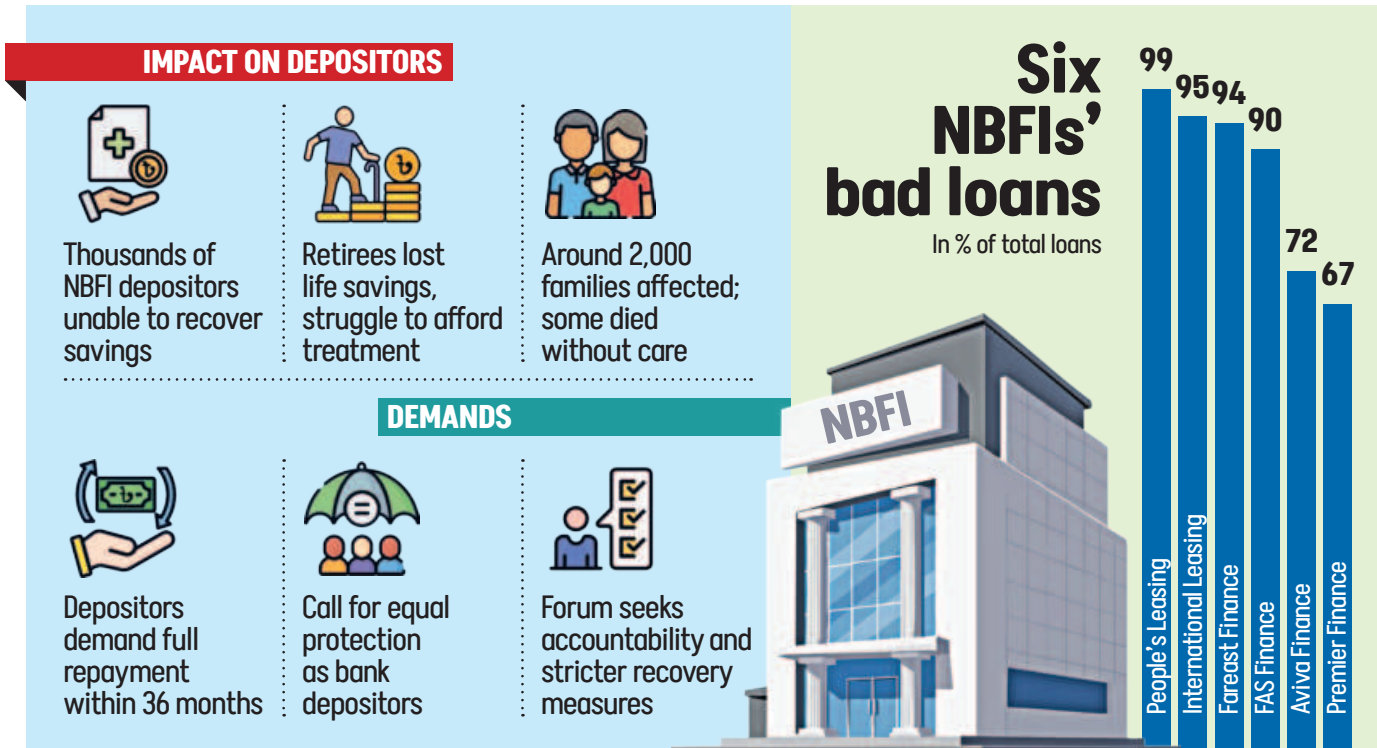
He also requested a revision of relevant clauses in the Import Policy Order to remove the requirement for bond licences when supplying goods from bonded exporters to non-bonded direct exporters.

BGMEA leaders urged the withdrawal

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NBFI depositors cry for payback

Some investors of six liquidating non-banks have already died, while others struggle with medical bills, as families face uncertain future



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AKM Ansar Uddin, a former official of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex), placed his retirement savings of Tk 16 lakh with People's Leasing and Financial Services Limited in the hope of earning a steady return.

He set aside the money for his three children, especially for the marriages of his two daughters. But when the deposit matured, the company did not return the principal, let alone any interest.

As his health deteriorated, the elderly depositor was unable to withdraw the funds for treatment. He died in November

last year. Amid financial hardship, the family later arranged the daughters' weddings without ceremony.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, his wife, Akhtari Begum, broke down in tears as she described their ordeal. Their youngest son, Anaf Uddin, sat beside her.

The event was organised by the Alliance of 6 NBFIs Depositors Recovery Committee, which represents depositors of six non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) now under liquidation. The institutions are FAS Finance, Premier Leasing, Foreast Finance, Aviva Finance, People's Leasing and International Leasing.

Over the years, several non-bank institutions collapsed amid widespread mismanagement, weak governance and heavy exposure to non-performing loans. Poor regulatory oversight and delayed action by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) deepened the crisis and ultimately led to liquidation.

At the press

conference, Akhtari Begum said she had struggled to arrange her daughters' marriages with dignity. "We are now uncertain how to survive with my children and cannot even ask others for help. Now I feel completely lost."

She said her husband expected to receive Tk 7 lakh, which he planned to use for medical treatment instead of taking loans, fearing he would leave his family in debt. Now, she said, she does not know how she will live the rest of her life.

Nashid Kamal, a professor and Nazrul exponent, coordinated the press conference, where other depositors recounted similar hardship after their savings became trapped in the six institutions.

She said some depositors, including Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, a musician, reportedly died without proper medical treatment because he could not access his money.

Another depositor said her family invested funds primarily meant for medical treatment and savings in Aviva Finance. Since 2024, they have been unable to withdraw their money or receive regular returns.

"Even urgent medical requests

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Govt drafts 5-year strategic plan

Designates ICT as special priority sector

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has drafted a five-year strategic framework proposing to designate ICT as a special priority sector and send 20 lakh workers abroad annually.

The draft framework has been made in line with the government's aim of achieving a trillion-dollar economy by 2034, according to a presentation by the General Economics Division (GED) of the Bangladesh Planning Commission at an advisory council meeting yesterday.

It projects real GDP growth reaching 8 percent by fiscal year 2029-30 (FY30), nominal GDP at \$749 billion, inflation falling to 5 percent, and gross investment rising to 37.6 percent of GDP.

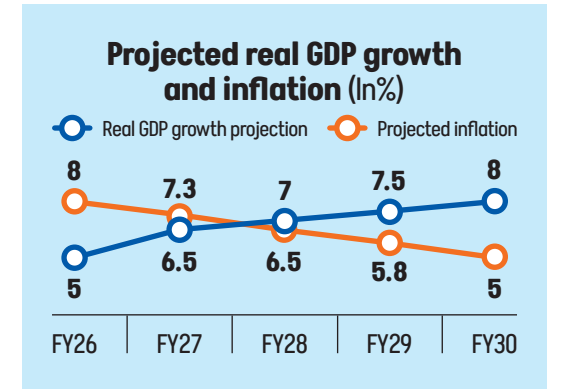
The outline will go through further consultations with relevant stakeholders before being finalised.

ICT AND JOBS

As per the draft, within the ICT sector alone, the government is targeting 10 lakh direct and indirect jobs.

Of the 10 lakh ICT jobs, 2 lakh are targeted in five areas – cybersecurity, business process outsourcing (BPO), artificial intelligence (AI) and data, semiconductors, and Industry 4.0. The remaining 8 lakh are to be created indirectly through freelancing.

A national initiative will strengthen software, hardware, and BPO industries, backed by a commitment to universal high-speed internet, the GED said.



The draft also states plans to introduce a national e-wallet, including PayPal access, for freelancers and tech professionals.

Beyond ICT, the government aims to send 20 lakh people abroad annually through short-term language and skills training.

More than 5 lakh vacant government posts are to be filled through a transparent recruitment process.

EXPORT AND ENERGY

As per the draft plan, the garment sector will see stronger "Made in Bangladesh" branding through new product innovation.

The draft aims to broaden the export base by prioritising pharmaceuticals, leather, footwear, and agriculture and fisheries-based products.

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BB resumes dollar purchase

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has resumed purchasing US dollars from the market after one and a half months, driven by higher inflows than outflows amid strong remittance earnings.

Yesterday, the central bank bought \$70 million from Islamic Bank Bangladesh at a cut-off rate of Tk 122.75 per US dollar.

Earlier, on March 2, BB purchased \$25 million from two commercial banks through multiple auction methods.

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, total US dollar purchases stood at \$5.56 billion, according to BB data.

Remittance inflows reached an all-time high of \$3.75 billion in March, as Bangladeshis working abroad sent increased amounts to their families ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In addition, remittance inflows stood at \$1.60 billion between April 1 and April 14 this year, up 25.2 percent year-on-year, data showed.

The banking regulator began purchasing dollars at the start of the current fiscal year as supply increased, supported by higher export earnings and remittance inflows.

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Govt doesn't want to dictate BB: Titumir

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The government does not want to dictate the Bangladesh Bank's actions under any circumstances, said Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the prime minister's adviser on finance and planning.

"We do not want to dictate the central bank's actions in any way. Our approach is to ensure coordination between fiscal and monetary policy," he said. "The central bank will listen to stakeholders, including you (businesses), and take appropriate actions independently."

Titumir made the remarks yesterday at a discussion on synergising the banking sector from the lender and borrower perspectives, organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in the capital.

He stressed that reviving closed industries and expanding existing ones would be key to restoring economic momentum.

"Reviving closed factories is fundamental. This is how we bring dynamism back into the economy and generate employment," he said.

Regarding efforts to tame inflation, Titumir said that the government is prioritising the people's interests.

During the Ukraine war, despite fluctuations in global gas prices, the previous (Awami League) government repeatedly raised fuel prices, he said, shifting the burden onto citizens amid what he described as economic mismanagement and capital flight.

However, with a strong public mandate, the present government is prioritising easing pressure on people's livelihoods, Titumir claimed, which is why fuel prices have not been increased despite external pressures.

Speaking on the upcoming national budget, he said the government is preparing a set of measures aimed at supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs), which remain central to employment generation.

"These measures may include stimulus support, tax reforms, and the creation of joint financing funds," he said.

DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed said the country's industrial sector is going through a highly challenging period due to the prolonged absence of a business-friendly environment.

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PPP guidelines rolled out to use public land for renewables

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has introduced a new policy framework to speed up renewable energy development by allowing unused or underutilised state-owned land to be used for clean energy projects under a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

The "Guidelines for Development of Renewable Energy Projects using Land

Owned by Government Agencies under PPP Modality, 2026," unveiled on April 12, aim to ease one of the biggest bottlenecks in expanding renewable energy in Bangladesh – the shortage of suitable land.

"One of the major pledges from this government is ensuring energy security by enhancing power production from renewable sources, which is why the guidelines are prepared," reads a letter



PHOTO: STAR/FILE

Bangladesh currently has 1,059MW of installed renewable capacity -- just 3.7 percent of the total 28,504MW -- with solar at 757MW, hydro at 230MW, and wind at 62MW.

sent to the PPP Authority from the Power Division in this regard.

The move comes as the government seeks to implement its Renewable Energy Policy 2025, which targets at least 20 percent of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030.

Bangladesh currently has 1,059 megawatts (MW) of installed renewable capacity – just 3.7 percent of the total 28,504MW – with solar at 757MW, hydro at 230MW, and wind at 62MW.

The new guidelines focus mainly on solar and wind projects, which require large areas of land.

Many government agencies – ranging from ministries to statutory bodies – own unused or underused land that the framework aims to bring into productive use for energy generation.

Under the framework, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) has been designated as the main contracting authority, responsible for selecting private partners, signing contracts, and overseeing implementation.

The Power Division will sign a Government Facilitation Agreement to provide state support, while Power Grid Bangladesh PLC will handle transmission and grid connectivity.

The PPP Authority will act as the central coordinating body to resolve inter-agency issues and ensure compliance with PPP rules.

The guidelines set a minimum project size of 50MW for solar and wind, though smaller projects may be permitted for other technologies – including tidal, wave, and

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