

Higher tax rates may fuel money laundering risks: MCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Raising tax rates on high-income earners without expanding the tax net could backfire, potentially encouraging money laundering and capital flight, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said yesterday.

"Raising tax rates on high-income taxpayers may discourage compliant taxpayers and increase the risks of tax evasion or capital flight," MCCI President Kamran T Rahman said while presenting budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year 2026-27 at a pre-budget discussion with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in Dhaka.

"In the context of regional competition, it is essential to keep tax rates reasonable. Expanding the tax base, rather than

increasing tax rates, could be a more effective and sustainable solution for boosting revenue," he added.

The chamber said maintaining a rational and predictable tax regime is essential to retain investment and ensure compliance in the region marked by growing tax competition.

The trade body recommended broadening the tax base to bring more individuals and businesses, particularly from the informal sector.

Currently, despite having more than one crore registered taxpayers with electronic tax identification numbers (e-TINs), fewer than half regularly file returns, pointing to a structural weakness in the system.

The MCCI proposed introducing a symbolic minimum tax, ranging from Tk

100 to Tk 1,000 annually, along with a simplified one-page digital return-filing system via mobile applications.

"This would encourage first-time taxpayers to enter the formal system and gradually build a culture of compliance," Rahman said.

The chamber also flagged concerns over the effective tax rate faced by businesses, noting that multiple layers of advance income tax (AIT), tax deducted at source (TDS), and various conditionalities often push the actual burden to as high as 40-50 percent, far exceeding statutory rates.

Such distortions reduce the benefits of nominal tax cuts and create disincentives for formal business operations, it said.

MCCI urged policymakers to move towards a simplified, income-based taxation system, reduce conditionalities

and accelerate digital integration across income tax, VAT, and customs platforms.

It also called for easing compliance requirements, such as the Proof of Submission of Return (PSR), rationalising VAT rates, and ensuring faster, automated input tax credit mechanisms.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of employment and industrial growth, the chamber recommended targeted tax relief, lower turnover taxes, and reduced duties on raw materials to enhance competitiveness.

The MCCI said that revenue policy should balance mobilisation and facilitation, warning that overly aggressive taxation could prove counterproductive in an already fragile economic environment.

Oil prices end volatile session

REUTERS, New York/London

Oil prices whipsawed in volatile trade on Friday, but were higher on the week, as traders weighed supply disruptions against the potential restart of peace talks between the US and Iran that could help limit those disruptions.

Brent crude futures settled at \$105.33 a barrel, rising 26 cents, or about 0.3 percent. US West Texas Intermediate futures settled at \$94.40 a barrel, falling \$1.45, or 1.5 percent.

For the week, Brent gained about 16 percent and WTI rose nearly 13 percent.

Crude futures gave back early gains after Reuters reported that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was expected to arrive in Islamabad late on Friday to discuss proposals for resuming peace talks with the US after talks collapsed earlier this week.

Prices fell further after CNN reported that US President Donald Trump was sending special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Pakistan for talks with Iran's foreign minister.

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FROM PAGE B1

The report highlighted a series of disruptions between 2017 and 2026, including climate vulnerability, the Rohingya crisis, a prolonged macroeconomic slowdown that predated the regime change, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, inflation, and pressure on the balance of payments.

It also noted that while Bangladesh meets all three criteria for graduation, significant risks persist, including the loss of trade preferences, fiscal and financial vulnerabilities and weak institutional coordination.

The report stressed the need for urgent reforms, stronger implementation capacity, adequate policy space and a whole-of-society approach to ensure a smooth and sustainable transition.

It added that a difficult political changeover and prolonged macroeconomic stress have eroded socio-economic gains, increasing risks linked to graduation.

Rising import costs for fossil fuels have created

operational constraints, with gas shortages worsening due to the Middle East conflict, the report said. Economic growth slowed from 7.1 percent in FY22 to 3.5 percent in FY25, weakening momentum ahead of graduation.

Inflation has outpaced wages, pushing millions into hardship and vulnerability.

Private investment has also weakened, with capital machinery imports falling from \$5.1 billion to \$2.8 billion during the 2019-2024 period. The labour market has also come under pressure, with nearly 1.9 million jobs lost between 2023 and 2024, disproportionately affecting women.

The financial sector remains fragile, with non-performing loans currently rising to 30.8 percent.

Fiscal space is also constrained, as revenue stands at just 6.8 percent of GDP, while interest payments absorb 36 percent of tax revenue. This has pushed the country's debt distress risk from low to moderate.

Exports have declined for eight consecutive

months, with US tariffs and volatile global trade conditions adding further pressure.

The report said that Bangladesh's readiness for the loss of trade-related support measures remains weak, with nearly 75 percent of exports dependent on LDC-specific duty-free access.

A recent UN Trade and Development assessment estimated that Bangladesh could lose more than \$17.5 billion in annual exports after graduation.

Ambassador Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the United Nations, on Thursday urged the UN to allow more time for the country's transition out of the LDC category, citing global economic and geopolitical instability.

Speaking during the general debate of the "ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum 2026" at UN headquarters in New York, he said geopolitical conflicts, shrinking aid, climate shocks and energy uncertainty are making it increasingly difficult for graduating countries to prepare for life after LDC status.

Amir Khosru vows not to print money

FROM PAGE B1

are normal working transactions.

Chowdhury echoed the governor, saying he felt "deeply saddened" by the rumours.

"During our political movement, we repeatedly protested against printing money and the government borrowing heavily from banks, which crowded out the private sector," Chowdhury said at a separate pre-budget discussion with editors and senior journalists. "We cannot deviate from our manifesto promises."

At the ERF meeting, Chowdhury blamed the country's deep economic distress on a legacy of "political patronage" that had allowed the state to fall "into the hands of oligarchs." This crony capitalism, he argued, allowed a select few to evade taxes with no barriers, causing the nation's tax-to-GDP ratio to plummet from 11 percent to below 7 percent at present.

"The financial sector became so heavily politicised that banks have essentially been emptied, and the stock market was looted," the minister said.

Outlining the scale of the crisis, Chowdhury

warned that the private sector was now "severely undercapitalised." Combined with sharp currency depreciation and high inflation, he said, business owners have been seeing their working capital erode, leading to widespread job losses.

Addressing pressure from multilateral lenders to quickly increase revenues, he offered a stark reality check. "Raising taxes right now is an extremely difficult task," he said. "When institutions like the IMF and the World Bank push for a higher tax-to-GDP ratio, you must understand the situation before demanding reforms."

"We cannot act like dictators and forcefully extract money from those who simply cannot afford to pay," he said.

Instead, the government is focusing on restructuring the tax framework, which Chowdhury described as historically "half-baked - much like an undercooked

cake that is unfit for consumption." A new committee has been formed to separate tax policy from execution, ensuring future policies "genuinely reflect the will of the people."

To revive economic growth without fuelling inflation, the minister promised a sweeping deregulation drive to slash the "cost of doing business," which he said is artificially inflated by port delays, customs bureaucracy, and road extortion. Deploying police to inspect consumer markets "will not solve the issue," he said; instead, the government must "fix the supply chain."

Chowdhury also outlined a strategy to "democratise the economy" by shifting focus toward small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the grassroots workforce. "We need mega-industries, yes, but the SME sector is the true engine of employment," he said.

The administration

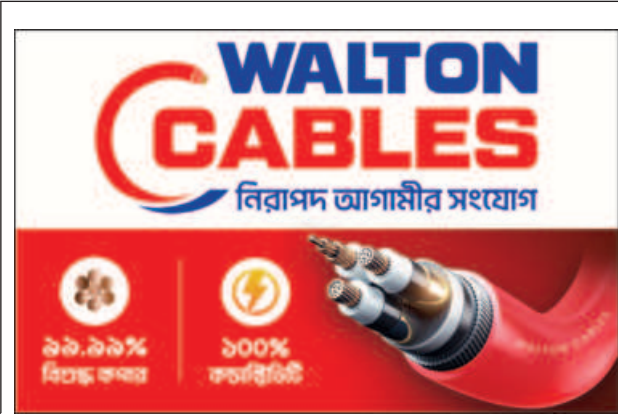
is rolling out a "Family Card" scheme - a direct cash transfer designed to empower female heads of households and alleviate poverty - alongside a push for universal primary healthcare, which Chowdhury likened to an "indirect cash transfer" that protects households' standards of living.

The minister pledged to restore the integrity of state data, referencing allegations that the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) had

historically understated population figures to artificially inflate per capita GDP.

"Institutions like the BBS must be kept entirely free from political interference," he said. "I cannot simply summon BBS officials and dictate what numbers they should publish; their independence must be maintained."

ERF President Doulot Akter Mala and General Secretary Abul Kashem also spoke at the discussion.



Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.tcb.gov.bd
Commercial Section

Invitation For Tender (National) for Purchase of

(a) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) piece of Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar of 100gm
(b) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) piece of Laundry Soap Bar of 125gm
(c) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) packet of Synthetic Detergent Powder of 500gm
(d) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) packet of Iodized Salt of 1kg

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Commerce.
2	Agency	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
3	Procuring Entry Name	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.
4	Procuring Entry Code	Not applicable.
5	Procuring Entry District	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	a) Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar b) Laundry Soap Bar c) Synthetic Detergent Powder d) Iodized Salt
7	Invitation Ref No.	a) 26.05.0000.016.25.119.26.1494, b) 26.05.0000.016.25.119.26.1495, c) 26.05.0000.016.25.119.26.1496, d) 26.05.0000.016.25.119.26.1497
8	Date	23-04-2026
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (National)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	TCB's Own Fund.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
11	Tender Package No.	a) TCB/Imp-74/ Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar/2025-26, b) TCB/Imp-75/ Laundry Soap Bar/2025-26, c) TCB/Imp-76/ Synthetic Detergent Powder/2025-26, d) TCB/Imp-77/ Iodized Salt/2025-26
12	Tender Package Name	a) Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar b) Laundry Soap Bar c) Synthetic Detergent Powder d) Iodized Salt
13	Tender Invitation/ Publication Date	26-04-2026
14	Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time	Date: 13-05-2026 Time: 16:00 P.M.
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	14-05-2026 12:00 P.M.
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	14-05-2026 (a) 12:15 P.M (b) 12:30 P.M (c) 12:45 P.M (d) 01:00 P.M
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address: (1) Sonali Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka and (2) Accounts & Finance Division, TCB's Principal Office at Dhaka. In front of TCB's reception (2nd floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
- Selling Tender Document of each item can be purchased from the banks & offices as mentioned in right column. - Receiving Tender Document - Opening Tender Document		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
18	Brief Eligibility of Tenderer	Bonafide Suppliers. Details conditions have been mentioned in the Tender documents.
19	Brief Description of goods	a) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) piece Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar. Per piece net weight will be 100gm. b) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) piece Laundry Soap Bar. Per piece net weight will be 125gm. c) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) packet Synthetic Detergent Powder. Per packet net weight will be 500gm. d) 20,00,000 (Twenty Lac) packet of Iodized Salt. Per packet net weight will be 1kg.
20	Price of Tender Document	Price of (a) Toilet Soap (Beauty Soap) Bar tender document is Taka 4,000 (Four Thousand), (b) Laundry Soap Bar tender document is Taka 4,000 (Four Thousand), (c) Synthetic Detergent Powder tender document is Taka 4,000 (Four Thousand), (d) Iodized Salt tender document is Taka 4,000 (Four Thousand).
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Golam Khorsheed
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No. 8180074 Fax No. 88-02-55014279 E-mail: tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd
26	Special Instruction	a) All terms and conditions related to the tender and product details are mentioned in the tender document. b) The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole/in part without assigning any reason.

(Md. Golam Khorsheed)
Additional Director (Commercial)
Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌপরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ (বিআইডব্লিউটিএ)
প্রবহমান নদীর সাথে
১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০

ঘাট/পয়েন্ট/হিকোপার্ক ইজারা/লাইসেন্স প্রদানের টেন্ডারের তারিখ পরিবর্তনের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌপরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ (বিআইডব্লিউটিএ)-এর ঢাকা, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, বরিশাল, খুলনা, চাঁদপুর, আরিচা, আশুগঞ্জ-ভৈরব বাজার, মেঘনাঘাট, পটুয়াখালী, বাঘাবাড়ী, শিমুলিয়া (মাগোয়া), বরগুনা, নওয়াপাড়া (যশোর), ভোলা, টঙ্গী, নগরবাড়ী-কাজিরহাট-নরাদহ, নাজিরগঞ্জ, চিলমারী, মজুতোধুরীরহাট, চরফ্যাশন (বেতুয়া), হাতিয়া, কক্সবাজার নদী বন্দর এবং চট্টগ্রাম ও সিলেট আঞ্চলিক দপ্তরের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন লক্ষঘাট, ফেরীঘাট, ল্যান্ডিং স্টেশন, ইকোপার্ক, উপকূলীয় টার্মিনাল জেটি ঘাট, ফেরী টার্মিনাল, পার্কিং ইয়ার্ড, খাল-টোল স্টেশন, কালেকশন পয়েন্ট, মালামাল উঠানামার শুষ্ক আদায় পয়েন্ট ও মালামাল উঠানামার লেবার হ্যাভেলিং পয়েন্টসমূহে ০১ জুলাই ২০২৬খ্রিঃ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৬খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত ১ (এক) বছরের জন্য (তবে শুধুমাত্র ইকোপার্ক সমূহ ১০ (দশ) বছরের জন্য) সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত শুষ্কহার অনুযায়ী শুষ্ক/ চার্জ আদায়ের নিমিত্ত ইজারা/লাইসেন্স প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে গত ০৮-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখ বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন, দৈনিক যুগান্তর: ০৯-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখ দৈনিক ইত্তেফাক, দি ডেইলী স্টার: ১৭-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখ বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন, দৈনিক যুগান্তর: ১৮-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখ দি ডেইলী স্টার এবং ১৯-০৪-২০২৬ তারিখ দৈনিক ইত্তেফাক পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত টেন্ডারের পূর্ব নির্ধারিত তারিখ অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নিম্নোক্তভাবে পুনর্নির্ধারণ করা হলোঃ

নদী বন্দরের নাম	দফা	পুনর্নির্ধারিত টেন্ডারের তারিখ
ঢাকা, বরিশাল, খুলনা, চাঁদপুর ও পটুয়াখালী নদী বন্দর।	১ম দফা ২য় দফা ৩য় দফা ৪র্থ দফা	১১-০৫-২০২৬, ১২-০৫-২০২৬ ও ১৩-০৫-২০২৬ = ০৩ দিন। ২০-০৫-২০২৬ ও ২১-০৫-২০২৬ ০২ দিন (১ম দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ০৩-০৬-২০২৬ ও ০৪-০৬-২০২৬ ০২ দিন (২য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ১০-০৬-২০২৬ ও ১১-০৬-২০২৬ ০২ দিন (৩য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/পয়েন্টসমূহ)।
নারায়ণগঞ্জ, আশুগঞ্জ-ভৈরব বাজার নদী বন্দর।	১ম দফা ২য় দফা ৩য় দফা ৪র্থ দফা	১২-০৫-২০২৬ ও ১৩-০৫-২০২৬ = ০২ দিন ২০-০৫-২০২৬ ও ২১-০৫-২০২৬ = ০২ দিন (১ম দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ০৩-০৬-২০২৬ ও ০৪-০৬-২০২৬ = ০২দিন (২য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ১০-০৬-২০২৬ ও ১১-০৬-২০২৬ ০২দিন (৩য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)।
বাঘাবাড়ী, বরগুনা, নওয়াপাড়া, নগরবাড়ী-কাজিরহাট- নরাদহ ও শিমুলিয়া (মাগোয়া), চরফ্যাশন (বেতুয়া), কক্সবাজার ও মজুতোধুরীর হাট নদী বন্দর।	১ম দফা ২য় দফা ৩য় দফা ৪র্থ দফা	১১-০৫-২০২৬ ২০-০৫-২০২৬ (১ম দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ০৩-০৬-২০২৬ (২য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ১০-০৬-২০২৬ (৩য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/পয়েন্টসমূহ)।
আরিচা, মেঘনাঘাট, নাজিরগঞ্জ, চিলমারী ও হাতিয়া নদী বন্দর।	১ম দফা ২য় দফা ৩য় দফা ৪র্থ দফা	১২-০৫-২০২৬ ২০-০৫-২০২৬ (১ম দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ০৩-০৬-২০২৬ (২য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ১০-০৬-২০২৬ (৩য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)।
চট্টগ্রাম আঞ্চলিক দপ্তর, সিলেট আঞ্চলিক দপ্তর, ভোলা নদী বন্দর ও টঙ্গী নদী বন্দর।	১ম দফা ২য় দফা ৩য় দফা ৪র্থ দফা	১৩-০৫-২০২৬ ২১-০৫-২০২৬ (১ম দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ০৪-০৬-২০২৬ (২য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)। ১১-০৬-২০২৬ (৩য় দফায় অনিষ্পন্ন ঘাট/ পয়েন্টসমূহ)।

২। ইতিপূর্বে প্রকাশিত টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত শর্তাবলী, নিয়মাবলী এবং টেন্ডার দাখিলের স্থান ও সময় অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে। তাছাড়া ইতোমধ্যে ক্রয়কৃত টেন্ডার ফরম পুনর্নির্ধারিত ১ম দফা টেন্ডারে ব্যবহার করা যাবে।

পরিচালক
বন্দর ও পরিবহন বিভাগ
ফোন নং-০২-২২৩৩৮২৬৭৩
port.biwa@gmail.com