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# Draft cyber security strategy shifts focus to AI threats

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government has drafted a new National Cyber Security Strategy for 2026-2030 that shifts its focus to emerging threats from artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing.

The draft takes a different approach from the previous five-year strategy as cyber threats become more sophisticated and the country becomes increasingly dependent on digital services.

Prepared by the National Cyber Security Agency with the ICT Division, the draft was unveiled at a programme in Dhaka recently.

It sets out a five-year roadmap to protect critical digital infrastructure, build a 20,000-strong cyber security workforce and update cyber security laws and institutions to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies.

For the first time, the strategy elaborated plans to secure technologies such as AI, cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), 5G and 6G networks, blockchain and post-quantum cryptography.

The draft also cited "harvest now, decrypt later" attacks, in which encrypted data stolen today could one day be decrypted using powerful quantum computers.

The strategy replaces the previous National Cyber Security Strategy for 2021-2025 and is built around six strategic pillars and 11 priorities.

ICT Division officials said it will be revised following consultations with government agencies, industry representatives and academics before being finalised.

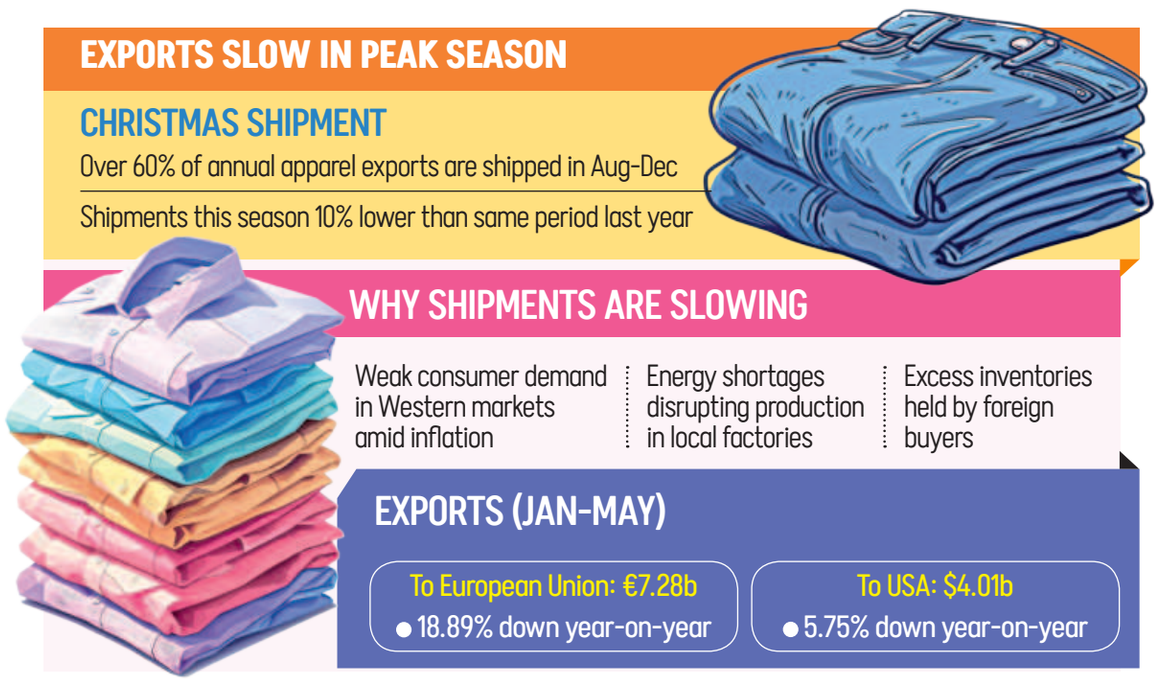
**GROWING CYBER RISKS**

The draft says the country's digital ecosystem has expanded rapidly, with around

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# Christmas apparel shipments slow on weak demand




REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Christmas apparel shipments from Bangladesh to major Western markets have slowed this season as weak consumer demand abroad and energy shortages at home disrupt factory production.

The slowdown comes as garment exports to both Europe and the United States continue to decline.

Christmas shipments are at least 10 percent lower than during the same period last year, according to a local exporter that mainly supplies the US market.

The Christmas season is one of the busiest periods for the country's readymade garment industry, with more than 60 percent of annual apparel exports shipped between August and the first week of December.

Exporters said high inflation in Western markets, fuelled by energy shocks linked to the Middle East conflict, has weakened consumer demand. They also blamed the export slowdown on excess inventories held by major international buyers.

At home, low gas pressure and frequent power outages are reducing production. The long-running gas shortage worsened after an accident at a floating LNG terminal in Cox's Bazar. The disruption became so severe that many factories across the Gazipur garment belt sent workers on a four-day leave last week, as gas supply was expected to improve around Monday.

Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez, chairman and managing director of Evince Group, said the industry has been struggling with low gas pressure and the energy crisis for several months, severely affecting factory production.

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# Tight monetary policy harming recovery

**Says BB panel**

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A Bangladesh Bank policy panel has concluded that keeping monetary policy this tight is starting to do more harm to Bangladesh's economic recovery than good for controlling prices, a shift in thinking that led the central bank to cut its policy rate for the first time in six years recently.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), meeting on July 30, recommended lowering the policy rate by 50 basis points to 9.5 percent. The BB acted on the recommendation the same day, bringing the rate, at which it lends to commercial banks, down from the 10 percent level it had held since October 2024.

"Inflation is still higher than the medium-term target, and low domestic demand, weak private investment, and worsening growth prospects indicate that keeping a very strict policy could impact economic recovery more than it would help reduce prices," the committee said, according to minutes of the meeting published by the central bank.

The reasoning marks a turn for a central bank that had held its rate at a record high for nearly two years to fight inflation, which has run above 8.5 percent on average since fiscal year 2022-23. Inflation eased to 9.16 percent in June, from 9.42 percent in May, but remains above the government's target.

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# Policy uncertainty hurting investment confidence: Bida

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh is passing through a tough time in terms of investment, with the prevailing situation creating uncertainty that continues to discourage new investment, said Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida).

The lack of policy continuity and political stability remains one of the biggest concerns for both local and foreign investors, he said at a Bida briefing, organised at its office in Dhaka yesterday, on the investment-related outcomes of the national budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

"The first question we are always asked is why investors lack confidence in Bangladesh. Throughout the past one and a half years, investors have repeatedly pointed to the absence of policy continuity and political stability," he added.

The FY27 budget offers the government an opportunity to send a strong signal that it remains committed to predictable, investment-friendly policies, he said, adding that while such assurances would not immediately attract large foreign investment, they were essential to rebuilding confidence.

"We cannot expect millions of dollars to flow into Bangladesh the day after such a signal is sent. Investor confidence is built gradually. If we continue to demonstrate that we are serious about policy continuity, investors will eventually believe us and consider Bangladesh more favourably," he said.

Ashik underscored the need for the government to look beyond sector-specific incentives and identify priority sectors in the budget, highlighting ICT and renewable energy.

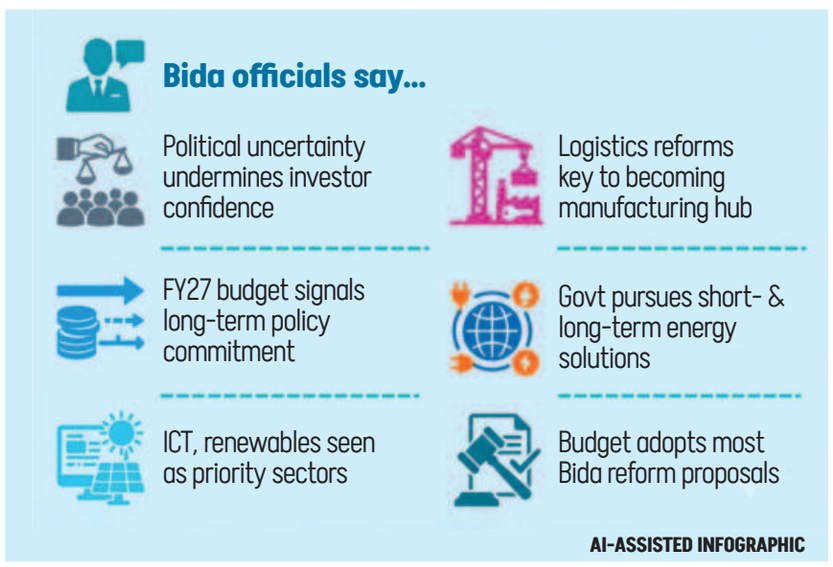
He said Bangladesh's ambition to become a regional manufacturing hub would depend not only on fiscal incentives but also on reforms in logistics, supply chains and trade facilitation, alongside improving the ease of doing business.

Acknowledging persistent gas and power shortages, he said the government was pursuing both short- and long-term solutions while remaining engaged with industries to minimise disruptions.

He also stressed the need to improve awareness of government support schemes, particularly among entrepreneurs outside Dhaka.

Rehan Asif Asad, adviser to the prime minister on posts, telecommunications, information technology, said the government had consulted businesses extensively before finalising the budget and that the finance minister was leading efforts to reduce unnecessary regulations.

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# South Korea deal to boost exports, cut trade gap

**Says FBCCI**

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) with South Korea is expected to boost Bangladesh's exports, reduce the trade gap and strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties, according to the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

In a statement yesterday, FBCCI Administrator Md Fazlul Hoque welcomed the signing of the landmark agreement, saying it would provide wider duty-free access for Bangladeshi products and improve the country's export competitiveness, especially after its graduation from the least developed country category.

Currently, bilateral trade between Bangladesh and South Korea stands

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# Correction

In a report headlined "Financial pressure ends Bengal Group's Swissôtel project", published in The Daily Star on August 3, it was inadvertently mentioned that Bengal Group had filed insurance claims for its damaged factories, but Bangladesh General Insurance Company (BGIC) had yet to settle them.

BGIC, in a rejoinder to the report, said: "Among the companies under Bengal Group, only Linnex Electronics Bangladesh Limited was insured with BGIC. The total claim amount was Tk 443,120, which was duly processed and settled within the stipulated time frame based on the surveyor's assessment report and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the insurance policy."

We regret the error.

