Business

DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 13, 2026, ASHWIN 28, 1433 BS
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Is Bangladesh's low-cost garment model running out of steam?

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA



Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) sector is facing mounting challenges as international clothing retailers and brands diversify their sourcing destinations. Rising production costs, energy shortages, geopolitical tensions and uncertainty over preferential market access after the country's graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category are putting pressure on exporters.

The challenges are exposing the limits of a business model built on low production costs and competitive prices. Although many manufacturers have started moving towards higher-value products, the transition remains gradual.

The situation has raised questions about how well Bangladesh can compete as costs rise and trade preferences come under pressure.

At a recent press conference, Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said several major international retailers and brands that had sourced garments from Bangladesh for years were shifting some work orders to other destinations for strategic reasons.

The prolonged energy crisis has further weakened buyers' confidence, as some suppliers have struggled to meet shipment deadlines.

Meanwhile, geopolitical conflicts and Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea have disrupted shipping routes connecting Asia with Europe and North America.

With vessels increasingly rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope instead of travelling through the traditional Suez Canal, shipping journeys have become longer and more expensive.

These disruptions have also encouraged buyers to consider sourcing from countries closer to European markets, including Egypt and Ethiopia, to reduce logistical complications and shipping risks.

THE LIMITS OF A LOW-COST MODEL

Bangladesh established itself as a major global manufacturing hub for basic garments from the early 1980s, capitalising on an abundant labour force and low production costs.

That model helped the country become a leading apparel exporter in the world. But rising production expenses, combined with continued pressure on garment prices, are making it increasingly difficult to sustain the same competitive advantage.

In the European Union, Bangladesh's garment export unit price is less than half that of Vietnam, reflecting, in part, the limited share of higher-value products in the country's export basket.

Eurostat data show that the average unit price of garments exported from Bangladesh to the EU fell to €13.80 per kilogramme in January-June this year, from €15.07 in the same period of 2025.

By contrast, Vietnam's average unit price rose to €29 per kg from €25.95 over the same period. China's garment export unit price to the EU fell by 2.18 percent.

Among major garment suppliers to the EU, Bangladesh remains one of the cheapest, with only one supplier recording a lower average unit price.

Although many Bangladeshi manufacturers have started exporting higher-value products, the transition remains gradual. According to industry estimates, high-end garments account for 30 to 40 percent of the sector's output, suggesting considerable scope for upgrading.

The government has been considering a gradual phase-out of export cash incentives, which supported exporters during the sector's development, ahead of Bangladesh's graduation from the LDC category.

On top of that, following LDC graduation, Bangladesh will face growing pressure to compete without relying on existing preferential trade arrangements.

The possible loss of duty-free market access is a particular concern. Unless Bangladesh secures the European Union's GSP+ facility or negotiates a free trade agreement (FTA), exporters could face higher tariffs in a market that absorbs nearly 60 percent of the country's garment exports, worth more than $25 billion annually.

Average duties on RMG products could approach 12 percent, further eroding the price advantage of Bangladeshi suppliers.

LABOUR AND INVESTMENT PRESSURES

The challenges extend beyond production costs and trade policy. After nearly five decades of growth, the first generation of garment entrepreneurs is ageing, while some second- and third-generation successors are struggling to sustain the traditional business model.

Several older factories are closing, and fresh investment in the sector is gradually slowing.

The workforce is also shrinking, particularly among women. Long working hours, demanding workloads and relatively low wages have discouraged younger workers from entering the industry.

READ MORE ON B3

Bangladesh in talks with IMF over new loan

MD MEHEDI HASAN, *from Bangkok*

Bangladesh is in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a fresh loan package in the current fiscal year to help cushion the economy against the energy shock caused by the conflict in the Middle East, after exiting its previous loan programme midway.

Speaking to journalists at the venue of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok yesterday, Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said Bangladesh has held several meetings with the multilateral lender.

"Discussions are going on," said Khosru. He did not give further details but said another meeting is scheduled for today or tomorrow.

Bangladesh entered a $4.7 billion IMF programme in January 2023 under the then Awami League government. The interim government later increased the package to $5.5 billion. The country has so far received $3.8 billion in five tranches.

Financing from multilateral partners has taken on greater importance as the conflict in the Middle East has increased uncertainty and energy costs for Bangladesh

In May this year, the BNP-led government decided to leave the programme eight months before its scheduled expiry. It subsequently applied for a fresh package, according to a June 3 statement by Ivo Krznar, the IMF mission chief for Bangladesh.

Financing from multilateral partners, including the IMF, has taken on greater importance as geopolitical tensions and the conflict in the Middle East have increased uncertainty and energy costs for Bangladesh, which depends heavily on imports to meet its energy needs.

In fiscal year 2026-27, the government plans to seek around $4 billion in budget support from multilateral and bilateral lenders, Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the prime minister's adviser on finance and planning, said recently.

At the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings venue, Khosru said the World Bank had supported Bangladesh and would continue to do so.

"We are going for a partnership framework agreement. It is under process, and future cooperation with the World Bank will be within that framework agreement," he said.

READ MORE ON B3

Strong deposit growth fails to spur private credit: GED

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Strong deposit growth in August has failed to spur robust private sector credit expansion, according to a government report.

Banking sector deposits stood at Tk 21.31 lakh crore in August 2026, up 12 percent year-on-year, according to the Economic Update & Outlook September 2026 prepared by the General Economics Division (GED) of the Bangladesh Planning Commission.

"This is faster than the 10.01 percent growth recorded a year earlier, so deposit collection has gained momentum," the report said.

"It suggests that liquidity in the banking system has improved and that depositors' confidence is recovering," it added.

In contrast, private sector credit grew by 4.75 percent year-on-year to Tk 18.30 lakh crore in August, below the 6.35 percent growth recorded in the same period the previous year, according to the report.

Private sector credit is likely to remain subdued in the near term if borrowing costs stay high, the GED report says

Private sector credit is likely to remain subdued in the near term if borrowing costs stay high, business confidence recovers slowly and credit risk remains elevated, the report said.

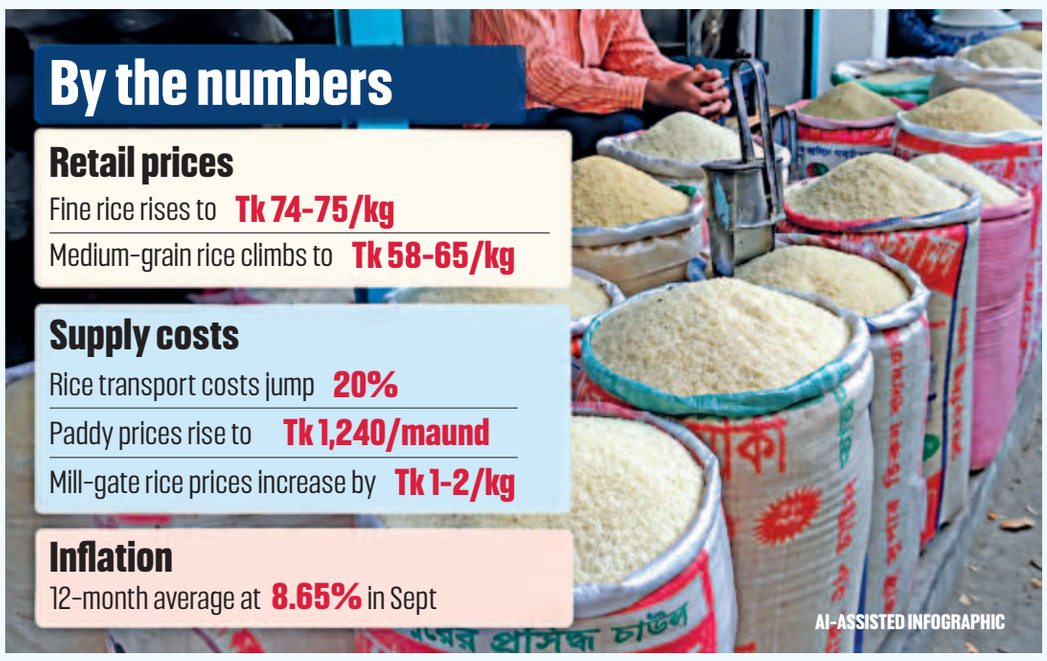
Credit growth was uneven across sectors. Public sector credit rose by 32.45 percent to Tk 7.22 lakh crore in August, more than double the 14.81 percent growth recorded in the previous year.

"Heavy public sector borrowing may also crowd out private lending. The pace of private credit recovery will therefore be the key indicator to watch," the report said.

Overall, the gap between deposit growth and private credit growth points to ample liquidity that is not being channelled into productive private investment, according to the GED.

Policy attention should focus on easing financing costs, improving the investment climate and strengthening the banking sector's ability to lend, it said.

"Sustained deposit growth would give banks the resources to support a revival of private credit as macroeconomic conditions stabilise," it added.



Rice prices rise as fuel costs bite at season's end

SUKANTA HALDER

Rice prices have risen in several districts, including Dhaka, over the past week as higher fuel costs, rising paddy prices and seasonal factors pushed up prices, adding to the burden on consumers already grappling with persistently high living costs.

Visiting Dhaka's retail markets on Sunday, The Daily Star found that fine rice was selling at Tk 74-Tk 75 per kilogramme (kg), up from Tk 72 a week ago.

Medium-grain rice, widely consumed by lower-income households, had risen to Tk 58-Tk 65 per kg from Tk 55-62.

Coarse rice prices, however, remained unchanged at Tk 50-Tk 55 per kg.

The latest increase comes amid persistently high inflation. The 12-month average inflation rate stood at 8.65 percent in September, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This measure reflects the average rate of price increases over the preceding 12 months, rather than the change in prices during September alone.

Shamim Al Mamun, a resident of Agargaon in Dhaka, said repeated increases in the prices of essential goods were making it increasingly difficult for households to manage their expenses.

"There is no month when the price of some essential item isn't going up. Amid this already high cost of living, the rise in rice prices will put even more pressure on us," he said.

However, the market picture differs from the official data. According to the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), no variety of rice became more expensive over the past week, while fine rice prices fell by 1.27 percent.

Over the past month, medium-grain rice prices rose by 2.50 percent, the data showed.

Shatadal Mondal, assistant director for market data at the TCB, said the organisation's figures appeared accurate based on the information collected so far, but it would investigate the discrepancies after The Daily Star raised the issue.

"Our market coverage is limited to Dhaka, including Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Malibagh, Rampura, Mohakhali, Hatirpool and West Agargaon," he said, adding that the TCB's data matched on one item but differed on two others.

"Since our people and your journalists both visit the markets, there shouldn't be much room for a gap. Even so, we will look into it thoroughly to determine whether the data is accurate and whether such a discrepancy occurred," he added.

The discrepancy comes as traders in Dhaka report rising prices, attributing the increases to higher fuel costs that have pushed up transportation fares and rising paddy prices that have increased milling costs.

Mohammad Shaon, a wholesaler at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, said the wholesale price of fine rice had risen by Tk 1 per kg to Tk 66, while medium-grain rice had increased by Tk 1.50 to Tk 48.50. Coarse rice prices remained unchanged.

A 25-kg sack of fine rice now costs Tk 1,650, while a sack of medium-grain rice sells for Tk 1,212, he said.

READ MORE ON B3

SPOTLIGHT

Two Beximco firms get BB lifeline to keep business going

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has relaxed lending restrictions for two loan-defaulting companies of the Beximco Group to help them maintain regular business operations.

The central bank issued two separate circulars yesterday, granting exemptions to Beximco LPG Unit-1 and Shinepukur Ceramics.

On condition of anonymity, a senior central bank official told The Daily Star yesterday that the facilities have been provided to the firms so that they can keep their regular businesses running.

Under the exemption for Beximco LPG Unit-1, the company will be allowed to open letters of credit (LCs) against 100 percent cash margins and receive working capital financing, despite being a loan defaulter to National Bank.

The relaxation of the restrictions will remain in force until December 31, 2027.

Section 27KaKa(3) of the Bank Company Act bars banks and financial institutions from providing any form of credit facility to loan defaulters.

READ MORE ON B3

Bankers get five-day break for Durga Puja

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks will remain closed from October 20 to 22 on the occasion of Durga Puja, followed by the regular weekend on October 23 and 24, giving bankers a five-day break.

The biggest religious festival of Hindus is set to begin next Friday.

However, banks will remain open on Saturday, October 17, under their normal working schedules to help customers complete financial transactions ahead of the long holiday, Bangladesh Bank (BB) said in a circular yesterday. The central bank issued the directive after the Ministry of Public Administration declared October 22 a public holiday.

Bank branches in port areas, however, will maintain limited operations from October 20 to 24 to facilitate import and export activities during the holidays and weekend.

The BB has asked banks to coordinate with local administrations and customs authorities to ensure uninterrupted services.

Chinese firm to invest $17m in Mongla EPZ

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Chinese company Longteng Garment Co Ltd will invest $17 million to establish a readymade garment (RMG) factory at Mongla Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) in Bagerhat.

The company will set up its factory on 16,426.37 square metres of land, with an annual production capacity of 6 million pieces of underwear and bras.

The products are intended for international brands such as Aerie, Calvin Klein, Zara, Florence & Fred (Tesco), ASOS and Primark, with major buyers, including H&M, Walmart, Marks & Spencer (M&S) and Gap.

The company plans to export its products to major markets worldwide, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Algeria, Brazil, Australia, Chile, Mexico, Iraq, Japan and Canada.

The project is expected to create employment opportunities for 3,005 Bangladeshi nationals, according to a press release.

To this end, Md Tanvir Hossain, member (investment promotion) of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), and Lin Qiangqiang, chairman of Longteng Garment Co Ltd, signed the agreement at the BEPZA Complex in Dhaka yesterday.

BEPZA Executive Chairman Major General Mohammad Moazzem Hossain attended the signing ceremony along with senior BEPZA officials.

Welcoming the investor, BEPZA Executive Chairman Maj Gen Moazzem expressed his appreciation to Longteng Garment Co Ltd for placing its confidence in BEPZA and Bangladesh as an investment destination.

The Mongla EPZ has recorded cumulative exports of $1.7 billion and total investment of $271.74 million, generating employment for 16,212 Bangladeshi nationals.

He assured the company of BEPZA's support and cooperation to facilitate the establishment and smooth operation of its business.

As of September 2026, 39 enterprises were operating in Mongla EPZ, while another 10 were at the implementation stage.

The Mongla EPZ has recorded cumulative exports of $1.7 billion and total investment of $271.74 million, generating employment for 16,212 Bangladeshi nationals.

Unicef, bKash partner to make donations for children easier

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Unicef has signed a collaboration agreement with bKash Limited, the country's largest mobile financial services provider, to make donating to support children in Bangladesh easier and more accessible.

The agreement is expected to boost support for Unicef's fundraising initiatives for children by enabling more donors to contribute easily through bKash. Carla Haddad Mardini, global director of private fundraising and partnerships at Unicef, and Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash Limited, signed the agreement at a ceremony in Dhaka, according to a press release.

"Our collaboration with bKash, a trusted and widely used digital platform, enables Unicef to connect with people and communities across Bangladesh through a simple, secure and accessible way to support children," Carla said.

"We are pleased to see this partnership come to fruition as part of Unicef's ongoing efforts to expand funding opportunities and mobilise durable support for children. Children are at the heart of Bangladesh's future, and through this initiative, we can reach more of them with the services they need to survive, learn and thrive."



Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash Limited, and Carla Haddad Mardini, global director of private fundraising and partnerships at Unicef, shake hands before exchanging signed documents of an agreement in Dhaka. PHOTO: BKASH

"Every contribution, no matter the size, can help create lasting change in a child's life and open the door to a brighter future," she added.

Speaking at the event, Kamal said, "At bKash, we are focused on creating impactful opportunities for community advancement. Having built the country's first digital donation platform, bKash empowers users to make informed decisions when contributing to meaningful causes."

"This partnership with Unicef will bring strong momentum to fundraising initiatives aimed at building a brighter future for children," he added. Under the deal, bKash users can donate directly to Unicef by logging into the bKash app, selecting the "Donations" option and choosing Unicef.

Donations can also be made through bKash's extensive offline merchant network, enabling more people to participate in Unicef's mission to improve children's lives.

As part of the collaboration, Unicef will have a permanent presence in the donation section of the bKash app, creating more opportunities for individual contributions and supporting future awareness and fundraising initiatives.

Guardian Life launches 'Healing Call' mental health service

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Guardian Life Insurance Limited has launched a mental health support service that allows people to speak with mental health professionals by calling its customer service centre.

Under the initiative, titled "Healing Call", callers can dial Guardian's call centre number, 16622, and press 8 to speak with professionals from mental health support organisations Kaan Pete Roi and The Purpleline.

The service will be available daily from 3pm to 3am, according to a company statement issued on Saturday. The initiative comes as mental health remains a public health concern in Bangladesh, where social stigma and fear of judgement often discourage people from discussing their struggles or seeking professional support.

Around 30 million people in Bangladesh suffer from some form of mental health condition, according to data from the National Institute of Mental Health cited in the statement.

Healing Call aims to provide a space where people can discuss mental stress, anxiety, worries and other personal concerns with professionals without fear of being judged.

Guardian said the initiative was part of its broader focus on health and wellbeing alongside its core business of providing financial protection. The company is using its existing call centre, mobile app and website to make mental health support more accessible.

It also plans to expand the initiative through further collaboration with organisations and professionals working in mental health, with the aim of reaching more people across the country.

Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Public Service Commission Secretariat
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
www.bpsc.gov.bd

Memo No: 80.00.0000.403.32.011.26-249 Date: 12.10.2026

e-Tender

This is to notify all concerned that the following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods as follows-

Name of Goods	Package No & Tender ID	Publication, Last Selling and Closing Date & Time
Supply of OMR Answer Sheets for BCS Examination.	**Invitation Reference No. :**80.00.0000.403.32.011.26-247 **Tender ID: 1350272**	Tender Publication: 14 Oct 2026 09:00 am Last Selling: 25 Oct 2026 04:00 pm Closing: 26 Oct 2026 11:30 am

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mofijur Rahman)
Deputy Director (Admin-3)
Telephone No: 55006639

GD-2487



Md Zabdul Islam, director of Bangladesh Bank's SME and Special Programmes Department, and Kanti Kumar Saha, chief executive officer of Alliance Finance PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at BB headquarters in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: ALLIANCE FINANCE

Alliance Finance gets BB funds for CMSME

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Alliance Finance PLC has signed a participation agreement with Bangladesh Bank (BB) to provide working capital refinancing for the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprise (CMSME) sector.

Under the scheme, eligible borrowers will be able to access financing at an annual interest rate of 9 percent, according to a press release.

Kanti Kumar Saha, chief executive officer of Alliance Finance PLC, and Md Zabdul Islam, director of Bangladesh Bank's SME and Special Programmes Department, signed the agreement at the central bank's headquarters in Motijheel, Dhaka recently.

The agreement follows two other participation agreements recently signed between Alliance Finance and Bangladesh Bank's Sustainable Finance Department for refinancing facilities targeting the information and communication technology (ICT) sector and green factory buildings.

The facilities offer eligible borrowers loans at annual interest rates of 4 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Ziaur Rahman elected chairman of SBAC Bank audit committee

STAR BUSINESS DESK



Ziaur Rahman Zia

Ziaur Rahman Zia, a fellow chartered accountant, has been elected chairman of the board audit committee of SBAC Bank PLC.

Ziaur Rahman, who serves as an independent director of the bank, has more than 21 years of professional experience in audit, finance and corporate governance, according to a press release. He is an elected council member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh and an associate member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. He holds a master's degree in accounting.

Ziaur Rahman began his career in 2005 and has since worked in audit, assurance, advisory and compliance across various sectors.

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
Directorate of Purchase, Biddut Bhaban (12th Floor),
1 No. Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
www.bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

The Following e-Tenders is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

SL. No	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of Goods/Works	Last Selling Date and time	Closing Date and time	Opening Date and time
1.	1349548	FRD050-GR06, 2026-27	27.11.0000.304.27.407.26 Dated:11/10/2026	Supply and Installation of Cation Resin of Cation Exchanger, Iron Remover Media (Manganese Geolite) and Micoron Filter For the Water Treatment Plant of Faridpur 50 MW Peaking Power Plant, BPDB, Faridpur	26-10-2026 13.00	26-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 16.00

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 System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-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).
For more details, please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01755575443).

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-২২৫(২)/১২/১০/২৬

(Md. Shahedul Azim)
ID No.1-01460
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka
E-mail: dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

GD-2488

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Planning
Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

No- 21.00.0000.000.001.14.0038.25(part-1)-566 Date: 12/10/2026

Invitation for e-Tender (Physical Service)

e-Tender is inviting in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Purchase of Physical Services. Details are given below:

Package No	Description	Tender ID No	Closing Date & Time
ceeprm-esi/26-27/SD-35	Hiring of Transport Vehicle (06 SUV and 01 Microbus)	1339753	**27-Oct-2026 Time-02:00pm**

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system. (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)

12.10.26
(Mohammad Fiznur Rahman)
Project Director
CEEPRM & ESI (2nd Revised) Project
pd.ceeprmesi@imed.gov.bd

GD-2479

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Faridpur.
☎/Fax: 0631-63256/66367
E-mail: eerhdfaridpur@gmail.com

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).
e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Faridpur for the procurement of:

Sl. No	Tender ID No/ Package No	Name of works	Last date and time for Tender Security submission	Tender Closing/ Opening Date & Time.
1	2	3	4	5
1	1349580, 08/e-GP/FRD/2026-2027 PMP Major	Re-construction of Durga Gotti Bridge of 22.68 (1X21.34) m Long R.C.C Girder Bridge at 15th km(p) (Ch: 14+933) of Faridpur (Badarpur)-Saltha-Sonapur-Muksudpur Road (Z-7004) under PMP (Major-Bridge) of Faridpur Road Division during the year 2026 2027.	09/11/2026 12:00 hour	09/11/2026 12:30 hour

e-Tender details can be downloaded from 12/10/2026 time: 23:00 to 08/11/2026, time: 17:00 of e-GP system portal http://www.eprocure.gov.bd for pursue.
e-Tenders will be accepted only as stated in above list, accepted tenders will be opened online immediately as stated in above list.

12.10.2026
(Khalid Saifullah Sardar)
ID No. 602287
Executive Engineer, (C.C) RHD
Road Division, Faridpur.

GD-2490

IPO rules to be made easy to attract new listings

BSEC Chairman Masud Khan says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock market regulator will bring major changes to its initial public offering (IPO) rules to make it easier for new companies to get listed on the stock market, said Masud Khan, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

The new rules would take into account accumulated losses incurred by companies undertaking long-term infrastructure projects, but loss-making companies will not be allowed to be listed, he said.

The proposed changes also include expanding the scope of audits, revising debt repayment requirements for IPO proceeds and adopting international methods for share price valuation.

The draft rules will soon be published on the commission's website for public consultation after being finalised.

The BSEC chairman made the remarks while addressing a seminar as the chief guest at a programme organised yesterday to mark World Investor Week 2026. The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) and the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh (DBA) jointly organised the seminar.

Masud Khan said the rules were being formulated in consultation with market stakeholders to expand companies' opportunities to get listed while protecting investors' interests.

He said the existing IPO rules impose restrictions on the listing of companies with accumulated losses.

However, large infrastructure projects, such as power plants, hotels, cement factories and steel mills, require substantial investment over a long period. It is not unusual for such projects to incur losses before commencing commercial operations. Against this backdrop, the IPO rules are being revised to take accumulated losses into account, he said.



Auditors would be given broader responsibilities in verifying documents under the proposed changes

Masud Khan, Chairman of BSEC

However, this does not mean that any loss-making company will be allowed to enter the stock market, he added.

Masud Khan said auditors would be given broader responsibilities in verifying documents under the proposed changes.

Currently, the DSE and BSEC examine various documents, but the revised rules would introduce a more extensive verification process resembling forensic auditing.

The BSEC chairman also announced plans to revise the debt repayment requirements under the IPO rules. According to him, the commission is considering raising the existing 30 percent requirement for debt repayment.

BSEC Commissioner Nahid Mahtab said technological advances had made stock market investment more accessible. However, fraudsters were also exploiting the same technology to spread misinformation rapidly and target investors.

Artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics can help identify suspicious trading patterns, he said.

However, technology should be used to flag suspicious activities and generate alerts. Human judgement and review must remain integral to the final assessment and any legal action, he added.

Mominul Islam, chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, said false information, investment scams and manipulative campaigns on social media were undermining investor confidence in the stock market.

One of the biggest challenges facing the market is ensuring that accurate, timely and comprehensive information about investment products and projects reaches all investors, he said. The proliferation of social media has added digital fraud to these challenges.

Is Bangladesh's

FROM PAGE B1

According to the BGMEA, women made up roughly 80 percent of Bangladesh's garment workforce between 1980 and 1994. The figure fell to 70 percent by 2005 and to around 53 percent in both 2021 and 2023, according to studies by the Ethical Trading Initiative, GIZ, BRAC University and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Industry insiders say younger workers increasingly prefer occupations such as driving auto-rickshaws or operating small shops, which they perceive as offering "greater flexibility and a more comfortable lifestyle".

Automation and artificial intelligence are adding another dimension to the challenge, as factory owners adopt new technologies to reduce costs and remain competitive. Meanwhile, some female garment workers have moved to countries such as Jordan, attracted by higher salaries, greater dignity and better employment benefits.

Despite these difficulties, Bangladesh has made significant progress in workplace safety and compliance. Inspections and remediation initiatives under the Accord and Alliance have improved factory safety standards, helping strengthen the country's international reputation.

However, improved compliance alone will not guarantee continued competitiveness. Exporters must also contend with rising costs, supply-chain disruptions and the risk of losing preferential access to major markets.

THE WAY FORWARD

Bangladesh retains important advantages, including substantial installed production capacity and a large, experienced workforce capable of serving international retailers and brands.

The challenge is to build on these strengths while reducing dependence on price competition in basic garments.

One option is to diversify export destinations. Markets such as India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Brazil and Argentina could help reduce dependence on traditional Western markets.

Bangladesh has been pursuing trade agreements to preserve preferential access after LDC graduation. These initiatives include an Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan and a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with South Korea, alongside negotiations with other countries.

According to BGMEA's Mahmud, international buyers had become concerned about concentrating too much of their sourcing in Bangladesh, prompting them to diversify their supply chains.

Nevertheless, Bangladeshi exporters are increasingly targeting Asian markets, particularly Japan, India and South Korea.

He added that the BGMEA had lobbied the Ministry of Commerce to negotiate FTAs with countries such as Brazil and South Africa, where Bangladeshi exports face tariffs exceeding 25 percent. Such agreements could help exporters secure zero-duty access.

The association has also urged the government to negotiate with the United States to waive the 10 percent duty on garments using US cotton and man-made fibres. Expanding exports of higher-value man-made fibre products could further improve the sector's prospects.

However, market diversification and trade agreements will need to be accompanied by improvements in domestic production conditions.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), said the garment industry was confronting numerous domestic and international challenges, with rising business costs being a central concern.

He emphasised that Bangladesh must strengthen its competitiveness by reducing production expenses, increasing prices per unit through value addition, ensuring adequate energy supplies and lowering logistics costs.

The sector's long-term sustainability will ultimately depend on whether Bangladesh can move beyond its traditional reliance on low-cost production, according to the economist.

Modernising factories, upgrading products, diversifying markets and securing favourable trade arrangements will be crucial as the country navigates the post-LDC era, he said.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE B1

Khosru said, "Our cooperation with the World Bank under the partnership is not only about existing projects. A global disaster is going on in the energy sector, and we need a cushion for this."

The 2026 annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank began in Bangkok yesterday and will run until October 18 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre. More than 15,000 delegates from around the world are attending the week-long discussions on the global economy.

Speaking at an event during the meetings, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said strong investment in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure is helping to keep global economic growth at around 3 percent, with major benefits for Asia. However, she warned that the technology also foreshadows a "slow-moving tsunami" that can massively disrupt labour markets, taxation and education.

Kristalina said the AI investment boom is already delivering a "demand shock, an investment shock". It could lift growth by half to one percentage point in advanced Asian economies and by 0.2 to 0.8 percentage points in emerging Asian economies.

"AI, love it, or hate it, it's already here," she said.

"That shift into higher gear is what is keeping the world economy growing at around 3 percent, despite the fact we are being dragged down by the energy supply shock," she said.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)
বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ
আইইবি ভবন (লেভেল ৯ ও ১০), রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০
www.sreda.gov.bd

নং: ২৭.০২.০০০০.০২২.১৮.০০১.২২-২৭৫ তারিখ: ১২ অক্টোবর ২০২৬ খ্রিঃ

৯ম জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ আইন, ২০১২ এবং জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষা প্রবিধানমালা, ২০২৩ অনুযায়ী বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানির বৃহৎ ব্যবহারকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহে জ্বালানির দক্ষ ও সাশ্রয়ী ব্যবহার চিহ্নিত এবং নিশ্চিত করতে দেশে পর্যাপ্ত সংখ্যক জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক তৈরী করা স্রেডার একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কার্যক্রম। এ প্রেক্ষিতে, স্রেডা ৯ম জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ পরীক্ষা আয়োজন করতে যাচ্ছে। উক্ত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে আবেদন আহবান করা হচ্ছে।

২। আগ্রহী প্রার্থীগণকে আগামি **২২ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ খ্রিঃ** তারিখের মধ্যে অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং আবেদন ফি প্রদান সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।

৩। যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হওয়া সাপেক্ষে জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ প্রদান করা হবে। পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। বিস্তারিত তথ্য সম্বলিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী জানতে ভিজিট করুন www.sreda.gov.bd ওয়েবপেজ।

অনলাইন আবেদন ফরমের লিংক: https://forms.gle/rGkDV6bQz3TLrXNk7

স্বা/=
(মোঃ আব্দুল্লাহ আল মামুন)
সহকারী পরিচালক
জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষা ও এক্রিডিটেশন

GD-2476

ISLAMIC FOUNDATION PRESS
Islamic Foundation
Ministry of Religious Affairs
Agargaon, Sher e Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

Memo No: 16.01.0000.012.04.114.25-155 Date: 12 October, 2026

Re-Tender Notice

A number of e-Re-Tenders have been invited through the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods as Stated below:

Tender Id	Description of Tender	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing & Opening Date with Time
1351972	Purchase of 80 GSM Roll-Fed White Offset Printing Paper (Width 30") for Web Offset Printing Machine	12 October 2026 at 17:00	26 October 2026 at 14:00	26 October 2026 at 17:00
1351182	Purchase of Sheet-Fed White Offset Printing Paper of Different Sizes and Thicknesses	12 October 2026 at 17:00	26 October 2026 at 14:00	26 October 2026 at 17:00

This is an online Re-Tender process in which only e-Tenders submitted through the National e-GP Portal will be accepted. No offline or hard copies of tenders will be accepted. Tenderers are required to register with the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) to submit their e-Tenders. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal shall be deposited online through any registered bank branch.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System and from the e-GP Helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all e-Tenders.

(Md. Mohiuddin)
Press Manager
Islamic Foundation Press

GD-2484

Rice prices

FROM PAGE B1

According to Shaon, transporting a truckload of rice from Kushtia to Dhaka previously cost Tk 20,000, but the expense has risen to Tk 24,000 following the fuel price hike.

Mamunur Rashid, another wholesaler at the same market, said the end of the season was also contributing to the price rise, as harvesting of Aman paddy had only recently begun in several districts.

Rice prices, however, remain slightly lower than at the same time last year, he added.

According to media reports and TCB data, coarse rice sold for Tk 55-65 per kg around the same time last year, while fine rice cost Tk 75-85, depending on quality.

Mohiuddin Sarker Saiful, a wholesaler and retailer at Karwan Bazar, also cited higher transportation and paddy costs as factors behind the increase.

The latest round of fuel price adjustments in the third week of September raised the prices of diesel, petrol and octane by Tk 20 per litre amid volatile global market prices and rising subsidies.

Traders and millers in Kushtia and Naogaon, two important rice-producing and trading areas, also reported increases, citing higher paddy prices, transportation costs and seasonal factors.

Joynal Abedin Pradhan, general secretary of the Bangladesh Auto Major and Husking Mill Owners Association in Kushtia, said mill-gate prices of rice had increased by Tk 1-2 per kg over the past month.

Mill-gate prices are the rates at which millers sell processed rice to wholesalers, before transportation and other trading costs are added further along the supply chain.

Depending on the variety, fine rice was now selling for Tk 55-67 per kg at the mill gate, Joynal said.

He attributed the increase to higher diesel and paddy prices. Paddy prices had risen from Tk 1,120 to Tk 1,240 per maund over the past month, he said.

At this time of year, paddy is dried more thoroughly, reducing its moisture content and weight, which can increase the effective cost of the raw material, he added.

Nirod Boron Saha, a rice miller and president of the Rice and Paddy Stockists and Wholesalers Association in Naogaon, said wholesale prices of fine rice had risen by Tk 30-50 per maund over the past five days.

Fine rice was selling at Tk 2,050-2,080 per maund (37.32 kg) in the local wholesale market, he said.

Nirod said prices of different rice varieties had increased by Tk 1-1.50 per kg in recent days as the season neared its end, describing the rise as normal for this time of year.

[Our Kushtia correspondent, Anis Mondol, contributed to this report.]

Two Beximco

FROM PAGE B1

As a result, Beximco LPG Unit-1 could not obtain credit from banks or financial institutions, making it difficult for the company to continue its operations.

The central bank has now relaxed the restriction for the company, subject to several conditions. The conditions include that the government and the central bank will bear no liability for the new credit facilities.

Besides, National Bank will not be able to claim any financial assistance from the government or the Bangladesh Bank in the future in connection with these facilities.

To qualify for the new credit facilities, Beximco LPG Unit-1 must deposit all its income into a designated bank account. It must then use that income to repay its dues to National Bank regularly on a proportional basis, according to the central bank circular. A similar exemption has been granted to Shinepukur Ceramics, which has defaulted on loans from state-owned Sonali Bank.

The Bangladesh Bank said the legal restriction would be relaxed to allow the renewal of the company's existing working capital limit of Tk 105 crore, despite its loan-default status. The central bank said the concession has been provided in the public interest.

Shinepukur Ceramics will also have to meet conditions similar to those imposed on Beximco LPG Unit-1 to receive the renewed credit facility.

The Bangladesh Bank informed the managing directors and chief executive officers of all banks about the legal exemptions granted to the two Beximco companies.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Medical Education & Family Welfare Division
Integrated Development Project of DGME NIPORT and DGNM
National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT)
13/1 Sheikh Shaheb Bazar, Azimpur, Dhaka-1205
www.niport.gov.bd

Ref. No: 59.12.0000.000.003.14.0007.26-126 Date: 12/10/2026

e-Tender Notice

Director General, National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) is inviting e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of the following work described below:

Sl. No	Name of Work	Tender ID	Scheduled Tender/ Proposal Publication/ Selling/Downloading Date and Time	Tender/Proposal/ Closing and Opening Date and Time
1.	Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS)-2026 Collaboration with Renowned International Universities/Organizations.	1352330	13-Oct-2026 11:00 AM	03-Nov-2026 11:00 AM

1. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no Offline/Hard copies will be accepted.
2. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd).
3. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal to be deposited through any branch of the scheduled bank.

12-9-26
(Hero Dhar)
Assistant Project Director
Phone- 02-226683610
E-mail: adtraining1@niport.gov.bd

GD-2481

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Narsingdi.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: -46.02.6800.000.07.001.26- 2047 Date: 11.10.26

e-Tender Notice-12/2026-2027

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for 5 Nos Packages under GoBM FY 2026-2027 for District: Narsingdi.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of Scheme (Package Number)	Last selling date & time	Closing & Opening date & time
1	1345453	LGED/GOBM/NSD/26-27/RW-17 Rehabilitation (Uni-Block) of Mahmudabad R&H-Ramnagor Bazar - Gouripur Road from Ch. 00m-685m under Raipura Upazila, District: Narsingdi. [Road ID: 368644067]	25-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 13:00
2	1345454	LGED/GOBM/NSD/26-27/RW-18 Rehabilitation (Uni-Block) of Sumit Power Station (RHD)-Madhabdi G.C (Nayapara) via Rainadi Pry. School Road from Ch. 600m-1710m under Narsingdi-S Upazila, District: Narsingdi. [Road ID: 368604052]	25-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 13:00
3	1345455	LGED/GOBM/NSD/26-27/RW-19 Rehabilitation (Uni-Block) of Shekerchar Bazar (Seven Storied Mour)-Shekerchar Zobo Nagar Model School Road from Ch. 00m-500m under Narsingdi-S Upazila, District: Narsingdi.	25-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 13:00
4	1345456	LGED/GOBM/NSD/26-27/RW-20 Rehabilitation (widening) of Taltoli R&H to Rampur Bazer Gazaria UP Road from Ch. 4278m-4800m under Palash Upazila, District: Narsingdi. [Road ID: 368633010]150	25-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 13:00
5	1345457	LGED/GOBM/NSD/26-27/RW-21 Rehabilitation (widening) of Fauji Jute Mill-Chalana RHD from Ch. 00m-998m under Palash Upazila, district: Narsingdi. [Road ID: 368634001]	25-10-2026 16.00	26-10-2026 13:00

(i) Micro and Small Enterprise: In the last three years (counted from the date of publication of tender), total value of the contract awarded under public procurement is less than or equal BDT 1 crore.
(ii) Women-owned Enterprise: An Enterprise owned by a Woman.
(iii) New Enterprise: An Enterprise formed in the period of last 2 years (counted from the date of publication of tender)
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 System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. It will be available online after 14 October, 2026.
The Tender Security have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 26 October 2026 12:00PM for all tenders of this notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mohammad Fulkam Badshah)
Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-9462260
e-mail: xen.narsingdi@lged.gov.bd

GD-2478



The photo shows an entry point outside Queen Sirikit National Convention Center on the opening day of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Bangkok yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

IMF-WORLD BANK MEETINGS

Policymakers take on energy shock, rising debt

AFP, *Bangkok*

Finance ministers and central bankers meet in Bangkok this week for the annual gatherings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with the global economy buffeted between the US-Iran war's energy shock, rising debt pressures and the AI boom.

The meetings run from Monday through Saturday in the Thai capital, and will see policymakers tackle some stark choices, with the IMF calling on governments to rein in spending even as vulnerable citizens' needs may be growing in the face of surging inflation and climate risks.

The week will see a combination of high-level closed-door meetings, public events and policy announcements from the world's top economic officials.

On Tuesday, the IMF will unveil its global economic forecast, along with detailed regional outlooks through the week, as policymakers set about tackling the challenges darkening the economic horizon. In Bangkok, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva highlighted how the world economy was being pulled in opposite directions by the negative energy supply shock caused by the US war on Iran and the positive demand shock of the artificial intelligence technology boom.

"That shift into higher gear (from AI) is what is keeping the world economy growing at three percent," she told an event on the first day of the meetings, adding the growth was "despite the fact we are being dragged down by the energy supply shock."

At a press briefing, World Bank President Ajay Banga told AFP his message to developing countries on AI was to focus on building "small AI" applications, rather than trying to compete on capital-intensive models.

"Don't try and compete with America and China on frontier models and large data centres," he said. "You don't have the computing power. You don't have the electricity. You don't have the people."

Banga said AI-powered applications could run on less powerful smartphones and be used in healthcare, education, agriculture and other fields that are development priorities for low-income countries.

Chief among concerns in Bangkok will be the economic fallout of the US war on Iran, which has seen energy prices skyrocket as Tehran's retaliatory action has targeted Washington's Gulf allies and curtailed global oil and gas supplies.

The IMF has warned that the effects of the shock have been unequal, with developing countries reliant on imported energy hit the hardest. Despite the crisis, the Fund has called on countries to curb spending on subsidies and instead build their fiscal buffers after years of shocks since the pandemic.

Critics say that approach is just not feasible for low-income countries, and that multilateral lenders need to do more.

"The poorer member states of the IMF and World Bank are in distress from spillovers of the Iran war, rising interest rates in the West, and a climate crisis exacerbated by El Nino," said Kevin P. Gallagher, director of Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

"The IMF and World Bank are not meeting this moment. They need an ambitious response that provides short-term emergency liquidity alongside longer term financing to make their economic growth paths less vulnerable to these shocks." And the needs are great, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The combined shocks "could leave millions more in poverty as developing countries struggle to sustain support for households," the UNDP warned in a report on Sunday. "We are witnessing a perfect storm that could throw tens if not hundreds of millions of people back into poverty," said UNDP Administrator Alexander De Croo.

In the developing world, he added, governments are being forced to make the "impossible" choice between cutting support for their poorest citizens or risking their entire development agenda.

Advanced economies in Europe and the United States have weathered the storm from the rising energy prices better, but have not been immune to surging inflation fuelled by those price increases, which have begun to bleed into other goods.

That inflation has seen central banks around the world raise interest rates in an effort to curb rising prices, tapping the brakes on economic activity.

Still, advanced economies have seen a boom in investment in artificial intelligence technology drive stock markets to new highs and bolster economic growth.

The week will also see several key meetings on the sidelines, including of G20 finance ministers, where spiking bond yields will be high on the agenda.

A notable absence at that meeting will be US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who will skip due to "domestic engagements", a department official said on Friday.

World Bank President Ajay Banga said AI-powered applications could run on less powerful smartphones and be used in healthcare, education, agriculture and other fields that are development priorities for low-income countries.

Can farmers break free from seed market dependence?

M JAMAL UDDIN

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in food production, but a stronger seed system could take this success further. Millions of farmers face rising seed costs and growing dependence on commercial suppliers. Empowering them to produce, save and exchange quality seeds is vital to reduce market dependence and build a more resilient agricultural system.

Bangladesh's seed demand for the 2025-26 season is about 1,209,050 tonnes, of which formal agencies are expected to supply around 347,286 tonnes (29 percent). The private sector accounts for 201,151 tonnes (16.6 percent), BADC 145,635 tonnes (12.1 percent) and the BMDA 500 tonnes (0.04 percent).

The seed sector also remains heavily dependent on imports, especially for commercially important crops. The Business Standard reported that Bangladesh imports around 80 percent of its jute seed and 90-95 percent of its maize seed, while hybrid rice, vegetables, oilseeds and pulses also rely substantially on foreign supplies.

The risk emerges when domestic research, production and distribution cannot offer competitive alternatives. Farmers are then left exposed to exchange rate shifts, international disruptions and uncertain delivery schedules, particularly smallholders in remote and climate-vulnerable areas.

Farmers' dependence is not only about imports. It also concerns who controls seed availability, price, quality and choice. An International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) report published by CGIAR in September 2024 noted that fewer than half of Bangladeshi farmers use certified seed, while many depend on informal sources.

A 2024 study of 1,196 rice farmers in northern Bangladesh likewise identified limited access to quality seed and low seed replacement as persistent challenges. Moreover, buying packaged seed does not guarantee quality unless certification and enforcement work.



Farmers are left exposed to exchange rate shifts, international disruptions and uncertain delivery schedules, particularly smallholders in remote and climate-vulnerable areas.

The first policy priority should be stronger domestic seed production, not simply a blanket campaign against imports. Public research institutions such as BRRI, BARI and BINA need predictable funding for breeding, breeder-seed production and rapid multiplication of climate-resilient, high-yielding varieties.

BADC should concentrate on foundation seed, strategic crops and underserved regions, while contracting capable farmer groups, cooperatives and private producers for multiplication. Clear purchase agreements, timely payments and transparent quality standards would encourage growers to invest. Second, community-based seed enterprises must be made commercially viable. Farmers' groups, women-led enterprises and local entrepreneurs can multiply suitable open-pollinated rice, pulses, oilseeds and vegetable varieties. They need training in isolation distances, rouging, harvesting, drying, storage, testing, packaging and record-keeping, as well as affordable credit and shared processing facilities.

Third, distribution and regulation need reform. In a 2025 initiative, IRRI, BADC and the PARTNER project convened more than 130 public- and private-sector stakeholders to identify gaps in forecasting, varietal replacement, seed movement and quality assurance. The government should publish crop-wise, season-wise seed demand, stocks, prices and delivery locations in accessible formats, linking research, dealers, extension officers and farmer organisations. The Seed Certification Agency needs adequate laboratories, field inspectors and risk-based market surveillance. Complaints and counterfeit-seed cases should trigger traceable investigations and penalties.

Finally, seed policy must distinguish strategic autonomy from self-sufficiency at any cost. Bangladesh should reduce avoidable dependence where domestic production is feasible, while allowing responsible imports when they provide superior genetics or fill genuine shortages.

Public procurement, research grants and tax incentives should reward locally bred, tested and climate-adapted seed, not merely domestic packaging. Variety registration should be scientifically rigorous but timely, and small firms should receive practical guidance rather than face disproportionate compliance costs. Farmers will break free from excessive market dependence when they have real choice: reliable seed they can save where appropriate, trusted local suppliers, fair prices and varieties suited to their fields.

The writer is principal scientific officer at BARI

Global poverty index rises for first time since its 2010 creation

AFP, *Washington*

A UN global poverty index has risen for the first time since its creation in 2010, bringing the number of people affected to 1.2 billion, the United Nations Development Programme reported Monday.

In the 2026 edition of their annual report, the UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative research center counted 51.5 million more people living in "acute" poverty compared to the previous year.

UNDP Administrator Alexander De Croo said the increase in poverty should be a "wake-up call for the world." "Behind these figures are 1.2 billion people facing hardships that reinforce one another: hunger, missed schooling and a lack of clean water or electricity. This is unacceptable," he said in a press release. More than half of those in acute poverty were children.

However, UNDP said a major factor in the recorded increase was population growth, and new data was only available for 13 of the 108 developing countries covered by the report.

While the total number of people in poverty has increased, the report provides a mixed picture. Some 33 nations have halved the percentage of their people living in poverty as defined by the index in the past 15 years.

Those included six countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Among the countries that have made the most rapid progress were countries in Asia -- China and Vietnam -- UNDP said. As in the previous year, the report found that the majority of the poorest people live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, specifically the Indian subcontinent, the most densely populated region on Earth.

"In Egypt, Nepal, and Tajikistan, both the poverty rate and the number of people experiencing multidimensional poverty have decreased significantly," the press release said.

In Angola and Zambia, the poverty rate has also declined, but population growth has more than offset this decrease, resulting in an increase in the number of people living in poverty.

The poverty index used in the report includes indicators such as the lack of adequate housing, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, food and education.



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

A pilot project will initially be launched in three districts, allowing farmers to sell their paddy to the government without hassle. The photo was taken from Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi recently.

Govt plans to buy paddy directly from farmers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government is planning to procure paddy directly from farmers, bypassing middlemen, to ensure fair prices for growers, Food Minister Afroza Khanam said yesterday.

A pilot project will initially be launched in three districts, allowing farmers to sell their paddy to the government easily and without harassment.

If successful, the programme will be expanded nationwide in phases, she said.

The minister made the remarks as the chief guest at a views-exchange meeting with food department officials at the Chattogram Circuit House conference room. The meeting was organised by the district administration and the food department.

She said farmers often face difficulties selling paddy directly to the government, including opening bank accounts and completing other formalities. The government is taking steps to remove these hurdles and simplify the process.

If necessary, it will also consider paying farmers through mobile financial services such as bKash and Nagad, she added.

The government's election manifesto pledges to ensure fair prices for farmers and deliver safe food to households on time, the minister said.

To achieve these goals, food department officials must perform their duties with honesty, dedication and accountability, she added.

The country currently lacks sufficient mini laboratories for food testing, but the government plans to supply them to all 64 districts soon, she said.

This would improve field-level sampling and strengthen efforts to ensure food safety, she added.

Dollar firm near 18-month highs

REUTERS, *London*

The dollar traded around its highest in a year and a half on Monday, as an escalating Middle East conflict kept investors wary ahead of key US inflation data later this week.

That could shape the outlook for interest rates. Oil prices were volatile after Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis stepped up strikes on Saudi Arabia, while two tankers were attacked over the weekend.

Brent crude futures were down 0.5 percent at $104 a barrel, under a touch of pressure after Sunday's announcement from US President Donald Trump about an energy ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia.

The futures price is still nearly 45 percent above where it was before the war started, while prices on some physical markets are double those levels.

The dollar index, which tracks the US currency against six others, was slightly down at 102.16 but remained within sight of last week's 18-month highs.

Weekly data from the US markets regulator shows investors have been adding to their bullish positions in the dollar.

The positions rose to around $36 billion in the week to October 7, from just $8.4 billion three weeks ago, largely at the expense of the euro.

"The US dollar has strengthened recently on the back of negative developments overseas that have boosted its appeal even as market participants have pared back expectations for Fed rate hikes," MUFG currency strategist Lee Hardman said.

Wednesday's US consumer inflation report, one of the last major economic releases before the Federal Reserve's policy meeting this month, could be critical in determining the near-term direction of the dollar.

Data last week showed US consumer sentiment deteriorated further in early October, as the rising cost of living because of the Middle East conflict soured households' views of the economy.