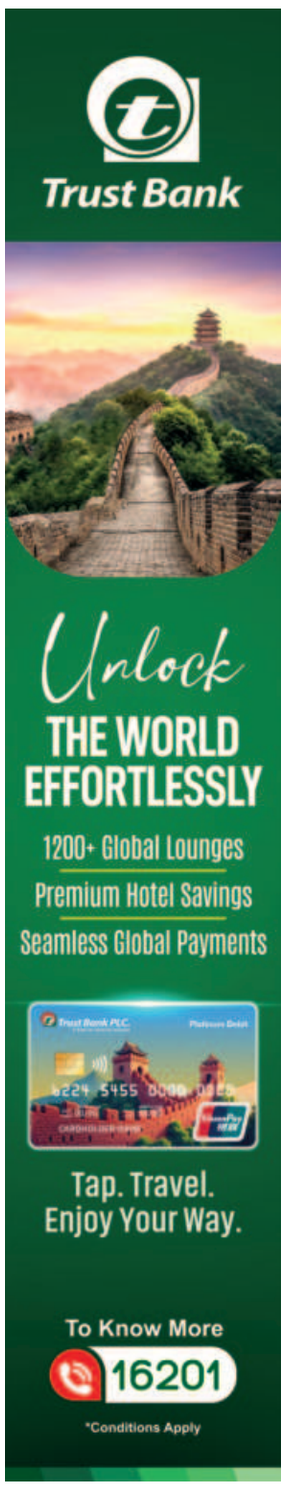
Business

DHAKA MONDAY OCTOBER 19, 2026, KARTIK 3, 1433 BS
starbusiness@thedailystar.net



B4

BTRC TO STUDY TELECOM GAPS IN REMOTE AREAS



Nearly Tk 12,000cr of private sector stimulus disbursed

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank has disbursed around Tk 12,000 crore of its Tk 60,000 crore stimulus package by mid-October to revive struggling businesses, reopen closed factories and boost investment and employment.

More than Tk 2,500 crore was still in the process of being disbursed, according to the central bank's latest progress report.

However, several targeted sectors, including jobless youths, have yet to receive any loans.

Announced in May, the package aims to support the troubled private sector, revive economic activity and create jobs.

It has two components: a Tk 41,000 crore refinancing fund sourced from banks with excess liquidity and a Tk 19,000 crore fund drawn from Bangladesh Bank's own resources, backed by a government guarantee.

More than Tk 2,500 crore was still in the process of being disbursed

The scheme-wise performance showed considerable differences, with export pre-shipment credit and cottage and micro-enterprise financing recording substantial disbursements, while several employment, export diversification and rural development schemes registered no loan disbursement.

The pre-shipment credit refinance scheme emerged as the largest contributor to disbursements, with Tk 6,917 crore released against its Tk 5,000 crore target, exceeding the allocation by 38 percent.

The cottage and micro sector entrepreneurs special scheme disbursed Tk 2,500 crore against its Tk 5,000 crore target, achieving 50 percent implementation.

The CMSME working capital refinance fund released Tk 908 crore against an allocation of Tk 5,000 crore, while the creative economy scheme fully disbursed its Tk 500 crore allocation.

READ MORE ON B3

'A ticking time bomb': AI threatens to deepen youth job crisis



The person who writes the education chapter of the government's plan doesn't get the chance to review the youth chapter. There is no coordination in the planning process.

M Niaz Asadullah
Professor of economics, DU



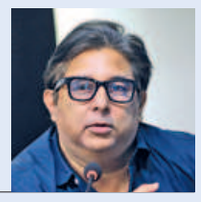
Graduate unemployment is even more alarming than what the IMF says. On our platform, we know that at least 50%-60% of graduates get no job for four to five years after graduating.

Fahim Mashroor
CEO, Bdjobs



AI will cut jobs; there is no doubt. But our white-collar base is so small that AI can help us leapfrog if every CEO uses it as artificial wisdom rather than a regular worker.

Raisul Kabir
Founder and CEO, Brain Station 23 Ltd



Anything you can do on a computer, AI can do it better and faster. One can do the work of twenty. We cannot stop it; we must prepare to be AI-ready.

Mustafa Mahmud Hussain
Co-founder and MD, PukuAI

RECOMMENDATIONS

BUSINESS AND BEYOND

- Integrate AI literacy into education and training
- Align technical and vocational training with AI
- Embed critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving
- Expand teachers' AI access and practical training
- Align skills training with global market demand
- Promote income-sharing for training and skilled migration
- Incentivise companies to hire fresh graduates

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh is sitting on a "ticking time bomb" as high unemployment, particularly among educated young people, collides with the rapid advance of artificial intelligence (AI). The technology threatens to eliminate jobs that graduates have long relied on to enter the workforce, according to IT professionals and an academic.

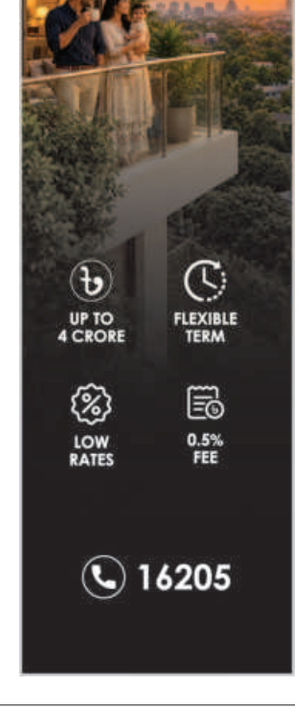
But AI could also create opportunities in higher-value services, caregiving, hospitality and other professions that depend on human interaction, provided Bangladesh prepares its workforce for the changing demands of the global economy, they said.

At a discussion at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, the speakers said the challenge is not simply to train young people to use AI, but to reform an education system that has failed to equip many graduates with basic skills, align training with market demand and prepare workers for emerging opportunities overseas.

The Daily Star organised the event, titled "AI and Youth Employment: Is Bangladesh Prepared?", as the eighth episode of its "Business & Beyond" series.

The discussion followed repeated warnings from global development partners about AI's impact on the labour market. Last week, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said AI is affecting labour markets like a "slow-moving tsunami", with about 40 percent of jobs worldwide eventually affected and young graduates among the most exposed.

READ MORE ON B3





FAO to provide $447,000 for pesticide safety, women's businesses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh will receive $447,000 in grants from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for safer pesticide management and green businesses led by rural women.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the FAO signed two agreements in Dhaka yesterday to implement the projects.

ERD Secretary Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky and FAO Representative in Bangladesh Jiaoqun Shi signed the agreements, according to a press release.

Of the total grant, $200,000 will fund a four-year project to strengthen pesticide management, while $247,000 will support a 24-month initiative to help rural women establish environmentally friendly businesses.

The first project, titled "Strengthening Capacities for Lifecycle Management of Pesticides", is part of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme, funded by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The project will support updated pesticide regulations, digital registration systems, stronger enforcement and improved laboratory capacity for residue testing. It will also raise farmers' awareness of safe pesticide use.

The project document reports that more than 30 percent of vegetables in Bangladesh contain excessive pesticide residues.

Of the total grant, $200,000 will fund a four-year project to strengthen pesticide management, while $247,000 will support a 24-month initiative to help rural women establish environmentally friendly businesses

The second initiative, "Green Roots Women's Farm Labs", is being piloted in Bangladesh and Uganda. Building on the FAO's Farmer Field School approach, it will help rural women develop green micro-businesses through training, appropriate technology, and access to finance and markets.

Nagad app gets new look

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Nagad, the mobile financial service of the Bangladesh Postal Department, has rolled out a redesigned mobile application aimed at making digital financial transactions faster, easier, and more secure.

Built with a user-friendly interface and cutting-edge technology, the new app will elevate people's daily financial experience to new heights, according to a press release on October 13.

Designed as one of the safest apps in the country's financial sector, it will be continuously upgraded and made more user-friendly in phases, with many new features to be added in the future.

The new Nagad app is now available on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store. Customers must update the app before making any new transactions to ensure uninterrupted digital services.

The transaction experience on Nagad has become smoother and more convenient. The new app features significantly lower response, load, and lag times compared to other financial service apps. Frequently used features have been organised based on customer convenience. With its simple and hassle-free design, marginalised populations can also use the app easily.

BRAC Bank, IFPRI to build digital financing ecosystem for farmers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have recently partnered to expand digital payments and access to formal credit across Bangladesh's agricultural value chains.

The Gates Foundation is supporting the initiative, which was developed under FINNOVISION, BRAC Bank's impact-driven SME Innovation Lab, according to a press release.

The two-year pilot, which will run until October 2028, will bring farmers and agricultural input retailers into the digital payments ecosystem. Their digital transaction histories will then help assess creditworthiness and facilitate access to formal financing for individuals and businesses that have traditionally relied on informal sources of credit. The initiative aims to reach 50,000 farmers and 1,500 agricultural input retailers.

BRAC Bank and IFPRI will jointly design and deliver payment and credit solutions through the bank's digital platforms – Astha, Shafollo, and Jibika – as well as its Agent Banking network. IFPRI will lead rigorous impact research, including randomised evaluations, to identify the factors driving adoption and assess the approach's effectiveness and scalability.

The evidence generated will inform policymakers and help shape the potential for wider national adoption.

BRAC Bank Additional Managing Director and Head of SME Banking Syed Abdul Momen and IFPRI Director General Johan Swinnen signed the partnership agreement.

BRAC Bank Additional Managing Director and Head of Wholesale Banking Md Shaheen Iqbal, was present. Present from IFPRI were Senior Research Fellow Kate Ambler, IFPRI Country Representative for Bangladesh Moogdho Mahzab, and Research Fellow and Project Lead Mehrab Bakhtiar.



Officials of BRAC Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute are seen at the signing event in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: BRAC BANK

ACI Marine, MHI-ESA host Mitsubishi marine engine seminar



PHOTO: ACI LTD

Participants pose for photographs at the Mitsubishi Marine Engine Seminar at the Renaissance Dhaka Gulshan Hotel on Friday.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

ACI Marine and Riverine Technologies Ltd, a concern of ACI Ltd, and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Engine System Asia (MHI-ESA) jointly organised a Mitsubishi Marine Engine Seminar at the Renaissance Dhaka Gulshan Hotel on Friday, October 16.

More than 60 senior representatives from the country's marine sector took part in the programme, bringing together government bodies and private sector entities, including regulatory and transport authorities such as BIWTA and BIWTC, port authorities, shipbuilders, dredger and fishing vessel owners, design and engineering consultants, classification societies, and academic institutions, according to a press release.

At the event, ACI Motors Managing Director Subrata Ranjan Das shared his vision for ACI's long-term commitment to advancing Bangladesh's marine sector.

ACI Marine Adviser Rajib Tripura highlighted the growing opportunities for Mitsubishi marine engines across the government and private sectors in Bangladesh, discussing their key operational advantages and stressing the importance of collaborative industry partnerships.

Delivering a guest address, Marine House Ltd Managing Director Md Shamsul Alam commended ACI Marine's achievements and praised the quality and reputation of the Mitsubishi engine brand in the country, expressing strong interest in future collaboration.

Bank Asia wins WSBI SDG Award 2026 again

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia PLC has received the World Savings and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI) SDG Award 2026 for the second time in a row. The award is a testament to its outstanding contribution to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The bank was recognised in the category of "Excellence in Inclusive Banking & Social Impact" for its commitment to promoting financial inclusion and creating meaningful social impact, according to a press release.

Mohammad Ziaul Hasan Molla, additional managing director of Bank Asia, received the award from Peter Simon, chief executive officer of WSBI, at an award ceremony held in Bangkok, Thailand, on October 15.

Ulrich Reuter, president of Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband (DSGV, German Savings Banks Association) and vice-president for WSBI, and Nahid Imani, senior executive vice president and head of Corporate & Large Loan of Bank Asia, were also present.

Held in the context of the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, the WSBI-ESBG SDG Awards Ceremony was organised by WSBI and the European Savings and Retail Banking Group (ESBG) for the second time.

The initiative recognises member institutions that have made remarkable contributions to economic prosperity, social and financial inclusion, and environmental responsibility in alignment with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bank Asia participated in the WSBI-ESBG SDG Data Survey and SDG Awards initiatives, which highlight financial institutions' contributions to sustainability, financial inclusion, and social transformation. This recognition reaffirms the bank's continued commitment to making a lasting difference in people's lives and communities through sustainable, inclusive, and socially responsible banking practices.

The latest accolade follows Bank Asia's achievement at the WSBI SDG Awards 2025 in Washington, DC, further underscoring the bank's sustained efforts to expand financial inclusion, empower underserved communities, and promote sustainable development.



Mohammad Ziaul Hasan Molla, additional managing director of Bank Asia, poses for photographs with the WSBI SDG Award 2026, alongside Peter Simon, chief executive officer of WSBI, at an award ceremony held in Bangkok on October 15. PHOTO: BANK ASIA

Turkish Airlines, GolfHouse team up for joint promotions

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Turkish Airlines and GolfHouse have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation through promotional activities and client engagement initiatives.

The agreement was signed at GolfHouse headquarters in Dhaka on October 16, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, GolfHouse will promote Turkish Airlines through various initiatives and engage its clients and business network to raise awareness of the airline's services.

The collaboration provides a framework for closer cooperation between the two organisations, connecting Turkish Airlines with GolfHouse's audience across golf, business and lifestyle.

İslam Güre, general manager of Turkish Airlines in Dhaka, and Ejaz Kadry, marketing officer (international) of the airline, attended the signing ceremony. A M M Nazrul Hosen, founder and chief executive officer of TheGolfHouse and GolfHouse Holdings Ltd, and K M Bodiuzzaman, director of operations at GolfHouse, represented the organisation.

Turkish Airlines operates seven weekly passenger flights between Dhaka and Istanbul. Its cargo division also operates two weekly cargo flights from Bangladesh.

GolfHouse is a Bangladesh-based golf media and business platform that brings together golfers, corporate leaders, diplomats and industry partners through publishing, tournaments and events.



İslam Güre, general manager of Turkish Airlines in Dhaka, and AMM Nazrul Hosen, founder and chief executive officer of TheGolfHouse and GolfHouse Holdings Ltd, pose for photographs at GolfHouse headquarters in Dhaka on October 16. PHOTO: TURKISH AIRLINES

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, খুলনা
রাজস্ব শাখা
www.khulna.gov.bd

স্মারক নম্বর -০৫.৪৪.৪৭০০.০৩১.৩২.০০০২.২৬.৪৯

তারিখ: ৩১ আশ্বিন ১৪৩৩ / ১৬ অক্টোবর ২০২৬

বালুমহাল ইজারায় অংশগ্রহণের নিমিত্ত তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বালুমহাল ও মাটি ব্যবস্থাপনা আইন, ২০১০ এর ধারা- ১০ এবং বালুমহাল ও মাটি ব্যবস্থাপনা বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ এর বিধি ৪ উপবিধি ৫ মোতাবেক বাংলা ১৪৩৪ সনের জন্য বালুমহাল ইজারায় অংশগ্রহণের নিমিত্ত তালিকাভুক্তি বা নবায়নের জন্য আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিম্নোক্ত নির্ধারিত শর্তাবলী পূরণ সাপেক্ষে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

শর্তাবলি:-

১. বিলম্বে ফিসহ আবেদন জমা দেওয়ার শেষ তারিখ ১৫ কার্তিক ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ অফিস চলাকালীন।
২. আবেদন ফরম জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়ের রাজস্ব শাখা(কক্ষ নং-৩০৮) এবং সকল উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয় হতে বিনামূল্যে পাওয়া যাবে।
৩. নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের মধ্যে জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, খুলনায় আবেদন দাখিল করতে হবে।
৪. আবেদনপত্রে কোন ঘষামাজা বা কাটাকাটি করা যাবে না।
৫. **তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য আবেদনপত্রের সাথে নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে:**

(ক) প্রথম শ্রেণি:-

১. ট্রেড লাইসেন্স
২. TIN ও সর্বশেষ আয়কর পরিশোধের প্রমাণপত্র
৩. ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট
৪. ভ্যাট সার্টিফিকেট
৫. জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র
৬. ড্রেজার/মেশিনের মালিক বা উক্ত মেশিন ভাড়ায় সংগ্রহ করার ক্ষেত্রে যার নিকট হতে ভাড়ায় আনা হবে তার প্রত্যয়ন পত্র
৭. লাইসেন্স ফি ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা [(অফেরতযোগ্য) নির্দিষ্ট A চালানে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। আবেদনের সাথে **মূল চালান কপি** সংযুক্ত করে দাখিল করতে হবে।]
৮. ৩ (তিন) কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি
৯. লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি- ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা
১০. তালিকাভুক্তির ও তালিকাভুক্তির সনদ নবায়নের বিলম্ব আবেদন ফি ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা

(খ) দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি:-

১. ট্রেড লাইসেন্স
২. জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র
৩. লাইসেন্স ফি ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা [(অফেরতযোগ্য) নির্দিষ্ট A চালানে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। আবেদনের সাথে **মূল চালান কপি** সংযুক্ত করে দাখিল করতে হবে।]
৪. ০৩ (তিন) কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি
৫. লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি- ১,০০০/-(এক হাজার) টাকা

বি.দ্র. তালিকাভুক্তি বা ইজারা চুক্তির কোন শর্ত ভঙ্গ করা হলে উক্ত তালিকাভুক্তি বাতিল বা স্থগিত বা কালো তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে।

১৬/১০/২৬
হরে জান্নাত
জেলা প্রশাসক
ও
সভাপতি
জেলা বালুমহাল ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি,
খুলনা
ই-মেইল: dckhulna@mopa.gov.bd

GD-2536

Govt eyes commercial revival of Dhakai Muslin: state minister



PHOTO: STAR/FILE

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government is working to bring the fabled 'Dhakai Muslin' back to commercial production, aiming to revive the heritage fabric, create jobs and open up global markets, State Minister for Textiles and Jute Md Shariful Alam said yesterday.

Speaking at a seminar in Dhaka, he said research had restored the technology for producing the fabric, which was lost about 170 years ago. The next challenge is to improve the cotton used to make muslin and develop the textile for wider commercial use.

The seminar, titled "Dhakai Futi Karpas Fiber Genomics and Development", was held at the CIRDAP Auditorium to discuss ways to improve the varieties of Futi Karpas, the cotton used to produce muslin.

It was organised under the second phase of the project to restore the technology for making muslin yarn and cloth. The Bangladesh Handloom Board is implementing the project under the Ministry of Textiles and Jute.

"Dhakai Muslin is not just a name; it is a witness to heritage and royal grandeur," Shariful said. "Very soon, the long-awaited Dhakai Muslin, a golden chapter of our history, an inseparable part of our national identity and a saga of glory, will return in full once again."

Textiles and Jute Secretary Sharf Uddin Ahmed Choudhury said under the ongoing project, researchers were working to develop Futi Karpas varieties that are less dependent on daylight duration, produce higher cotton yields and have more and larger cotton bolls with fewer seeds.

They are also seeking to control plant height, he said. Research is also under way to improve the count, which determines finesse, and quality of muslin yarn and refine the processes involved in preparing, weaving and finishing the fabric, said the secretary.

Handloom Board Chairman Md Jakir Hossan said intensive training and research had helped spinners progress from producing yarn of 80 metric count to 750 metric count.

Md Ayub Ali, project director of the muslin restoration project, said the first phase was completed at a cost of Tk 12.10 crore, restoring the technology for producing Dhakai Muslin after nearly 170 years.

The second phase is now under way with a budget of Tk 18.50 crore, he said.

Ahmed Mohamed Abdelmoghny Abdulbaky, chief researcher at the Cotton Breeding Department of Cotton Research Institute under Egypt's Agricultural Research Center, also took part in the seminar as a discussant.

Pubali Bank opens 285th sub-branch in Uttara

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank PLC on October 12 opened a new sub-branch in Uttara Sector 12 in Dhaka to provide modern banking services.

This is the bank's 285th sub-branch, according to a press release.

Mohammad Ali, managing director of the bank, inaugurated the sub-branch as the chief guest. He said the bank's primary objective was to bring modern, convenient and swift banking services to customers' doorsteps.

"Through this sub-branch, customers in the Uttara area will be able to access banking services more easily. Building on the trust and affection of its customers, Pubali Bank will continue to work towards expanding technology-driven, secure and customer-friendly banking services," he said.

He added that Pubali Bank was not merely a financial institution but also a vital partner in the country's economic development and the advancement of trade and commerce.

The bank remains committed to supporting its customers through deposit mobilisation, investment, remittance services and modern banking solutions, the release added.



Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's 285th sub-branch at Uttara Sector 12 in Dhaka on October 12. PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

Md Hafizur Rahman Sardar, manager of Sonargaon Janpath branch and deputy general manager, presided over the programme. AKM Abdur Raqib, general manager and regional manager of Dhaka North Region, attended as a special guest.

Niger Sultana, manager of Dhanmondi branch and deputy general manager; Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, assistant general manager and head of public relations; and Sharif Santu, president of the Uttara Sector 12 Welfare Society, were also present, along with local businesspeople, invited guests and senior bank officials.

'A ticking time bomb'

FROM PAGE B1

At yesterday's event, M Niaz Asadullah, a professor of economics at Dhaka University, said the country is approaching a potentially serious social crisis as technological disruption collides with longstanding weaknesses in education and employment.

"What we are facing is a ticking time bomb," he said. "What I see is a massive social crisis developing."

The problem, he argued, goes beyond AI. Bangladesh is entering this technological transition with major deficiencies in literacy, numeracy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

"We are studying, but we are not really learning," Prof Niaz said, pointing to gaps in foundational education and students' difficulties in acquiring basic competencies.

He also questioned whether the government's ambitious employment and economic targets adequately account for the disruption AI could cause.

He said that the government has discussed creating 1 crore jobs, including 50 lakh for digitally certified workers, alongside a target for 85 percent of those workers to find employment within six months.

"But where will these projections stand when we account for technology-driven disruption?" he asked, arguing that education, youth employment and information and communications technology policies need to be coordinated.

At the event, Fahim Mashroor, chief executive officer of Bdjobs, said Bangladesh's unemployment problem was already severe, even before the effects of AI were felt.

Drawing on his experience with his recruitment platform that holds around 60-70 lakh jobseeker profiles, he said many graduates struggle to find work for years after completing their studies.

He also argued that international estimates could understate the scale of graduate unemployment in the country.

"AI or no AI, they will be unemployed," Fahim said, referring to young graduates already struggling to find work.

Mustafa Mahmud Hussain, co-founder and managing director of PukuAI, a domestic AI platform, said tasks performed on computers are particularly vulnerable to automation. "Anything you can do on a computer, AI now can do it better and faster," he said.

AI could allow one person to perform tasks previously handled by several employees, Mustafa said, although businesses would need time to adapt their workplaces and processes to the technology.

He compared the transition with earlier technological changes, when the introduction of electric motors and computers required businesses to reorganise their operations before they could realise the full productivity gains.

Bangladesh, Mustafa said, cannot afford to wait until automation becomes widespread before preparing its workforce.

"We need preparation," he said, stressing the need to equip people to work with AI rather than react only after jobs begin disappearing.

ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS AT RISK

The discussants said the technological transition poses a particular challenge for young people seeking their first jobs.

Prof Niaz said automating entry-level tasks could deprive graduates of the experience they need to build careers. Employers often demand experience even for junior positions, creating a difficult cycle for those trying to enter the workforce.

He suggested that companies adopting automation could be incentivised to offer supervised apprenticeships, allowing young people to gain practical experience while learning to work in changing environments.

Education reform, meanwhile, must go beyond teaching students to operate AI tools.

Prof Niaz said workers would need strong foundational knowledge, critical thinking skills and the ability to assess AI-generated information. Without subject knowledge, users might struggle to identify errors or judge whether an AI-generated answer is appropriate.

"In the age of AI, you need to be good at your own subject matter while also having a high level of AI literacy," he said.

Raisul Kabir, founder and chief executive officer of Brain Station 23 Ltd, said AI is already reducing demand for traditional software outsourcing, posing a growing challenge for Bangladesh's IT industry.

"Now, with AI, the work of 25 people can be done by 10," he said, explaining how clients are using AI to reduce their reliance on software developers.

He added that AI is performing some tasks "in very good quality", sometimes better than humans.

However, Raisul said the technology is also creating opportunities by enabling companies to take on work they previously could not handle.

"The net result of the new opportunities being created and the old opportunities disappearing is something we do not know yet," he said.

He believes the software industry can remain sustainable in the short and medium term, provided companies move beyond conventional outsourcing and focus on delivering solutions.

Businesses that rely solely on software outsourcing face greater risks as AI adoption expands, he said. Developing new products and solutions, by contrast, could help them adapt.

SERVICES OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY

The speakers also identified a potential silver lining. They said AI-driven productivity gains in wealthier countries could increase demand for services that depend on human interaction.

Bdjobs CEO Fahim said that if AI-enabled businesses and economies generate more wealth while reducing working hours, consumption patterns would change. People with more disposable income and leisure time might spend more on restaurants, tourism, personal care, fitness and other personalised services.

"When people have money and time, they actually spend that money on personalised services," he said, explaining why consumers might continue paying for experiences and personal attention even as technology takes over other tasks.

For Bangladesh, the opportunity lies in preparing workers to serve these expanding markets rather than competing mainly for low-paid, routine jobs. Fahim identified caregiving, nursing and hospitality as fields in which Bangladeshi workers could potentially secure higher-value jobs in wealthier countries.

He cited the Philippines as an example of a country moving beyond traditional call-centre work towards more specialised care services. Language proficiency, professional standards, cultural understanding and the ability to interact with customers are also essential for such jobs.

"Should we manufacture clothes and send them abroad, or should we send our people abroad to provide services?" he asked, arguing that Bangladesh needs to rethink how it prepares workers for international employment.

The country sends large numbers of workers overseas every year, but Fahim said it needs to move beyond its overwhelming focus on lower-skilled jobs and prepare more people for specialised occupations.

He called for appropriate training institutions and programmes to equip young people for international markets, including jobs in hospitality and caregiving.

Without such facilities, training initiatives risk producing certificates without the practical skills employers require, he commented.

Prof Niaz also stressed the need to distinguish between education in general, education for employment and training to improve workers' productivity.

"Each requires a different approach, and all three need attention," he said.

Nearly Tk 12,000cr

FROM PAGE B1

The overseas employment financing scheme disbursed Tk 200 crore against a target of Tk 1,000 crore.

The agriculture and rural food security refinance scheme, which has an allocation of Tk 10,000 crore, disbursed Tk 293 crore, representing around 3 percent of its target.

Similarly, the agro-based special economic center in North Bengal recorded disbursements of Tk 49 crore against its Tk 3,000 crore allocation.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB), said even a normal loan takes more than two to four months to disburse.

Disbursing a loan requires examining many things, processing them, and involves various steps. On top of that, these are all closed factories, so even more work is required here, he said.

Furthermore, he added, there are many guidelines to follow when granting these loans under the package. For instance, there is a condition that those who have not engaged in money laundering will get the loan, but it is difficult for banks to be certain about this.

Moreover, he said, applicants must apply to receive the loan, which many do not do. In addition, there are gas shortages and several other problems, so many do not even apply.The biggest issue is that loans must be disbursed after considering whether they will be repaid. Banks have already started disbursing loans, and considering everything, loan distribution may gradually increase in the future, he added.

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-Tender 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.	1355844	PC Pole GR-1 FY 26-27	27.11.0000.304.27.409.26 Dated:15/10/2026	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Grid Tied Rooftop Solar PV System at PC Pole Manufacturing Plant & Saidpur 150 MW Simple Cycle Power Plant, BPDB, Saidpur, Nilphamari, Bangladesh.	09-11-2026 14.00	09-11-2026 16.00	09-11-2026 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- ২৪১ (২)/১৮/১০/২৬

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

GD-2542

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Madaripur District.
Website: eed.madaripur.gov.bd

Meme No.EE/EED/MAD/e-GP/2026-27/6 Date: 18/10/2026

e-Tender Notice No: 6/2026-2027

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following Goods/Works under EED Madaripur District as mentioned below:

SL No	Tender ID	Package No	Description of Works Limited Tendering Method (LTM)	Tender Security Submission (Date &Time)	Tender Opening (Date & Time)
01.	1353447	EE/EED/MAD/4931/MOE/WD-01	Repair & Renovation Work at EED Office Building, Madaripur [(2025-26) (RMS ID:1058544)].	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00
02.	1353457	EED/MAD/5974/MOE/WD-01	Repair and Renovation work of Academic Building at Kulpuddi high School Sadar Upazilla Madaripur District (2025-26) (RMS ID: 1056635).	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00
03.	1354481	EED/MAD/5974/MOE/WD-02	Repair and Renovation work of Academic Building at Khoajpur Tekerhat High School Sadar Upazilla Madaripur District [(2025-26) (RMS ID: 1056722)].	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00
04.	1354496	EED/MAD/5974/MOE/WD-03	Repair and Renovation work of Academic Building at Ghatakchar Multilateral High School Sadar Upazilla Madaripur District (2025-26) (RMS ID: 1056723).	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00
05.	1354889	EE/EED/MAD/5974/TMED/WD-01	Repair and Renovation work of Academic Building at Durgaboddi Hat Dakhil Madrasha Sadar Upazilla Madaripur District (2025-26) (RMS ID: 2014243).	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00
06.	1354896	EE/EED/MAD/5974/TMED/WD-02	Repair and Renovation work of Admin Building at Taltola Islamia Dakhil Madrasha Sadar Upazilla Madaripur District (2025-26) (RMS ID: 2014247).	04-11-2026 at 12:00	04-11-2026 at 13:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e-GP system portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender A1 renewed up to FY. enlistment Category Contractor of Education Engineering Department Madaripur District/All Department Madaripur District who are registered in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) will be eligible. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 16:00 on 03-11-2026.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason what so ever.

18/10/26
(RAJANI KUMAR CHAKMA)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Madaripur
E-mail: ee_mad@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-2538

Prior approval suspended for boiler imports

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has suspended the requirement for prior approval from the chief boiler inspector before importing boilers and boiler components, a move industry leaders say will ease imports by reducing bureaucratic delays.

In a circular issued yesterday, Bangladesh Bank informed authorised dealer (AD) banks involved in foreign exchange transactions of the suspension.

The central bank's Foreign Exchange Policy Department-1 instructed the head offices and principal offices of all AD banks to take necessary action in line with the decision.

The move follows a Ministry of Industries letter dated October 7, informing Bangladesh Bank that the Boiler Board had decided to suspend the prior approval requirement as part of efforts to simplify boiler imports. A separate letter from the ministry's Boiler Wing, dated October 14, also requested the suspension, referring to the board's decision.

In a circular issued on July 14, Bangladesh Bank had made prior approval from the chief boiler inspector mandatory for importing boilers and boiler components, following an earlier directive from the Ministry of Industries. Under the procedure, importers had to secure approval before proceeding with imports.

The latest circular communicates the suspension to banks handling foreign exchange transactions. However, the documents do not clarify whether the requirement has been permanently scrapped or whether an alternative procedure will be introduced.

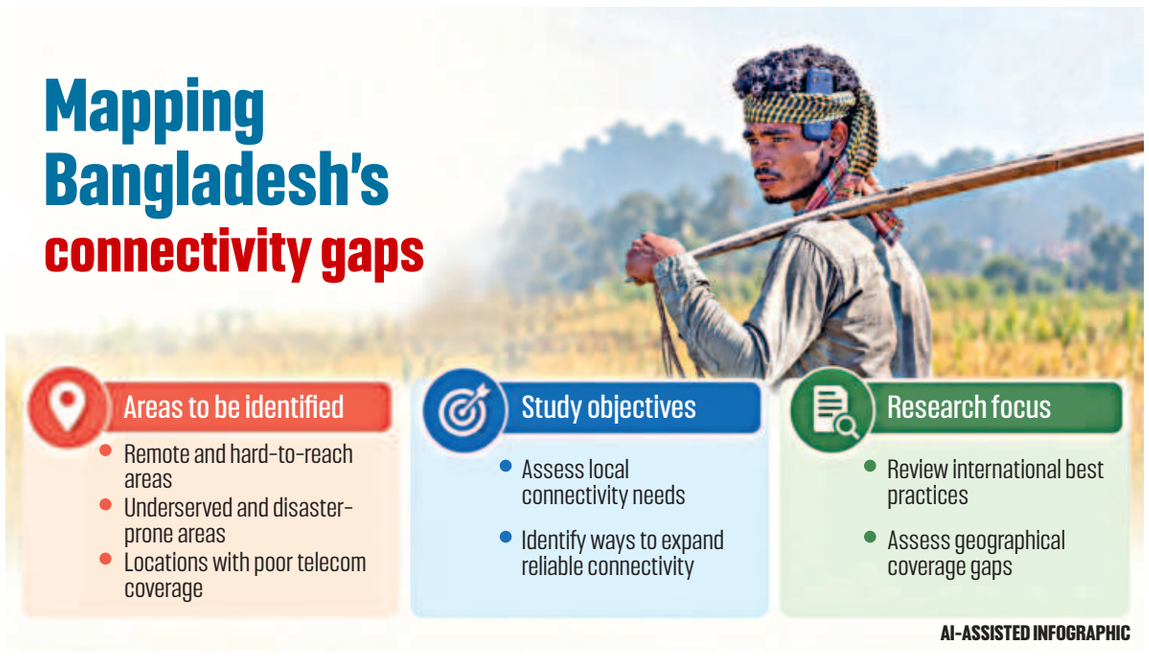
Boilers are widely used in industries that require steam for production, including textiles and garments, food processing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals.

According to industry insiders, around 60 percent of industrial boilers are used in the ready-made garment sector, while food processing accounts for 19 percent, pharmaceuticals 8 percent and chemicals another 8 percent.

Md Eleash Mridha, managing director of PRAN Group, said the decision would make it easier for food-processing companies to import boilers by removing a cumbersome approval process.

"We get duty benefits on capital machinery, so duty was not an issue for us. The main problem was obtaining permission from the boiler inspector, including submitting drawings, providing documents and responding to queries. Even after submitting papers three times, objections would be raised on different grounds," he said.

BTRC to study telecom gaps in remote areas



MAHMUDUL HASAN

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has decided to conduct a study to identify remote, hard-to-reach, underserved and disaster-prone areas where telecom services are inadequate or of poor quality and explore ways to ensure reliable, high-quality connectivity.

At a recent commission meeting, the telecom regulator gave in-principle approval to the proposed research and decided to form a committee to prepare a detailed research proposal within one month for submission to the BTRC chairman.

According to the documents, the study will identify areas with inadequate telecom coverage and assess local connectivity needs, while exploring possible approaches to ensure quality services in places where expanding mobile networks may not be commercially viable.

The initiative comes as the government seeks to ensure reliable and high-speed internet access for citizens across the country, including both urban and rural areas, under its election manifesto.

The government is also working on a connectivity master plan, while the Telecommunications Network and Licensing Policy, 2025, provides for spectrum-based incentives to expand networks in remote and underserved areas.

During the meeting, Brig Gen Mohammad Moniruzzaman Jewel, director general of the BTRC's spectrum management division, presented a detailed proposal, highlighting the importance of quality telecom services in the daily lives of people across all sections of society.

He noted that reliable telecommunications are essential for the development of people living outside major urban centres. However, expanding quality mobile networks in remote and disadvantaged areas is often not commercially sustainable for operators.

As a result, he said, even where some network coverage exists, the quality and availability of services may not meet the government's goal of ensuring high-speed, quality connectivity nationwide.

The proposed research will review international best practices to identify suitable approaches for addressing the problem, according to the meeting minutes.

The study is expected to examine the geographical extent of underserved areas, assess their telecommunications requirements and identify potential methods for delivering quality services.

The regulator said a systematic assessment is necessary to determine where network expansion is most needed and what measures could make service delivery viable in areas that operators may otherwise find commercially unattractive.

The proposed research will also take into account the government's election manifesto, its plans for expanding telecommunications services, and existing laws and regulations.

Under the decision, the committee will be headed by a director general nominated by the BTRC chairman.

Representatives from the spectrum management, spectrum services, finance, accounts and revenue divisions, along with the legal wing, will serve as members.

An officer nominated by the chairman will act as the member secretary.

The commission's decision marks an initial step towards developing a more targeted approach to expanding telecommunications services in areas where geographical challenges, disaster risks and limited commercial returns can discourage network investment.

When AI hallucinations reach the boardroom

FAISAL IMTIAZ KHAN

In the last week of June this year, the Bangladesh Bank issued a quiet but unprecedented internal directive. The central bank banned its own officials from inputting sensitive financial data, policy drafts or office notes into generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Gemini and DeepSeek. The regulator discovered that employees, eager to use cutting-edge technology, were running unverified financial metrics and confidential files through external algorithms, risking severe cross-border data leaks.

This is not a localised tech glitch. It is a striking symptom of a global boardroom epidemic.

From the commercial towers of Gulshan, Dhaka, to the financial hubs of Wall Street, pressure on corporate leaders to project a hyper-digitised image has reached a fever pitch. In boardrooms across the globe, artificial intelligence is no longer treated merely as a tool; it is flaunted as a badge of corporate modernisation. However, when the rush to adopt technology outpaces the development of human capability, the results can be catastrophic. As HR professionals, we must ask a critical question: are we building resilient institutions, or simply ornamenting our corporate look to appease investors?

The financial and corporate sectors are facing the fallout of uncritical AI adoption. Recent global data highlights a deeply troubling disconnect in executive governance: 84 percent of senior corporate executives trust unreviewed AI output, despite only 11 percent of their organisations having the data quality required to back it up.



When automated fabrications reach the highest levels of governance, it is not a technology failure but a human, cultural and talent failure

This blind trust has created an immense liability. Approximately 26 percent of business leaders admit that critical AI errors and "hallucinations" have bypassed internal audits, reaching the board or public financial disclosures before being caught. AI-related securities lawsuits have spiked internationally, accounting for 73 percent of all disclosed investor losses. When automated fabrications reach the highest levels of governance, it is not a technology failure but a human, cultural and talent failure.

This risk is amplified by the rise of "Agentic Finance", where autonomous AI agents can instantly shift capital to maximise interest rates. Forbes recently warned that these unchecked systems could trigger high-velocity "AI bank runs", threatening to drain up to $1.3 trillion from traditional banking institutions in minutes. If the people operating these systems lack the critical thinking to intervene, the institution's stability collapses.

Paradoxically, while AI risks are slipping through the cracks, the return on investment is dreadful. Some 95 percent of enterprise AI pilots fail to scale or deliver a measurable impact on the P&L. Billions are poured into technology that stalls because leadership treats AI as a plug-and-play marketing asset, ignoring the legacy infrastructure and human capability gaps that kill modernisation. Every HR professional must reflect on these realities and refuse to fall into the "innovation trap". Embracing modern technology must be driven by caution and organisational purpose, not FOMO (fear of missing out). True digitisation requires a strategic pause.

First, HR must redefine capability frameworks. We must stop hiring for tech buzzwords and start assessing rigorous cognitive scepticism and systemic risk management. Second, we must mandate human-in-the-loop governance. No AI-generated financial model, strategic forecast or compliance report should reach an executive's desk without verifiable human review and cross-examination. Finally, we must realign corporate culture. Leaders should be rewarded for data accuracy and operational resilience, not for launching flashy, unvalidated pilots.

The illusion of digital sophistication is a dangerous boardroom narcotic. Technology can augment efficiency, but it can never replace human judgment, ethical oversight and strategic accountability. It is time for HR to step up, strip away the corporate window dressing and re-anchor human oversight at the centre of leadership.

The writer is a senior HR executive

What is holding up the US-India trade deal?

AFP, *Mumbai*

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to visit India for the second time this year, as Washington seeks to bolster ties with a strategic partner despite months of friction over a trade deal.

Rubio will meet senior Indian officials, but will bypass the Indian capital during the trip in the coming week.

Instead he will focus on investment and energy during visits to financial hub Mumbai and India's oil hub of Jamnagar, which is home to billionaire Mukesh Ambani's refining complex, the world's largest.

The elephant in the room will be the inability by both countries to seal their long-awaited trade deal, experts say.

Several factors, including US President Donald Trump's tariff blitz, friction over energy imports and Washington's warmer ties with India's arch-rival Pakistan have made it harder for negotiators to clinch an agreement.

Rubio will start his six-day overseas trip on Saturday with a visit first to Uzbekistan before arriving in India, according to the US State Department.

Here are some of the challenges the trade pact has faced and the road ahead.

WHY HAS THE DEAL BEEN DELAYED?

India and the United States agreed in February on the framework for an interim deal under which Washington would lower reciprocal tariffs from 25 percent to 18 percent and India would reduce duties on a range of industrial and agricultural goods.

Despite months of negotiations, the agreement has not yet been finalised and signed.

One reason is the legal uncertainty surrounding Trump's tariff plans after court challenges undermined the reciprocal tariffs that formed their basis.

"The February framework had offered to reduce India's reciprocal tariff... in return for substantial Indian concessions. Once that tariff regime was struck down, the value of the US offer became unclear," trade expert Ajay Srivastava said in a note.

India is also wary of new trade measures by Washington that could impact it, including an investigation into alleged unfair practices in several countries and a new law that allows for up to 100 percent tariffs on nations that purchase Russian oil.

Trump on Friday signed an executive order that waived those threatened sanctions.

WHERE DO NEGOTIATIONS STAND?

Progress appears to have hit several hurdles.

For the better part of this year, both governments spoke optimistically about the possibility of finalising the interim deal.

US ambassador to India Sergio Gor in June said negotiators were working on the "last one percent" of the pact.

More recently, the tone has turned markedly cautious.

India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said last week that talks had hit a "plateau", with little room for further concessions.

Her remarks came days after US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said an announcement was not "imminent".

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MAIN STICKING POINTS?

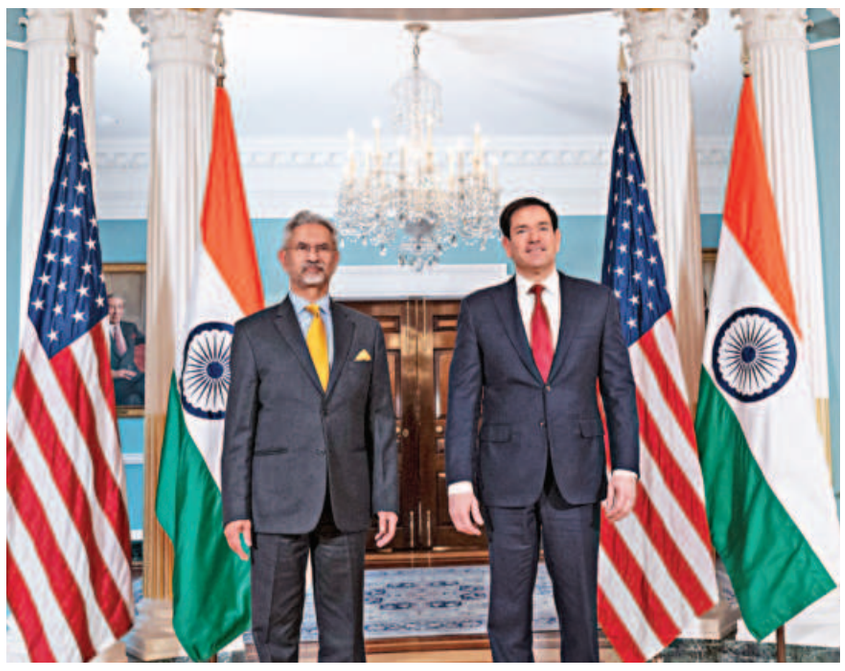
Agriculture remains a sensitive area for India, which is reluctant to expose farmers to greater foreign competition.

Washington, meanwhile, wants India to buy more US energy supplies.

New Delhi has also insisted that its final tariff rate should be competitive with those received by other regional manufacturing rivals such as Vietnam.

Indian trade minister Piyush Goyal said this week that the first tranche of the deal was in its final stages, but added that it would not be operational until India secured an edge over its competitors.

"It's going through the final contours, the legal drafting, and we hope to be able to finalise that soon and operationalise that once we get competitive advantage over our peer countries," he said.



In this file photo, Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar at The State Department in Washington, DC on February 3, 2026. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

HOW HAS TRADE BEEN HOLDING UP?

Goods exports to the US jumped 21 percent in August to $8.3 billion compared to the same month a year earlier, when India faced 50 percent tariffs.

The surge in exports has been a bright spot for the Indian economy, which has been roiled by high energy prices due to war in the Middle East.

If higher tariffs were to return, economists say it would cast a shadow on India's growth outlook, hurt market sentiment and heap pressure on an already-weak rupee.

US budget deficit grows to nearly $2tn

AFP, *Washington*

The US budget deficit grew to almost $2 trillion over the past year, government data showed Friday, reaching its highest level since 2021 despite President Donald Trump's promises to cut public spending.

The expansion comes amid growing worries over the massive $40.3 trillion US debt load and rising inflation, as the cost of borrowing climbs.

Refunds of Trump's tariffs after they were overturned have further fueled the budget gap.

The federal deficit, which occurs when government spending exceeds its revenues, rose to $1.99 trillion in fiscal year 2026, the Treasury Department said. This marked a 12-percent increase from the prior year, when the shortfall came in at $1.78 trillion.

A key driver of expenditures was the rising interest paid on public debt, which jumped $144 billion to a record $1.36 trillion.

Interest costs on around $32 trillion in publicly held US debt have been ballooning in recent years, and climbing bond yields have sparked further concerns.

Treasury bond yields, which influence interest rates for mortgages and auto loans, have jumped this year, with steeper borrowing costs adding to pressures that US voters face ahead of November's midterm elections.

Meanwhile, an expected influx of revenue from Trump's sweeping tariffs have failed to fully materialize during his second term.

The Supreme Court struck down his global duties in February, triggering a wave of refunds. Treasury data released Friday reflected $145 billion in customs refunds over the year -- primarily due to tariffs -- erasing significant gains from Trump's duties.

Vietnam signs free trade deal with four EU nations

AFP, *Hanoi*

Vietnam and four European nations outside the EU signed a free trade agreement in Hanoi on Sunday, seeking to diversify their markets as US tariffs disrupt global commerce.

The deal, between Southeast Asia's fastest-growing economy and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, eliminates or reduces customs duties, including on imports of industrial, fish and agricultural products.

The deal was signed in the capital in the presence of Vietnam's top leader To Lam and representatives of EFTA governments.

Vietnam said the agreement showed the parties' resolve to "reinforce the rules-based trading system amid continued volatility in the global economy", according to a government statement.

It was also expected to help Vietnam "diversify its import and export markets" and "integrate more deeply into global value chains", the government said. Vietnam and EFTA concluded negotiations in July, more than a decade after the free trade talks officially began in 2012.

The parties relaunched negotiations in September last year, after they had stalled since 2018.

The agreement followed a global trade-disrupting tariff blitz by the United States under President Donald Trump which has left Vietnam with a hefty tax on its US exports amid ongoing negotiations with Washington.

Experts say the new deal reflected a shared initiative to diversify commercial ties and reduce reliance on major trading partners.

"As the US increasingly exerts trade pressure on European countries, the agreement is a joint effort to turn economic integration into greater strategic autonomy and to develop alternative commercial relationships rather than relying exclusively on their largest partners," history and politics scholar Do Dinh Lam Khang told AFP.

For Vietnam, closer ties with EFTA economies could support its ambition to move into higher-value-added activities, Khang added.

The agreement covers trade in goods and services, intellectual property rights, trade remedies and sustainable development, among other areas, both parties say.

Bilateral trade between the EFTA and Vietnam last year was valued at 4.8 billion euros ($5.4 billion), according to the association.

Electrical and mechanical machinery, fish and pharmaceutical products were the EFTA nations' top exports to Vietnam last year.