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'

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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

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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.

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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

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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
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GD-2538