Tourism fair opens tomorrow, focusing on AI, sustainability

BSS, *Dhaka*

The three-day Bangladesh Travel and Tourism Fair (BTTF) 2026 will begin in Dhaka tomorrow, bringing together local and international tourism businesses to explore new opportunities in technology, investment and sustainable travel.

The 14th edition of the international fair, organised by the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), will run until Saturday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center under the theme "AI-Powered Tourism, Sustainable Destination".

TOAB President Mohammad Hanif announced the details at a press conference at Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport yesterday.

"The fair aims to accelerate tourism development in Bangladesh by integrating modern technology and AI into tourism services, promoting environmentally responsible travel and strengthening international connectivity," he said.

Tourism organisations, airlines, hotels and other industry representatives from more than 20 countries are expected to participate. These include Nepal, India, Singapore, the Maldives, the Philippines, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Azerbaijan.

The fair will feature more than 200 booths and stalls, over 220 exhibitors and more than 250 qualified buyers. Around 2,500 trade visitors and more than 60,000 members of the public are expected to attend.

More than 200 airlines, hotels and tour operators will showcase their offerings across four themed exhibition halls.

The event will give local and international businesses a platform to display their products, explore investment opportunities, build partnerships and establish business-to-business (B2B) connections.

Hanif said BTTF had grown into one of South Asia's leading tourism platforms over its 13 previous editions.

He said the fair would help promote Bangladesh's tourism potential internationally, connect local operators with global tourism brands and create new business opportunities.

Artificial intelligence is taking on a growing role in the global travel industry, and the organisers hope the fair will encourage businesses to adopt digital tools to improve services, market destinations and connect travellers with service providers.

The focus on sustainable tourism also aims to encourage environmentally responsible travel and support the long-term development of Bangladesh's tourism resources.

The fair is expected to help local tour operators establish direct links with international buyers, travel agencies, airlines and hospitality businesses.

Bank Asia clients to get home loan for JCX flat purchases

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Dhaka-based real estate developer JCX Developments Limited to offer convenient and accessible home loan facilities to buyers of apartments across the developer's projects.

Under the agreement, the two organisations will also undertake joint marketing initiatives, customer engagement programmes and promotional activities to raise awareness of and improve access to home financing.

Md Zahed Chowdhury, executive vice-president and head of the assets section of the bank's retail banking division, and M Tareq Hosen Mozumder, chief executive officer of JCX Developments, signed the agreement at the developer's corporate office in Bashundhara, Dhaka, recently, according to a press release. The partnership aims to make purchasing an apartment in JCX projects more affordable and accessible, helping buyers move closer to owning a home.



M Tareq Hosen Mozumder, chief executive officer of JCX Developments Limited, and Md Zahed Chowdhury, executive vice-president and head of assets, retail banking division of Bank Asia PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the realtor's corporate office in Bashundhara, Dhaka recently. PHOTO: BANK ASIA

Jamuna Bank opens 116th sub-branch in Savar



Md Belal Hossain, chairman of Jamuna Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's 116th sub-branch at Nama Bazar in Savar, Dhaka recently. PHOTO: JAMUNA BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Jamuna Bank PLC has opened a new sub-branch at Nama Bazar in Savar, Dhaka aimed at providing modern, innovative banking services and secure investment opportunities.

This is the bank's 116th sub-branch, according to a press release.

Md Belal Hossain, chairman of the bank, inaugurated the sub-branch as the chief guest.

The event was presided over by Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed, managing director and CEO of the bank.

The new sub-branch is expected to make banking services more accessible, convenient and efficient for the local community.

Local businesspeople, dignitaries, senior officials from the bank's head office and a large number of customers, were also present at the inauguration ceremony.

UCB launches sticker payment card with Mastercard, GP

STAR BUSINESS DESK

United Commercial Bank PLC (UCB) yesterday launched a co-branded sticker payment card with Mastercard and Grameenphone Limited (GP), offering contactless payments alongside cashback, rewards and lifestyle benefits.

Brent T Christensen, the US ambassador to Bangladesh, inaugurated the card as the chief guest, according to a press release.

The prepaid sticker can be attached to a smartphone or another suitable item, allowing users to make payments by tapping it on a contactless-enabled point-of-sale (POS) terminal without carrying a conventional payment card.

The card combines UCB's banking services, Mastercard's payment technology and GP's MyGP digital ecosystem. Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, said the collaboration reflected the bank's commitment to innovative financial solutions that meet customers' evolving needs.

Solaiman Alam, chief product officer of GP, said the card brought payments closer to the digital experiences customers already use through MyGP.

Gautam Aggarwal, division president for India and South Asia at Mastercard, said the initiative expanded consumer choice while supporting the growth of contactless payments in Bangladesh.

The card offers a first-year fee waiver. The annual fee will also be waived for cardholders spending Tk 1 lakh or more in a calendar year.

Benefits include 10 percent cashback on eligible OTT services and bundle purchases through MyGP, MyGP Shop transactions and learning courses, as well as 3 percent cashback on eligible GP Fi subscriptions.

Cardholders will also receive Tk 50 cashback on eligible roaming pack purchases, exclusive offers at GPStar and Mastercard partner merchants, and additional MyGP Points on qualifying transactions. All cashback offers are subject to applicable terms and conditions.

Mohammad Mamdudur Rashid, chief executive officer of UCB; Sandun Hapugoda, country manager for Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal at Mastercard; and Zakia Sultana, country manager for Bangladesh at Mastercard, attended the event.



US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent T Christensen poses for a photograph after inaugurating a ceremony to launch a co-branded sticker payment card jointly introduced by United Commercial Bank PLC, Mastercard and Grameenphone Limited in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: UCB

India seeks bigger share of diesel exports on refining capacity boom

REUTERS, *Goa*

India's diesel exports are set to surge from 2027, giving the South Asian nation a bigger role in global markets, as state-run companies boost refining capacity, industry officials said on Tuesday.

That will bolster India's position as a swing supplier of refined products in an already tight global market buffeted by the US-Iran and Ukraine-Russia wars that have disrupted trade flows and boosted freight rates worldwide.

"We will be in a happy situation of not only refining for ourselves but for the world," said Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

India is becoming a global refining hub as it prepares to boost refining capacity to 300 million tons per year by 2030, and increasing further to 400 million tpy later.

Amid unprecedented disruption to global refining from conflict and plant closures, with operating refineries running at historic utilisation rates to ease fuel shortages, India has emerged as the second-largest exporter of seaborne diesel this year, behind only the US, ship-tracking data from Kpler shows.

In 2027, Indian state refiners will together increase their diesel production capacity by 16.5 million tons as they boost capacity of existing refineries, officials said.

"We will be exporting diesel due to refinery expansion," said A S Sahney, chairman of Indian Oil Corp, the country's largest refiner, which aims to add about 18 million tons of annual capacity, to produce about 8 million tpy of additional diesel.

Hindustan Petroleum Corp's new 9-million-tpy refinery in the western state of Rajasthan will turn out 3 million tpy of diesel next year, once the refinery stabilises, said Chairman Vikas Kaushal.

Bharat Petroleum Corp plans to produce 1.5 million tpy extra diesel from next year, its chairman, Sanjay Khanna, said.

Oil India's subsidiary Numaligarh refinery in the eastern region, which will be expanded to 9 million tpy in March next year, will add 3 million tpy of diesel production.

Some refiners, such as HPCL, buy refined products from private companies for sale by their retail outlets. The expansion will limit their purchases from other companies for local sales, and free up volumes for exports, officials said.

Additionally, India's expanding refining capacity is designed to process a broad range of crude grades and flexible petrochemical feedstocks, letting companies capitalise on price arbitrage and produce higher-value products.

Private refiners Reliance and Nayara now export refined fuels while state companies mainly meet domestic demand.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio described India as a refining "superpower" during a recent visit to Reliance's massive refining complex in the port city of Jamnagar.

World to add less clean energy capacity this year

Renewables agency says

REUTERS, *Singapore*

The world will add less clean energy capacity in 2026 for the first time in five years due to inadequate transmission networks and trade barriers, the chief of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) said.

Growth in solar and wind capacity has been accelerating every year since 2021, when the coronavirus pandemic disrupted global supply chains. Clean power installations including hydropower surged a record 692 gigawatts, or 15.5 percent, to 5,149 GW in 2025 – representing half the world's power capacity.

Governments have pledged to boost clean energy use to ensure reliable power supply and cut costs, particularly after the US-Israeli war with Iran choked energy supplies and inflated prices. But IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera noted that there has been a slowdown in renewables deployment in China due to curtailment – or rejection of clean power when a grid hits its limits.

"The main cause of a lack of new record in additions this year is the mismatch between generation capacity and the capacity to distribute and transmit electricity," he told Reuters on the sidelines of the Singapore International Energy Week conference.

China, the world's biggest renewable energy producer, turned away enough clean energy to power Mexico for a year in the first half of 2026, while networks in nations such as Australia and Japan also failed to keep pace with a surging renewables buildout.

Clean power installations including hydropower surged a record 692 gigawatts, or 15.5 percent, to 5,149 GW in 2025 – representing half the world's power capacity.

"The amount of the (capacity) increase in the other parts of the world this year, I don't think it will offset the slowing down in China," La Camera said. He declined to provide a numerical forecast for expected growth in clean energy additions this year.

Shanta Life opens regional office in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Shanta Life Insurance PLC yesterday opened its regional office in Chattogram to make its life insurance services more accessible to customers in the country's commercial hub.

The new office, located in the Muradpur area, is expected to bring Shanta Life's insurance solutions closer to individuals and families in Chattogram and its surrounding areas, company officials said. Nafis A Ahmed, chief executive officer of the life insurer, inaugurated the office as the chief guest.

Addressing the event, Nafis said the company was a new entrant in the country's insurance sector, which comprises 36 companies, but stood out for its values, including trust, transparency and the delivery of high-quality services in a simple manner.

The company was working to digitalise the entire insurance process, including claim settlements, to build customer trust, the CEO said. He added that customers would be able to purchase policies and access other services through the company's mobile app.

Claiming that the company settles 99 percent of insurance claims within five days, setting a new standard in the sector, the CEO said the insurer was also focusing on cashless operations.

Jane Alam Romel, chief marketing officer of the insurer, was also present at the event, along with other senior company officials and corporate representatives from various organisations in Chattogram.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000
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Memo No: 30.00.0000.011.07.020.26-779 Date: 27.10.2026

E-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited through the National e-Government Procurement (e-GP) Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods:

e-Tender ID	Description of Goods	Document Purchase Deadline	Tender Submission Deadline	Tender Opening Date and Time
1357909	Toner	11 November 2026, 4:00 PM	12 November 2026, 10:00 AM	12 November 2026, 11:00 AM
1357922	Stationery Items	11 November 2026, 4:00 PM	12 November 2026, 10:00 AM	12 November 2026, 11:00 AM
1357937	Computers and Related Accessories	11 November 2026, 4:00 PM	12 November 2026, 10:00 AM	12 November 2026, 11:00 AM
1357949	Office Equipment	11 November 2026, 4:00 PM	12 November 2026, 10:00 AM	12 November 2026, 11:00 AM
1357955	Furniture	11 November 2026, 4:00 PM	12 November 2026, 10:00 AM	12 November 2026, 11:00 AM

These tenders will be conducted entirely online. Only e-Tenders submitted through the National e-GP Portal will be accepted. Offline submissions or hard copies will not be accepted. Interested tenderers must be registered with the National e-GP Portal to submit their tenders. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents must be paid online through a bank registered with the e-GP system before the document purchase deadline stated above. Further information and guidelines are available on the National e-GP Portal or from the e-GP Help Desk at helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd.

27.10.26
(Mohammad Mahabub Alam)
Deputy Secretary

GD-2589