Govt eyes 1m digital jobs in five years

Says ICT minister

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government aims to create one million jobs in the digital sector over the next five years and turn Bangladesh into a regional hub for information technology and artificial intelligence, ICT Minister Faqir Mahbub Anam said yesterday.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at Bangladesh TechConnect 2026, jointly organised by the Posts and Telecommunications Division and Huawei, at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center in Dhaka.

He said the government was committed to building a modern, technology-driven and knowledge-based country under its "Bangladesh First" policy.

The minister stressed the need to ensure reliable, secure, high-speed and affordable internet connectivity across the country. He said modern telecommunications infrastructure, digital skills development, investment and support for local innovation would be essential to achieving the government's goals.

"Effective use of AI and digital technologies would boost productivity, create new jobs and accelerate economic growth," he said.

He also called for stronger cybersecurity, better protection of personal data and responsible use of technology.

Emphasising cooperation between the public and private sectors, the minister said joint efforts by the government, local businesses and international technology partners could help build an inclusive and competitive digital economy.

Md Kamruzzaman, secretary of the Posts and Telecommunications Division, said Bangladesh TechConnect had become a national platform bringing together the government, businesses, educational institutions, development partners and the media.

The conference offered an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between policymakers and industry, he said, adding that digital infrastructure was no longer a luxury but a key foundation for a prosperous, investment-driven and knowledge-based economy.

Md Mamunur Rashid Bhuiyan, secretary of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division, said the government had identified five priorities to accelerate the country's digital transformation.

These are a strong legal and policy framework, reliable connectivity, digital public infrastructure, AI and cybersecurity, and domestic manufacturing.

Work had begun on a national AI policy, which the government expected to complete within the next three to four months, he said.

Jason Wu, president of Huawei's South Asia region, said the company was committed to working with the government and industry partners to develop digital infrastructure and expand technology adoption in Bangladesh.

Drawing on its expertise in connectivity, cloud computing and AI, Huawei aims to help local industries improve efficiency, develop new services and support the country's long-term digital growth, he added.

The event featured three panel discussions on "Future Technologies and Connectivity", "The Role of Technology in Enhancing Industrial Efficiency" and "Artificial Intelligence: Global Trends, Impact and Bangladesh's Readiness".

The sessions were moderated by Iqbal Ahmed, commissioner of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC); Syeda Naushin Parnini, additional secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology; and Md Taibur Rahman, director general of the National Cyber Security Agency, respectively.

Panellists discussed the development of 5G and connectivity infrastructure, ways to improve industrial efficiency through technology, and Bangladesh's readiness to adopt AI.

They also examined the commercial potential of 5G, fixed wireless access and enterprise connectivity in sectors such as readymade garments, ports, agriculture and healthcare.

Telcos seek

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Their existing spectrum licences expire on November 10.

While welcoming the proposed extension, AMTOB expressed surprise at the pricing, saying the fees appeared to have been calculated by mechanically extending the rates proposed for the shorter tenure in the regulator's October 19 letter.

"Spectrum valuation and spectrum renewal pricing are not typically determined through a simple linear extrapolation," the association said, citing factors such as discounted cash flow, inflation, technological change and investment risk.

AMTOB said operators had not expected their request for a 20-year renewal to result in a straightforward scaling up of the earlier valuation. Instead, they expected the regulator to apply its "prevailing reference pricing framework" to determine fees for the longer tenure.

The operators cited the GSMA, the global body representing mobile operators, which maintains that longer spectrum validity and certainty over renewal encourage investment. They also referred to the UK regulator Ofcom, which they said had recently reduced spectrum fees based on forward-looking valuations.

AMTOB questioned the transparency of the valuation process, saying public reports indicated that a consultant's study had produced a range of values using economic, engineering and international benchmarking methods. However, the industry had not been given access to the study's assumptions or findings.

Available information suggested that the final prices reflected neither the lower end of the valuation range nor its average, the association said.

AMTOB called for further cuts to the base prices proposed on October 19, a 20-year renewal period with fees paid in 20 equal annual instalments without any upward revision for the longer tenure, and withdrawal of the annual spectrum charge.

"Spectrum pricing should be viewed not merely as a revenue consideration but also as a strategic enabler," the letter said, warning that excessive costs could constrain investment, delay network expansion and undermine service quality and affordability.

On October 15, the BTRC sent the Posts and Telecommunications Division a proposal to cut spectrum prices by 10 to 30 percent across the three bands, covering a total of 79.2MHz.

Under that proposal, spectrum renewal would cost around Tk 13,100.5 crore, or $1.07 billion, compared with Tk 16,845.2 crore, or $1.37 billion, at existing rates.

The proposed cuts would reduce potential government revenue by Tk 3,744.7 crore, equivalent to about $304 million.

The proposed rates covered a period ending March 10, 2039, or approximately 12 years and four months. Taxes, VAT and other fees would be charged separately.

The prices were based on a consultant's study that used four valuation methods.

BTRC Chairman Md Emdad Ul Bari has defended the proposed rates, saying they were based on the study and that the regulator aimed to sell at least 80 percent of the spectrum available for renewal.

With the existing licences due to expire on November 10, AMTOB said a direct meeting between the regulator and industry representatives could "quickly resolve any misunderstandings" and help settle the outstanding issues within the limited time available.

RMG wage board

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The minister shared the information at the 96th meeting of the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC) and the 25th meeting of the RMG Tripartite Consultative Council (RMG TCC), organised by the ministry at the CIRDAP Conference Centre in Dhaka.

Regarding the ongoing labour unrest and protests, the minister said he had urged employers to clear workers' outstanding wages by the seventh of every month.

"At the same time, I would tell protesting workers not to cause public suffering by blocking roads in the name of a movement."

Any problem should be resolved internally through discussions between employers and workers within the factories, he said.

He further warned that if anyone tried to put the government in an embarrassing situation or pursued any other malicious intent, neither the government, nor the employers, nor the worker representatives would tolerate it.

"I am directing law enforcement agencies and intelligence organisations to swiftly bring to justice those who are instigating unrest from outside the actual labour leadership and turning non-issues into issues. No third party will be allowed to create chaos in the industrial sector at any cost," he added.

At the meeting, Nazma Akter, president of Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation, talked about recent incidents of labour unrest in various industrial areas, including Gazipur.

She stated that the government, employers and worker representatives were working jointly to clear outstanding wages quickly, and efforts were underway to resolve the issues with the help of the industrial police and local administration.

She noted that initiatives had been taken to complete the process of forming the wage board within the month.

Furthermore, discussions were ongoing with the government regarding increasing workers' wages, controlling house rent, reducing the prices of daily essentials, and resolving gas and energy crises.

Razekuzzaman Ratan, assistant general secretary of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, said that a policy decision on forming the wage board had been made at the TCC meeting, and he expressed optimism that it would be implemented swiftly.

Rezwan Selim, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, expressed concern over the ongoing protests in Gazipur and Kaliakair and called for a quick and sustainable solution.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said the government was highly committed to increasing workers' wages.

If employers and workers shared the same mindset, there would be no need for fresh protests, he said.

The BKMEA president urged workers not to damage industrial factories or embarrass the government.

Md Abdur Rahman Tarafder, secretary to the labour and employment ministry, also spoke.

Gas crisis

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"Businesses are choosing to preserve cash flow rather than take on costly debt to expand," he added.

The DCCI president urged the government to draw up a clear industrial roadmap that ensures reliable utility supplies and affordable financing.

He said that such measures would help promote import substitution, conserve foreign exchange and safeguard domestic manufacturing.

UNEVEN SLOWDOWN ACROSS INDUSTRIES

In the first quarter of FY27, the LC for capital machinery slowdown was not uniform. Some sectors recorded increases in fresh LC openings even as settlements declined.

Fresh LC openings for textile machinery more than doubled, rising 120 percent to $33 million in the July-September quarter from $15 million a year earlier. Settlements, however, fell 29 percent to $24 million from $33 million, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

In the garment industry, fresh LC openings rose 11.59 percent to $73 million, while settlements fell 8.90 percent to $86 million.

Drugmakers also committed to more machinery imports, with fresh LC openings up 31.25 percent at $27 million. However, settlements in the pharmaceutical sector dropped 10.88 percent to $18 million.

The picture was different in the "other industry" category, where fresh LC openings fell by 11.58 percent to $381 million. Settlements in the segment rose 2.96 percent to $303 million.

The mixed results suggest demand for imported machinery varied across industries, with gains in some sectors failing to offset losses in others.

'A REFLECTION OF WEAKENING INVESTOR CONFIDENCE'

M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, a local think tank, said the year-on-year fall in both LC openings and settlements for capital machinery in the first quarter of the current fiscal year reflects a broader economic slowdown and weaker investor confidence.

The economist said prolonged energy shortages, sluggish domestic demand amid high inflation and persistent law and order concerns all played a part.

Investors expected law and order to improve largely after the new government took office in February, he said, but those hopes have yet to be fully realised. As a result, many businesses have put plans for new factories and capacity expansion on hold, cutting capital machinery imports.

On the overall rise in LC openings and settlements, Masrur said higher petroleum import costs, driven by global price increases, were probably a major factor.

Imports of intermediate goods and raw materials had also risen somewhat, he added.

Md Fazlul Hoque, administrator of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said the energy crisis in the past few months created confusion among investors. This led to a fall in capital machinery imports.

Fazlul, also a former president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said factories need energy to run imported machinery, and when the energy crisis prevails, it creates a burden.

Now, LC openings for capital machinery would improve as the energy crunch eased, he said. "But there is little prospect of the industrial sector gaining significant momentum soon."

Ramadan essentials

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period last year. LCs opened for the pulses stood at 1.14 lakh tonnes.

Date imports also increased, reaching 11,000 tonnes compared with 4,000 tonnes a year earlier.

The higher import volumes and LC openings have improved the supply outlook, but they do not necessarily guarantee lower retail prices, as the cost of imports and the pace at which shipments reach the market also influence domestic prices.

The BTTC review noted that international prices of edible oil and chickpeas had remained somewhat elevated, while red lentil prices had declined.

It called for close monitoring of global market trends, import costs and domestic supply conditions.

The commission also noted that chickpeas and lentils currently faced no import duties or taxes. A review and rational adjustment of the existing tariff structure for sugar and fruit imports could help keep market prices at tolerable levels, it said.

Mostafa Kamal, chairman of Meghna Group of Industries, one of the country's major commodity importers, said importers had stepped up efforts to ensure adequate supplies and prevent shortages, aided by Bangladesh Bank's simplified LC procedures for essential commodities. The overall supply situation remained stable, with no major shortages, he said.

However, volatility in international markets, particularly rising oil prices amid ongoing global conflicts, remained a concern, he added.

Imports were continuing through regular shipments and new LCs ahead of Ramadan, he said, adding that future market conditions would depend on developments in the global economy and geopolitical situation.

Indian firm L&T

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L&T is an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) and high-tech manufacturing conglomerate.

The company said the awards build on its previous work in Bangladesh, where it won and delivered the integrated railway systems package for Dhaka Metro Line 6, the country's first metro rail corridor.

The announcement follows the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase approval of eight construction packages for Metro Rail Line 1 and Line 5 (Northern Route), worth about Tk 58,500 crore.

L&T classified the combined contracts as a "major" order under its standardised reporting framework, which defines such orders as those valued between INR 5,000 crore and INR 10,000 crore.

Apart from the Indian firm, contractors from Japan, China and Bangladesh have also secured work on the two metro lines. The projects are funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Dhaka Metro Line 1 will span about 31km across two routes: an underground section from HSIA to Kamalapur and an elevated section from Natun Bazar to Purbachal Terminal. The line will have 19 stations and a depot at Pitalganj.

The 20km Metro Rail Line 5 (Northern Route) will run from Hemayetpur in Savar through Gabtoli, Mirpur-14 and Natun Bazar to Vatara.

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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.	1358595	SBR060-GRL-60 FY 26-27	27.11.0000.304.04.27.304.26	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of a 300 kWp Grid-Tied Solar Rooftop Power Plant at Shahjibazar, Hobiganj, Bangladesh on Turnkey Basis	19.11.2026 13.00	19.11.2026 16.00	17.08.2026 16.00

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To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd/) is required.
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Yours faithfully

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Bangladesh

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trade, logistics, and special economic zones, he added.

Sharf also mentioned that Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim had discussed concluding a sustainable and mutually beneficial FTA by 2027 during the premier's visit to Malaysia in June.

He also thanked Malaysia for supporting Bangladesh's aspiration to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a regional trade agreement.

Meanwhile, Rashidi said the proposed FTA was intended to establish a long-term economic partnership rather than simply reduce tariffs.

Bilateral trade between the two countries reached around $2.84 billion in 2025, he said, adding that the agreement could open up further opportunities for trade, industrialisation and investment.

He expressed optimism that the negotiations would conclude by 2027 through mutual understanding, flexibility and a practical action plan. A planned visit to Bangladesh by the Malaysian prime minister could help advance the process, he added.

BB lets UCB

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and relatives Anisuzzaman Chowdhury and Asifuzzaman Chowdhury also served on the board.

UCB has been seeking to strengthen its finances through regulatory-approved fundraising initiatives. The bank has received approval for a Tk 775 crore rights share issue and an Tk 800 crore subordinated bond issue.

It now wants to bring in financially capable strategic investors from Bangladesh and abroad, according to a statement from the bank. Shareholders approved the plan at its last annual general meeting.

UCB said the new investors could contribute not only capital but also advanced technology, international experience, stronger governance and a long-term commitment to the bank's development.

In its statement, UCB described the central bank's decision as a significant step towards removing a legal barrier to large share investments.

It said stronger capital, transparency and good governance were priorities as it sought to build a more reliable and customer-friendly bank.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office of the Directorate of Engineering
Bangladesh Coast Guard Headquarters
Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher- e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Director Engineering e-GP Invitation no: 44.08.2680.050.46.001.26.006 Date: 27 October 2026

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Ser	Tender ID	Package Name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last Selling	Closing and Opening
1.	1360419	Repair & maintenance of internal RCC road and drain at BCG Base Mongla	OTM	28/10/2026 12:00 PM	08/11/2026 15:00 PM	09/11/2026 12:00 PM
2.	1360420	Repair & maintenance of CCMC building and pond ghat at BCG Station Kokilmoni & Supoti	OTM	28/10/2026 12:00 PM	08/11/2026 15:00 PM	09/11/2026 12:00 PM
3.	1360422	Repair & maintenance of two storied guard room building at BCG Base Bhola	OTM	29/10/2026 12:00 PM	08/11/2026 15:00 PM	09/11/2026 12:00 PM
4.	1360423	Repair & maintenance of internal road at BCG Station Nidrasokina under South Zone	OTM	29/10/2026 12:00 PM	08/11/2026 15:00 PM	09/11/2026 12:00 PM
5.	1360847	Repair & maintenance of water tank & plumbing system at BCGHQ building	OTM	02/11/2026 12:00 PM	15/11/2026 15:00 PM	16/11/2026 12:00 PM
6.	1360848	Repair and maintenance of fitting and fixture items for various offices at BCGHQ	OTM	02/11/2026 12:00 PM	15/11/2026 15:00 PM	16/11/2026 12:00 PM

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Documents can be downloaded till deadline of Tender/Application/Proposal submission.

MARIAM AKTER
Commander BN
For Director Engineering
Bangladesh Coast Guard

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