Business

DHAKA WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2026, KARTIK 26, 1433 BS
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B4

BRAZIL WIDENS LEAD AS BANGLADESH'S TOP COTTON SUPPLIER



Fruit imports grow from Tk 500cr to Tk 11,000cr in 16yrs

Once a luxury, imported fruits are finding a market among middle-income consumers

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, *Chattogram*

Over the past 16 years, the fruits on sale at Chattogram's Falmandi wholesale market has changed considerably, trader Aminul Haque told The Daily Star. Apples, oranges and grapes once dominated sales, with only limited quantities of kiwifruits, pears and avocados available.

Today, buyers look for fruit from different countries and at different price points. They have also become more health-conscious and are willing to try varieties once considered unfamiliar or expensive, he said.

A visit to the market shows the extent of the change. Shoppers can now find more than 40 varieties of imported fruit, including avocados, rambutans, mangosteens, persimmons and durians.

A FIVEFOLD IMPORT GROWTH

An analysis of National Board of Revenue (NBR) data shows that fruit imports increased more than fivefold in volume and nearly 22-fold in value over 16 years.

Bangladesh imported 97,280 tonnes of fruit in 2009 at a total cost of nearly Tk 500 crore, including duties and taxes. By 2025, the volume had surged to 5.47 lakh tonnes, while expenditure climbed to Tk 11,008 crore.

The expansion continued in 2026. In the first 10 months through October, the country imported 4.77 lakh tonnes of fruit at a total cost of Tk 9,614 crore.

EVOLVING HABITS, SUPPLY GAP

What was once largely a luxury market catering to affluent households has gradually attracted middle-income consumers as well. The expansion is owed to both changing consumer preferences and a gap in domestic supply, according to traders.

Md Alauddin, sales manager at a Shwapno supermarket in Chattogram, said, "Over the years, we have seen growing interest in imported fruits among middle-income consumers as well."

"Customers are now more familiar with different varieties and increasingly look for fruits such as kiwifruits, avocados and apples," he added.

Bangladesh meets only around 40 percent of its fruit demand through local production, according to a November 2024 background paper by Bangladesh Agricultural University prepared with the Foresight4Food initiative. Imports have been growing by an average of around 6 percent annually, particularly during the September-January off-season.

Domestic fruit production is heavily concentrated in a few months, with nearly 56 percent of the annual harvest coming

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REVENUE AND TAXATION

- 119% — Average duty-tax incidence. Up from 59% in 2009
- Tk 5,967cr — Govt revenue. Duties and taxes collected in 2025
- Tk 5,222cr — Revenue in 2026. First 10 months alone

MARKET GROWTH

- 22× — Growth in import bill. Tk 500cr in 2009 to Tk 11,008cr in 2025
- 5.6× — Growth in import volume. 97,280 tonnes to 547,000 tonnes
- 477,000 — Tonnes imported till Oct '26

CHANGING CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

- 40+ — Imported fruit varieties. From traditional choices to exotic fruits
- 187× — Growth in kiwifruit imports. 2026 first 10 months versus 2009
- 165,712 — Tonnes of apples imported in 2025. Against 34,274 tonnes in 2009







AI-ASSISTED INFOGRAPHIC PHOTO: COLLECTED

BASIC Bank gets HQ building after 13-year legal battle

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

After more than a decade of legal battles, BASIC Bank PLC yesterday took possession of a 12-storey building in Motijheel that it had bought for its head office but never received from the developer.

The state-owned commercial bank took control of the building through an eviction drive conducted with the assistance of law enforcement agencies, in compliance with a final court judgment and subsequent orders.

Dhaka Metropolitan Commercial Court-2 representatives formally handed over the premises to the bank, which is trying to recover from the financial damage caused during the tenure of its former chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu.

"We sincerely express our gratitude to the honourable court for ensuring the handover of the building to the bank in accordance with the court's order," Abu Md Mofazzal, acting managing director of BASIC Bank, told journalists at the site after the handover.

He said the bank would take prompt steps to complete the unfinished construction work and relocate its head office to the building.

The move is also expected to save the bank significant costs, he added.

Subhash Chandra Das, deputy managing director, as well as several general managers and other head office officials and employees, were also present on the occasion.

In 2010, BASIC Bank signed an agreement with Business Resources Limited, a developer owned by landowner Sinku Akramuzzaman, for the purchase of the land and the construction of a building to house its head office.

Under the agreement, the developer was to complete construction and hand over the building, fit for use and along with ownership documents, by September 2013. The bank was allocated 51,500 square feet of floor space, from the ground floor to the 12th floor, as per the officials of the bank.

However, the building was not handed over within the stipulated time, prompting the bank to take legal action to protect its property rights and financial interests.

After lengthy judicial proceedings, the Dhaka Metropolitan Commercial Court-2 delivered its final judgment in the bank's favour on November 9 this year, directing that possession be handed over to the bank.

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BB seeks explanation from bKash over 7,000 fake accounts

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank has sought an explanation from bKash, the country's leading mobile financial service (MFS) provider, over the detection of more than 7,000 suspected fake accounts on its platform.

bKash was asked to explain why it should not be fined for violating the Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU).

Central bank officials said more than 7,000 fake MFS accounts had been detected on bKash's platform. Some account holders had listed their ages as ranging from 100 to 150 years, while many of the accounts also showed excessive transaction activity, they said.

"Despite this, the accounts remain active, which is a violation of the BFIU's KYC guidelines," an official said.

The central bank sought an explanation from bKash on November 3 under Section 37 of the Payment and Settlement Act, 2024.

The BFIU guidelines apply to all banks, non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), MFS providers and other payment service providers.

Arief Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson of Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star that the central bank routinely penalises banks, NBFIs and MFS providers that breach its directives, provided the relevant circular or law prescribes a fine.

He said such penalties cite specific legal provisions and are not tied to any broader allegation of obstructing the central bank's goals.

No fine has been imposed in this case yet, he said. Seeking an explanation is the first step, and further action will depend on whether the response is satisfactory.

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64.5% of adults now financially included: survey

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh has made notable strides in expanding its formal financial ecosystem, with the National Financial Inclusion Survey 2025 revealing that 64.5 percent of the adult population is now formally financially included.

These adults hold an account with at least one type of formal financial institution, including banks, mobile financial service (MFS) providers, microfinance institutions, insurers, finance companies or capital market intermediaries.

The findings are highlighted in the Financial Inclusion Report 2025 published by Bangladesh Bank.

The comprehensive report outlines the nation's progress during the final stages of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2021-2026, showcasing significant advancements driven by mobile financial services, agent banking and structural policy frameworks.

An analysis of the data showed that financial inclusion is higher among men than women. This gender gap remains consistent across both rural and urban areas

MFSs maintained the largest customer base, highlighting their significant role in expanding access to digital financial services.

MFS accounts expanded to 25 crore, including 10 crore female accounts, backed by an extensive network of over 20 lakh active agents. Annual MFS transactions surpassed Tk 2 lakh crore in 2025.

Mobile financial services, despite operating without a traditional branch network, compensate for this through an extensive agent base exceeding 15 lakh touch points, reflecting the sector's reliance on agent-driven, low-cost distribution to reach a wide population base.

Banks maintain the most extensive physical network, with 11,418

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SPOTLIGHT

BSEC introduces single-window IPO review system

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) has approved a single-window initial public offering (IPO) review system to make the application process more efficient, integrated and time-saving.

Under the system, companies seeking to go public will submit their IPO proposals through the stock exchanges only. The exchanges will then forward their observations and recommendations to the commission through a unified channel.

If the BSEC has any observations during the stock exchanges' review period, it will communicate them to the exchanges, which will incorporate them into their own observations.

The stock market regulator took the decision at a commission meeting held at its office in the capital, chaired by BSEC Chairman Masud Khan.

The BSEC also decided to extend the deadline for stockbrokers and merchant bankers to adjust their negative equity and unrealised losses until 2030.

Negative equity in the stock market, particularly in relation to margin loans, occurs when the market value of an investor's shares purchased with borrowed funds falls below the outstanding loan

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Govt thinks 6.5% growth possible despite battered economy: Titumir

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government believes it can achieve 6.5 percent economic growth in the current fiscal year (FY27), despite inheriting what it describes as a battered economy, said Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the prime minister's adviser on finance and planning, yesterday.

He said the government was working to revive economic activity, boost investment and restore confidence to meet the target.

"Steps are being taken to turn the economy around by boosting investment, consumer spending, government expenditure and export earnings," he said at a press briefing at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) headquarters in Agargaon, Dhaka. NBR Chairman Ahsan Habib was also present.

Titumir was responding to a question about growth forecasts by international financial institutions. In October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered its growth projection for Bangladesh in FY27 to 3.2 percent from 4.3 percent in April.

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Square Pharma director to buy Tk 38cr shares

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Square Pharmaceuticals Director Ratna Patra plans to buy 17.50 lakh shares of the company within the next 30 working days.

The purchase would be worth Tk 38.34 crore at Monday's closing price of Tk 219.10 per share.

Ratna intends to buy the shares at the prevailing market price through the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), according to a disclosure published on the exchange's website yesterday.

The shares will be purchased through both the public market, where shares are traded in the usual way, and the block market, which handles large-volume transactions. Shares of Square Pharmaceuticals rose 0.09 percent to Tk 219.30 at the DSE yesterday.

The company's profit grew 15 percent in FY2025-26, which ended on June 30, 2026.

Earnings per share (EPS) rose to Tk 31.24 from Tk 27.04 in the previous fiscal year.

The board of directors recommended a 130 percent cash dividend for FY2025-26, up from 120 percent in the previous year.

The board also approved Tk 725 crore for balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion, as well as capital machinery and land for future expansion. Sponsor-directors held 44.15 percent of the company's shares as of October 31, 2026, according to DSE data. Institutional investors, foreign shareholders and the general public held the remaining shares.

A-challan compulsory for non-judicial stamp duties from July 2027

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has made the Automated Challan System (A-challan) mandatory for paying all non-judicial stamp duties from July 1, 2027, aiming to curb forgery and boost revenue collection. Non-judicial stamp duties apply to documents used outside court proceedings. The Internal Resources Division (IRD) said people could use A-challan or follow the existing payment system until June 30, 2027.

Under the new arrangement, all payments must be made through the A-challan system (www.achallan.gov.bd), regardless of the amount, the IRD said in a press release yesterday.

The IRD, a division of the Ministry of Finance, said deeds submitted for registration must be prepared on cartridge paper once the new system takes effect.

A printed copy of the A-challan receipt, serving as proof of payment, must be attached when a deed is submitted to the sub-registrar for registration. The challan number must also appear on the first page of the deed.

The notification also sets requirements for bulk A-challan payments made on behalf of multiple individuals or organisations. The name and identification number of each individual or organisation must be included.

Acceptable identification numbers include the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), National Identity (NID) number, Business Identification Number (BIN) and trade licence number, where applicable.

Explaining the move, the IRD said automating non-judicial stamp duty payments through A-challan would save the government substantial amounts spent on printing, storing and distributing impressed (pre-printed) and adhesive (stick-on) stamps, as well as paying commissions on them.

The move would also eliminate opportunities to sell counterfeit stamps and help increase government revenue, it added.



Shafiuzzaman

Shafiuzzaman made AMD of Al-Arafah Islami Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Al-Arafah Islami Bank (AIB) PLC has appointed Shafiuzzaman as its additional managing director (AMD).

Shafiuzzaman has approximately 31 years of experience in local and multinational banks and financial institutions, with expertise in corporate banking, relationship management, investment risk management, investment administration and recovery operations.

He began his professional career in 1994 as an executive at the erstwhile United Leasing Company Limited (now United Finance PLC).

During his career, he also served at ONE Bank PLC and Bank Asia PLC, contributing significantly to business development, institutional growth and operational excellence.

Shafiuzzaman obtained a master of business administration (MBA) degree from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) at the University of Dhaka.



Md Wahiduzzaman, managing director and CEO of Starpath Holdings Ltd, and Mamur Ahmed, senior executive vice-president and head of distribution at Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing a memorandum of understanding at Prime View on Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Prime Bank clients to get benefits on Starpath flat purchases

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Starpath Holdings Ltd, a real estate company in Dhaka, to offer exclusive benefits to the bank's customers and employees when purchasing apartments.

Mamur Ahmed, senior executive vice-president and head of distribution at the bank, and Md Wahiduzzaman, managing director and CEO of the real estate company, signed the MoU at Prime View on Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Starpath Holdings Ltd will offer special prices to Prime Bank PLC customers and employees purchasing apartments.

The initiative aims to enhance customer benefits and provide greater value to the bank's customers and employees.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Joarder Tanvir Faisal, executive vice-president and head of consumer assets and cards; Takiyan Chowdhury, executive vice-president and head of secured consumer financing and embedded payments; Shafiquzzaman Bhuiyan, senior manager of the real estate company; and Md Rezaul Islam, senior assistant manager, along with other senior officials from both organisations.

BRAC Bank's profit rises 38% in first nine months of 2026

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank PLC reported a 38 percent year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit after tax (NPAT) to Tk 2,121 crore in the first nine months of 2026, driven by its diversified businesses, strong governance and customer-focused strategy.

The profit stood at Tk 1,536 crore in the corresponding period of 2025, according to a press release.

The bank disclosed this information at a virtual earnings event on Monday, attended by local and international investors, research analysts, portfolio managers and capital market professionals.

On a standalone basis, NPAT rose 50 percent year-on-year to Tk 1,584 crore from Tk 1,055 crore a year earlier. Despite a challenging macroeconomic and industry environment, BRAC Bank continued to outperform the market, delivering strong balance sheet growth.

Compared with December 2025, customer deposits increased 16 percent, while loans and advances grew 7 percent.

The bank also improved its operational efficiency, reducing its cost-to-income ratio to 41 percent at the end of September 2026 from 46 percent in the corresponding period of 2025, reflecting its focus on productivity, cost discipline and digital transformation.

Commenting on the financial results, Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank, said, "Our third-quarter performance reflects the strength of our business model, prudent governance and disciplined execution."

"Continued customer confidence has enabled us to deliver growth well above the market while maintaining one of the industry's strongest asset quality indicators."



Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank PLC, attends the bank's virtual earnings event on Monday. PHOTO: BRAC BANK



German Ambassador to Bangladesh Rüdiger Lotz poses for a photograph with founding trustees and members of the German-Bangladeshi business community at the third annual general meeting of the German Business Council Trust (GBC) at The Westin Dhaka on Saturday. PHOTO: GERMAN BUSINESS COUNCIL TRUST

German envoy sees scope for stronger business ties

STAR BUSINESS DESK

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Rüdiger Lotz has highlighted growing commercial opportunities between the two countries, particularly in sustainability, trade expansion and private sector investment.

He made the remarks at the third annual general meeting (AGM) of the German Business Council Trust (GBC), held at The Westin Dhaka on Saturday, according to a press release.

The council also hosted a business networking dinner alongside the AGM, bringing together founding trustees and members of the German-Bangladeshi business community to review organisational progress and strengthen bilateral economic cooperation.

At the meeting, GBC Chairman Md Zahidul Islam presented an overview of the council's operational achievements over the past year, statutory compliance updates and future initiatives to strengthen trade relations between Germany and Bangladesh.

Members also took part in an open question-and-answer session, discussing business strategies, trust frameworks and potential industry partnerships.

Welcoming the ambassador, board of trustees and other guests, the GBC chairman reaffirmed the council's commitment to serving as a key platform for German businesses and local corporate stakeholders.

Auditor doubts

FROM PAGE B4

physically verify the assets because they were not identified by tag numbers in the fixed asset register.

The company also failed to provide the original land deed, saying it was held by Janata Bank, preventing the auditor from verifying ownership of the property.

The company has also failed to pay its listing fees to the DSE and fees to the Central Depository Bangladesh Ltd (CDBL), exposing it to possible regulatory action, including penalties, suspension of trading privileges or delisting from the stock exchange.

According to the auditor, the reported loan balances had remained unchanged since June 2022, with no loan instalments repaid or provisions made for interest expenses.

The auditor sought confirmation of the loan balances from the bank but received no response by October 11, 2026. The management also failed to provide an update on the loans.

As a result, the auditor could neither verify the outstanding balances nor determine their current and long-term portions.

The Daily Star tried to reach Central Pharmaceuticals Company Secretary Md Tajul Islam by phone, but he did not respond.

Shares of the drugmaker rose slightly to Tk 8.70 at the DSE yesterday.

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

Memo No: 46.02.0400.000.14.001.26-2425 Date: 09/11/2026

e-Tender Notice No-22/2026-27

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of Works	e-Tender ID	Procurement Method	Tender/ Proposal Document Last Selling/ downloading Date and Time	Last Date and Time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	Tender/ Proposal Closing Date and Time
1.	CAFDRIRP/ BARGUNA/ UZR/W-39/ER/2026-27	Rehabilitation of Amtali HQ-Taltali HQ-Sonakata Sea Beach Road (Taltali Part) Road from Ch.5510m -9680m under Taltali Upazila, Dist: Barguna. [ROAD ID 504872003] [TALTALI]	1354264	OTM	25-Nov-2026 17:00	26-Nov-2026 11:00	26-Nov-2026 12:00

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 an 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 at any branches of the registered Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from the e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

09.11.26
Executive Engineer
LGED, Barguna.
Tel: 02479930954
e-mail: xen.barguna@lged.gov.bd

GD-2726

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Superintendent, Joypurhat District jail
www.prison.joypurhat.gov.bd

Memo no.44.07.3800.133.008.26-4914 Date-09.11.2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following work

SL No	Tender ID	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1.	1368663	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Protein Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KA Package-1 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
2.	1368664	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Protein Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KA Package-2 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 10:30	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
3.	1368665	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Protein Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KA Package-3 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
4.	1368666	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Protein Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KA Package-4 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
5.	1368667	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of vegetable Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KHA Package-1 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
6.	1368668	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of vegetable Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KHA Package-2 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
7.	1368669	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of vegetable Items Categories-3 to Schedule-KHA Package-3 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
8.	1368670	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Oil Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-1 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
9.	1368671	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Spices, Food Ingredients and Miscellaneous Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-2 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
10.	1368672	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Spices, Food Ingredients and Miscellaneous Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-3 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
11.	1368673	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Spices, Food Ingredients and Miscellaneous Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-4 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027.	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
12.	1368674	Procurement of Supply of Various Types of Fire Wood and Transport Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-5 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00
13.	1368675	Procurement of Supply of Cigarettes, bidis, and various types of rice Items Categories-3 to Schedule-GA Package-6 for the Period from January/2027 to July/2027	23-Nov-2026 11:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00	23-Nov-2026 12:00

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 banks branches of Bangladesh. Further e-GP information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

09/11/2026
Umme Salma
Jail Super
Joypurhat District Jail
Email-jsjhat@prison.gov.bd

GD-2727

Finance Division tightens spending rules for revised budget

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Ministry of Finance has directed all ministries and divisions to suspend or restrict expenditure in several areas, including foreign travel and vehicle purchases, as part of efforts to rein in spending in the revised budget for the current fiscal year.

The Finance Division issued the initial guidelines yesterday for preparing the revised budget for fiscal year (FY) 2026-27, which has an overall outlay of Tk 938,000 crore.

As budget allocations are rarely fully utilised by the end of a fiscal year, resulting in overspending in some areas and underspending in others, the Finance Division initiates the budget revision process after the first quarter.

Under the operating budget, the construction of all new residential, non-residential and other buildings or structures by ministries and divisions must remain suspended, except for projects under the ministries of education, health and agriculture.

However, ongoing construction projects that are at least 70 percent complete may continue, subject to funding approval from the Finance Division. Emergency expenditure may also be permitted on a case-by-case basis, provided prior approval and proper justification are obtained.

To curb public spending, allocations for purchasing all types of motor vehicles, watercraft and aircraft will remain suspended. Exceptions will be allowed only for newly established government entities or the replacement of vehicles under the Table of Organisation and Equipment (TO&E) that are more than 10 years old, subject to Finance Division approval.

Except for ambulances and security vehicles, all newly purchased or replacement jeeps and cars must be fully electric vehicles (FEVs).

The guidelines also prohibit allocations under the operating budget for land acquisition, although expenditure under the development budget may continue in accordance with the prescribed guidelines.

No funds will be allocated for interest-free special advances to government employees for purchasing vehicles.

Government-funded participation in foreign training programmes, seminars, symposiums and workshops has also been suspended. However, foreign travel or training may be permitted for essential and urgent purposes, subject to approval from the appropriate authorities in line with official circulars.

Govt thinks

FROM PAGE B1

He said the IMF's projection was based on the assumption that no reforms would be undertaken.

"The forecast says, 'if reforms are not undertaken'," he said, adding that multilateral institutions had recognised the government's reform programme and offered support at the recent annual meetings of the World Bank and the IMF.

To boost household spending, the government plans to increase remittances and expand its Family Card programme. It also aims to raise exports while monitoring the impact of higher fuel prices.

Titumir said several economic indicators, including the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), pointed to a recovery.

"We are moving towards relief and restoring confidence. All the indicators of an economic recovery, and all the indicators needed to bring the economy out of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), are showing positive signs," he said.

On investment, Titumir said Chinese companies had started investing in economic and industrial zones in Chattogram, while Japanese firms had shown interest in setting up manufacturing operations in Bangladesh.

He stressed that increasing private sector credit was essential to revive business activity. Bangladesh Bank has announced a support package, of which one-fifth has already been disbursed.

The government is also reviewing proposals for the Family Card programme to ensure that poor and extremely poor households receive support.

"We are reviewing the proposals to ensure that poor and extremely poor people are included in the programme so that it can inject fresh life into the economy," he said.

Titumir also called for better implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP), saying the fiscal year should be aligned with the economic cycle.

He pointed out that development work often slows during the monsoon, making it difficult to use public funds effectively.

"Development work under the ADP does not take place during the monsoon. If you insist on carrying out the work then, the money will simply be thrown into the water," he said.

On revenue transparency, Titumir said the NBR would resume publishing revenue statistics regularly from December, addressing concerns over delays.

"You will receive the statistics regularly from December. There will be no deviation from this commitment," he said, adding that the government was putting the necessary systems in place.

Describing the condition of the economy inherited by the government, Titumir said the damage extended across several sectors.

"We have inherited an economy that has been shattered and left in ruins," he said.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়
মুদ্রণ ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তর
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নম্বর-০৫.০৪.০০০০.০০৯.১১.০০২.২৬(অংশ-২)/ ১৮৮২

তারিখ: ২৫ কার্তিক ১৪৩৩ / ১০ নভেম্বর ২০২৬

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মুদ্রণ ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তরের ১৩তম হতে ২০তম গ্রেডের লিখিত পরীক্ষার সময়সূচী বিষয়ে অবহিতকরণ

মুদ্রণ ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তরের শূন্যপদে জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে গত ২৩ অক্টোবর ২০২৩ তারিখে ০৫.০৪.০০০০.০০৯.১১.০০১.২৩/২২৩২ সংখ্যক বিজ্ঞপ্তি এবং ১৬ জুন ২০২৬ তারিখের ০৫.০৪.০০০০.০০৯.১১.০০২.২২ (অংশ)/১০১৪ সংখ্যক বিজ্ঞপ্তি মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত ২১ ক্যাটাগরির পদে জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে গত ৩০/১০/২০২৬ ও ০৬/১১/২০২৬ তারিখে প্রাক বাছাই পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। বাছাই পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা ছকে বর্ণিত সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী সরকারী তিতুমীর কলেজ ও তেজগাঁও আদর্শ স্কুল এন্ড কলেজে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে :

তারিখ ও সময়	গ্রুপ	পদের নাম	কেন্দ্রের নাম
২৭ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ সকাল ১০টা হতে ১১.৩০টা পর্যন্ত	গ্রুপ-এ ১৪টি পদ	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর, সাঁটলিপিকার-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর, সাঁট মুদ্রাক্ষরিক-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর, লাইব্রেরিয়ান (ইউ.ডি.এ), সহকারী লাইব্রেরিয়ান (ইউ.ডি.এ), অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক, হিসাব সহকারী (এল.ডি.এ), সহকারী স্টোরকিপার, সেলসম্যান, কপিহোল্ডার, সহকারী চেকার, মেকানিক (মেকানিক্যাল), ইলেকট্রিশিয়ান, বাইন্ডার	সরকারী তিতুমীর কলেজ
২৭ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ সকাল ১০টা হতে ১১টা পর্যন্ত	গ্রুপ-বি ৭টি পদ	ড্রাইভার, পানি পাম্প চালক/পাম্প চালক, অফিস সহায়ক, নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী, পোর্টার, পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী, কাউন্টার (প্রেসের জন্য)	তেজগাঁও আদর্শ স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ

প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই নিম্নোক্ত নির্দেশনাবলী অনুসরণ করতে হবেঃ

ক. পরীক্ষার্থীকে লিখিত, ব্যবহারিক ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময় অবশ্যই ইতোপূর্বে ইস্যুকৃত ছবিযুক্ত প্রবেশপত্র সঙ্গে আনতে হবে;

খ. পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে মোবাইল ফোন, ঘড়িসহ যেকোনো ধরনের ইলেকট্রনিক ডিভাইস, বই-পুস্তক, ক্যালকুলেটর, ব্যাগ আনা যাবে না; যদি পরীক্ষার্থীর নিকট কোনো ধরনের ইলেকট্রনিকস ডিভাইস পাওয়া যায় তবে তার পরীক্ষা তাৎক্ষণিক বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে ও তাকে কেন্দ্র থেকে বহিষ্কার করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে;

গ. পরীক্ষা চলাকালে কোনো প্রকার অসদাচরণ অথবা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে প্রার্থীর উত্তরপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে তাৎক্ষণিক আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

(মোহাম্মদ রুহুল আমিন)
পরিচালক (উপসচিব)
ও
সদস্য সচিব
বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি
মুদ্রণ ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তর

GD-2731

BSEC

FROM PAGE B1

amount owed to a brokerage house or merchant bank.

Under the decision, stockbrokers and merchant bankers can adjust their negative equity and unrealised losses progressively through 2030. Based on their negative equity positions as of September 30, 2026, institutions must maintain a minimum provision of 25 percent annually, starting from 2027.

However, any new negative equity created during 2026 must be fully provisioned within the same year. If further negative equity arises in subsequent years, provisions must be made in the respective years.

Beneficial owner (BO) accounts with negative equity can rebalance their portfolios by selling existing shares and using the proceeds to buy new 'A' category shares. However, they will not be allowed to take out new margin loans. Block market transactions will also be prohibited for these accounts when selling shares.

During the provisioning and adjustment period, no interest on margin loans or portfolio management fees can be charged to these BO accounts.

Investors will not be held liable for, or burdened with, financial claims arising from negative equity accounts. Institutions granted the extended deadline will also be barred from declaring or distributing cash dividends.

At the meeting, the BSEC also decided that bonds carrying conditions for listing on the Alternative Trading Board (ATB) but remaining unlisted must apply for listing on the main board of the respective stock exchange by November 30, 2026.

64.5% of adults

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branches and full online connectivity, underscoring their continued position as the backbone of formal financial access.

Agent banking maintains 20,501 outlets serving 2.5 crore accounts, with 86 percent of these outlets and 85 percent of the accounts concentrated in rural areas, predominantly driven by private commercial banks and Islamic banks.

At the end of 2025, merchant onboarding reached approximately 9.63 lakh under Bangla QR, a national interoperable QR code payment standard introduced by Bangladesh Bank to establish a unified, secure and cost-effective merchant payment ecosystem.

During 2025, Bangla QR processed approximately 64 lakh merchant payment transactions, amounting to Tk 2,771 crore.

An analysis of the data showed that financial inclusion is higher among men than women. This gender gap remains consistent across both rural and urban areas.

The inclusion rate increases with education, as account ownership rises from 55.1 percent among adults with no formal education to nearly 90 percent among those with tertiary-level education.

Across the financial sub-sectors, a highly uneven growth pattern was observed in 2025.

The number of accounts at finance companies rose by 19 percent and those at banks by 10 percent compared to the previous year.

MFSs and microfinance institutions posted moderate growth of 8 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Capital market intermediaries remained broadly stable, recording a marginal decline of around 0.6 percent.

BASIC Bank

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The bank subsequently took control of the premises through court representatives, following the prescribed legal procedures.

The deal dates back to the tenure of the bank's former chairman Bacchu, whose time at the helm was marked by widespread financial irregularities.

Three months after Bacchu became chairman in 2009, the bank's board decided to purchase a building for its head office. Four months later, BASIC Bank signed an Tk 81 crore agreement to buy the under-construction building in Motijheel.

The contract, which was not registered, was legally inadmissible in court. The proposed building was named Zaman-Basic Bank Tower.

Business Resources Limited was responsible for both the land sale and construction, effectively placing both aspects of the deal under the control of the same person.

The bank's current management said Bacchu played the main role in the disputed land deal, the unregistered contract and the large payment.

Established in 1989, the state bank was profitable till 2009, when the then Awami League government appointed Jatiya Party leader Bacchu as its chairman. Soon after, the commercial lender became mired in financial irregularities.

An inspection by the Bangladesh Bank later found that loans of nearly Tk 4,500 were disbursed with serious irregularities across four branches between December 2009 and November 2012. The loans are yet to be recovered by the bank.

BB seeks

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Central bank officials also said illegal transactions, online gambling, betting and crypto trading through MFS platforms were on the rise, with such activities largely carried out through fake accounts.

bKash Limited is a subsidiary of BRAC Bank PLC. It began as a joint venture between BRAC Bank and Money in Motion LLC.

Shamsuddin Haider Dalim, head of corporate communications at bKash, told The Daily Star that all bKash accounts are opened through either e-KYC or paper-based KYC, following the customer due diligence (CDD) protocol set out in the regulator's guidelines.

Customers' identities are verified through biometric authentication against National ID (NID) records in the Election Commission (EC) database.

He said that in e-KYC, information from the NID is captured exactly as it appears using optical character recognition (OCR), while facial recognition is used to confirm the person's identity.

Any error in the NID is therefore reflected in the account records, and only the customer can change the captured information.

"A large number of the reported accounts showing an age of 100 or above is due to errors in the birth dates recorded in the respective NIDs," he said.

The account holders concerned have been asked to correct their dates of birth in the EC database and inform bKash so that their KYC records can be updated, he added.

In some paper-KYC cases, he said, the year of birth was entered incorrectly during manual data entry. These unintended errors have since been corrected.

All the accounts in question have been placed under Enhanced Due Diligence (EDD), and necessary risk mitigation measures have been taken, Dalim said.

bKash has 8.5 crore registered accounts, of which 4.20 crore are active.

Fruit imports grow

FROM PAGE B1

between May and August, according to a 2026 review published in the International Journal of Agricultural Research, Innovation and Technology.

The review identifies inadequate cold-chain facilities, a lack of suitable off-season varieties and weaknesses in post-harvest management as constraints on year-round supply. This has helped sustain demand for imported fruits, particularly apples, oranges and grapes, which are available throughout the year.

Consumer research also points to the importance of purchasing power. A 2022 study of 155 respondents in a peri-urban area around Bangladesh Agricultural University found that income, education and nutritional knowledge were positively associated with fruit consumption. Apple, grape and orange consumption, in particular, showed a positive correlation with income, while higher prices reduced the quantities purchased.

FAMILIAR FRUITS DOMINATE

The growth has been driven largely by familiar fruits rather than exotic varieties.

Apple imports increased from 34,274 tonnes in 2009 to more than 1.65 lakh tonnes in 2025, while orange imports rose from 20,025 tonnes to over 1.57 lakh tonnes. Together, they accounted for about three-fifths of all fruit imports in 2025.

Newer varieties arrive in much smaller quantities, but their growth has been striking. Bangladesh imported just 129kg of kiwifruit in 2009, worth Tk 18,265. By 2025, the volume had increased to 14,582kg, valued at Tk 52.59 lakh. Imports reached 24,214kg in the first 10 months of 2026.

The figures suggest that the expansion has not replaced traditional choices but has widened the range of fruits available to consumers.

Aminul said rising purchasing power, particularly among urban consumers, and changing food habits had created demand for a wider variety of imported fruits. Supermarkets and specialised fruit shops had also made them more accessible.

RISING COSTS, RISING REVENUE

The expansion has not been uninterrupted. Importers have faced mounting pressure since 2022, when a shortage of foreign currency prompted the authorities to discourage imports and conserve reserves.

Bangladesh Bank introduced a 100 percent margin requirement for opening letters of credit (LCs) for fruit imports. The government also raised regulatory and supplementary duties, increasing the overall tax burden.

Saiful Alam, owner of Shah Amanat Fruits Imports, said importers previously could open LCs with margins of 10 to 30 percent, depending on their banking relationships and business records.

"The higher upfront payment requirements, alongside increased import taxes and dollar shortages, made imports more expensive and constrained the ability of traders to bring in supplies," he told The Daily Star.

Those costs were eventually passed on to consumers, he added.

The Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) said in a report sent to the commerce ministry on October 27 that imports of apples, oranges, mandarins, grapes, pears and pomegranates had fallen by more than a third in the three years to fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) before recovering by roughly a tenth the following year.

The commission linked the decline to successive increases in duties and taxes, which pushed the combined rate on these fruits from around 89 percent in FY21 to about 122 percent in the current fiscal year.

The depreciation of the taka has added to the pressure. The dollar cost about 43 percent more in local currency over the five years to 2025-26, according to the commission.

Thanks to the rising duties, despite the slowdown, imported fruits have become an important source of government revenue.

"Imported fruits are an important contributor to customs revenue because of the relatively high tax incidence on the products," said Sharif Mohammad Al Amin, assistant commissioner of Chattogram Custom House.

NBR collection from imported fruits rose from Tk 186 crore in 2009, when the average duty-tax incidence was around 59 percent, to Tk 5,967 crore in 2025, when duty-tax incidence averaged at 119 percent. Revenue collection reached Tk 5,222 crore in the first 10 months of 2026 alone.

The BTTC has recommended exempting fruits not produced commercially in Bangladesh from supplementary and regulatory duties. It named apples, oranges, mandarins, grapes, pears and pomegranates.

Among the five countries it compared, Bangladesh had the highest total tax rate and Nepal the lowest. The commission estimated that bringing the rate back to around 89 percent could restore import volumes to their 2021-22 level and raise revenue above Tk 6,500 crore, assuming an average assessed value of Tk 90 per kg.

For traders, the challenge is to keep the market supplied without making imported fruit increasingly unaffordable.

Alam urged the government to balance revenue generation and foreign exchange management with consumers' access to a wider range of food products.

Zila Parishad, Sylhet
(www.zp.sylhet.gov.bd)

Memo No: 46.60.9100.001.01.002.26.479(50) Date: 09-11-2026

:Notice:

OPEN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITION FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF BAISHTILA NATURAL PARK, SYLHET
JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY ZILA PARISHAD, SYLHET
INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS BANGLADESH

CRITERIA & VISION	Baishtila Natural Park is an emerging landmark destination for tourism, recreation, and ecological development in Sylhet, undertaken by Zila Parishad Sylhet. Situated on approximately 43.25 acres of scenic hilly terrain adjacent to Osmani International Airport, the site is envisioned as a major public asset that celebrates Sylhet's natural beauty, biodiversity, and cultural identity. An initial Master Planning Framework has already been prepared, and several Phase 1 components are completed or nearing completion. This competition invites architects, landscape architects, and multidisciplinary design teams to propose implementable, future-phase development strategies that build upon the existing framework and elevate Baishtila Natural Park into a premier national destination.	
SITE	Location: 24.965224, 91.852194, Baishtila Natural Park, Sylhet.	
PRIZE	First Prize	**Tk. 5,00,000.00 (Taka Five Lakhs) & Certificate**
	Second Prize	**Tk. 3,00,000.00 (Taka Three Lakhs) & Certificate**
	Third Prize	**Tk. 2,00,000.00 (Taka Two Lakhs) & Certificate**
	Special Mention (3 Nos)	**Tk. 1,00,000.00 (Taka One Lakh) & Certificate each**
JUROR	1. Khandakar Abdul Muktadir, Honorable MP for Sylhet-1 2. Abul Kaher Chowdhury, Administrator, Sylhet Zila Parishad. 3. Ar. Enamul Karim Nirjhar. 4. Ar. Ehsan Khan. 5. Ar. Prof. Iftekhar Rahman.	
ELIGIBILITY	The Architect (Team Leader) must be a 'Regular Member' of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) with eight years of professional experience and meeting the conditions outlined in the "Bangladesh National Building Code 2020" are eligible to participate as team leaders. 2. The Team Leader should have up-to-date IAB membership fees.	
REGISTRATION	Eligible Architects/Firms/Team will have to pay an amount of BDT 2000 in cash against his/her IAB Membership No. at the IAB Office (Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) Plot-E/11, Sthapatyacharjo Muzharul Islam Sarani, Agargaon Administrative Zone, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207) from 03.11.2026 to 08.11.2026 between 12:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Upon receiving the amount, IAB will issue a unique registration code against the participant's IAB Membership No. One registered participant can submit only one proposal.	
QUERIES	Queries will only be addressed in written form to the following **iab.zps.competition@gmail.com**, with **'Q-unique registration code'** as the subject.	
DEADLINE	**Registration:** November 09, 2026 to November 15, 2026 (by 8:00 PM) **Queries Deadline:** November 14 - November 18, 2026 (by 6:00 PM) **Reply to Queries:** November 22, 2026 (Online) **Submission:** December 26, 2026 (by 6:00 PM) at IAB Center **Jury:** December 28, 2026 to December 29, 2026 **Result:** December 31, 2026	
CONTACT	Competition Director 1. Ar. Abhijit Mazumdar (M-174) 2. Ar. Imrul Islam Durrany (D-022)	

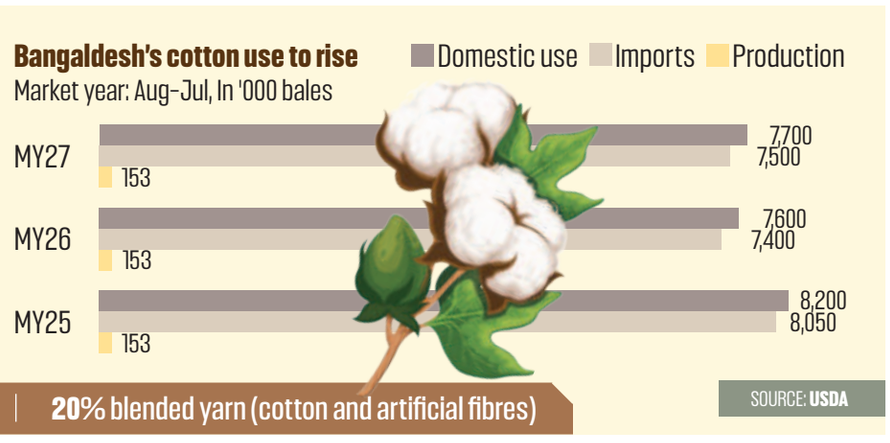
09.11.2026
(Md. Moyazzem Hossain)
Assistant Engineer
Zila Parishad, Sylhet.

GD-2728

Brazil widens lead as Bangladesh's top cotton supplier

Key points

- Bangladesh's cotton imports to rise in MY27
- Country utilises 7-8m bales of cotton annually
- With full capacity, local spinners can use 15-20m bales of cotton



Spinners produce: **80**% cotton yarn | **20**% blended yarn (cotton and artificial fibres)

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Brazil has consolidated its position as Bangladesh's leading raw cotton supplier in marketing year (MY) 2025-26, expanding its market share.

The South American country supplied around 24 lakh bales, accounting for 33 percent of Bangladesh's cotton imports in MY26.

In the previous year, it exported 19 lakh bales, representing a 25 percent market share, according to a report by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) published earlier this month.

In its latest report, the USDA said Bangladesh was the world's third-largest cotton-importing country, behind Vietnam and China, and the fourth-largest cotton consumer.

Bangladesh consumed 76 lakh bales of cotton in MY26, meeting 97 percent of its requirements through imports due to negligible domestic production.

India was the second-largest supplier, shipping 10 lakh bales and retaining a 15 percent market share in MY26.

Benin and the United States followed, with market shares of 12 percent each. They supplied 8.7 lakh bales and 8.6 lakh bales, respectively, the USDA said.

Australia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Cameroon were among the other major cotton suppliers to Bangladesh, the world's second-largest apparel exporter.

The USDA said many Bangladeshi spinners preferred US cotton for its high quality and contamination-free fibre. However, suppliers in South America and West Africa had expanded their market shares by capitalising on logistical advantages, lower freight costs and shorter lead times.

The agency lowered its forecast for Bangladesh's cotton imports in MY26, citing higher global prices, elevated shipping costs, and domestic business and investment challenges.

For MY27, the USDA projects that Bangladesh's cotton imports will rise 1.35 percent to 75 lakh bales, from 74 lakh bales in the previous year.

It also forecast that domestic cotton consumption would increase slightly to 77 lakh bales in MY27, from an estimated 76 lakh bales in MY26, driven by growing domestic yarn demand following government policy support.

"These reforms aim to boost local value addition and reduce reliance on imported raw materials, particularly within the textile and apparel sector," the report said.

Bangladesh has 530 yarn manufacturing mills under the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), with a combined annual cotton utilisation capacity of more than 2 crore bales, according to the report.

However, local spinning mills are operating at only half of their installed capacity as the energy crisis has disrupted their operations.

To encourage the use of domestically produced yarn, the government raised the cash incentive for ready-made garment exports using locally produced yarn and fabric to 5 percent for one year, effective from July 1, 2026. The previous rate was 1.5 percent.

The policy aims to narrow the price gap between domestic and imported materials, directly targeting imports of foreign yarn, according to the USDA.

Furthermore, Bangladesh Bank is implementing a Tk 20,000 crore pre-refinancing scheme to provide loans for raw material purchases.

The National Board of Revenue also tightened zero-duty import benefits for 10–30 count cotton yarn under bonded warehouse rules from early September this year, requiring a 100 percent bank guarantee to protect local spinners.

NRBC Bank to invest Tk 100cr in securities subsidiary

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

NRBC Bank will invest Tk 100 crore in its subsidiary, NRBC Bank Securities Limited, within the next 30 days.

The private bank will subscribe to 10 crore ordinary shares at Tk 10 each, according to a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

NRBC Bank Securities, a subsidiary of NRBC Bank, was launched in 2016. It provides brokerage services, with a focus on non-resident Bangladeshis, according to its website.

Shares of the bank rose 1.08 percent to Tk 9.40 yesterday on the DSE. NRBC Bank's profit grew nearly sixfold in the first nine months of 2026 compared with the same period a year earlier.

Earnings per share (EPS), which measures profit attributable to each share, stood at Tk 0.58 for January-September 2026, against Tk 0.10 for the same period in 2025, according to a recently published price-sensitive information (PSI) disclosure.

The bank attributed the increase in earnings to higher income from investments and lower provisions for taxation.

Sponsor-directors held 58.71 percent of NRBC Bank's shares as of October 31, 2026, while institutional and public shareholders held the remainder, according to DSE data.

Partnerships should create opportunities, not dependencies

SYED ERSHAD AHMED

The world's economic map is being reshaped by geopolitical competition, shifting supply chains and the growing use of trade as an instrument of influence. For Asian economies, the challenge is to build partnerships without excessive dependence. A commentary in The Japan Times on November 3, 2026 by Stephen R Nagy examines Japan's response and offers lessons for Bangladesh.

Japan's dilemma is familiar across the region. China is a major market, manufacturing centre and trading partner. Decades of integration have benefited Japanese businesses and consumers. Yet interdependence can become a vulnerability when market access, customs procedures, critical resources or regulatory decisions are used to exert political pressure. The lesson is not to disengage from China, but to ensure economic cooperation rests on mutual benefit, predictability and respect for national autonomy.

The article shows how geopolitical tensions can extend beyond diplomacy. Even cultural products and commercial partnerships may become caught in political disputes. Such episodes remind businesses that market concentration carries commercial and political risks.



By combining constructive engagement with diversified partnerships, Bangladesh can turn the extended LDC preparatory period into a launchpad for sustainable growth

Japan's response rests on three pillars. First, engagement. Tokyo continues diplomatic, educational, cultural and institutional exchanges with China. Dialogue remains essential, and the Chinese people should not be equated with every position taken by their government. Cooperation helps preserve regional stability.

Second, economic resilience. Japanese companies are reviewing their exposure to China and diversifying supply chains towards Southeast Asia, India and North America. This does not mean abandoning the Chinese market. It is a practical effort to ensure disruption in one country cannot paralyse an entire business. Diversified sourcing, alternative markets and reliable logistics give companies flexibility during shocks.

Third, credible deterrence. Japan is strengthening its defence capabilities and partnerships to protect its territory, maritime interests and regional stability. Diplomacy is more effective when backed by capable institutions, trusted partnerships and the ability to safeguard national interests.

These lessons are especially relevant as Bangladesh prepares for a major economic transition. On October 29, 2026, the United Nations General Assembly approved an extension of Bangladesh's LDC graduation preparatory period until November 24, 2029. This provides valuable time, but should not encourage complacency or delay. Bangladesh has made significant development achievements; nevertheless, the reforms needed for a smooth transition are substantial. Three years is not a long time.

The country must accelerate efforts to diversify export products and destinations, secure new markets, attract foreign investment and strengthen competitiveness. This requires efficient ports and customs, better infrastructure, predictable regulation, a skilled workforce and an investor-friendly business environment. It also requires purposeful economic diplomacy.

Bangladesh's diplomatic missions should identify export opportunities, connect local businesses with overseas buyers, promote investment projects and support trade and investment arrangements. Economic diplomacy must go beyond protocol and official meetings; it should turn international relationships into measurable commercial opportunities and sustained business confidence.

China will remain an important partner, just as Japan, India, ASEAN, Europe, the United States and other economies offer opportunities. Bangladesh need not choose one relationship at the expense of another. It needs a balanced approach that widens its options and strengthens its negotiating position.

The central message is simple: openness is an advantage, but overdependence is a risk. By combining constructive engagement with diversified partnerships and stronger domestic capabilities, Bangladesh can turn the extended LDC preparatory period into a launchpad for sustainable growth. Strategic autonomy is not achieved by distancing itself from the world; it is built by becoming competitive enough to engage with it on better terms.

The writer is former president of FICCI and AmCham Bangladesh

Auditor doubts Central Pharma's viability

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Central Pharmaceuticals Ltd, a listed drugmaker, has received an adverse audit opinion on its financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2026, with the auditor raising serious concerns about the company's ability to continue its operations. The auditor cited mounting financial losses, failure to repay bank loans, substantial tax claims by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), inadequate cash flows and the non-renewal of the company's drug licence as major reasons for the adverse opinion.

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) disclosed the auditor's opinion yesterday. An adverse audit opinion is a formal statement that a company's financial statements contain material misstatements and do not present a true and fair view of its financial position.

Although the company assumed it had adequate resources to continue operating in the foreseeable future, the auditor said the circumstances indicated material uncertainty that could cast significant doubt on its ability to continue as a going concern.

The financial statements also failed to adequately disclose this uncertainty, according to the auditor.

In his audit report, Mohammad Shibbir Hossain, partner at chartered accountancy firm Ashraf Uddin & Co, said the company had negative retained earnings almost equal to its paid-up capital. It had also failed to raise fresh funds to generate sufficient operating cash flows to meet its current obligations and working capital requirements.

The report identified several weaknesses in the company's financial reporting, including difficulties in verifying fixed assets, questions over inventory valuation, unsupported tax balances, unverified receivables and inadequate documentation of sales and expenses.

The company reported property, plant and equipment worth Tk 103 crore. However, the auditor could not

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