Business

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starbusiness@thedailystar.net



Food safety testing to go mobile

Authority proposes 72 lab vans at Tk 390cr as experts urge it to make full use of existing district labs alongside them



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A mobile food-testing van stands outside the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority office in Shahbagh, Dhaka, as the authority plans to spend Tk 390 crore on 72 vans despite staff and equipment shortages at existing district labs. The photo was taken recently.

SUKANTA HALDER

The Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) wants to take food testing onto the road, with 72 mobile mini laboratories that would check daily essentials such as edible oil, milk, ghee, turmeric and chilli powder on the spot.

The authority wants to buy the vans for all districts and metropolitan cities as part of a tougher drive against food adulteration.

Fitted with testing kits, the customised vans would carry out instant checks and help raise public awareness, officials said. They would supplement the existing mini labs in every district across the country.

The mobile mini laboratory vans have been running in eight divisional cities for two years, and the authority is now convinced the model can go nationwide.

The 72 vans would cost about Tk 390 crore. Those will be purchased with BFSA funds under the second phase of the BFSA Capacity Enhancement Project, according to a proposal by the authority to the planning ministry.

As per the proposal, the Food Safety Authority wants to complete the project by June 2030.

Food Minister Afroza Khanam said the vans are meant for testing food samples instantly during monitoring drives.

"With its current capacity, it is quite challenging for the authority to identify adulteration and contamination in various foods and ensure food safety in faraway parts of the country," she told The Daily Star.

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Decade of taka depreciation key driver of inflation

Says BB governor

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The depreciation of the local currency taka over the past decade is a major driver of inflation, Bangladesh Bank Governor Md Mostaqur Rahman said, as he urged commercial banks to cut the margins they add when selling dollars to importers.

Speaking at the 5th Bangladesh Economic Conference in Dhaka yesterday, he said the taka has lost about 60 percent of its value in 10 years, or roughly 6 percent a year.

Business daily Bonik Barta organised the conference amid the Middle East conflict, energy volatility and global supply chain disruptions to discuss strategies for the country's macroeconomic stability, investment expansion, and energy security.

At the programme, the central bank governor said Bangladesh is import-dependent, and even local production relies on imported inputs, so depreciation fed through to prices.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) data show the average rate against the US dollar rose from Tk 78.26 in fiscal year 2015-16 to Tk 122.30 in fiscal year 2025-26, an increase of about 56 percent.

The governor said all key indicators, including reserves and private sector credit growth, were negative when he took charge early this year.

"Banking sector troubles, including money being siphoned off, added to the burden," he said.

Mostaqur said the banking sector would need Tk 60,000 crore a year for the next five to eight years to recover from massive "financial looting and structural damage".

According to the governor, the current generation is leaving the next a heavy legacy.

The governor said private sector credit growth has slowed to almost single digits, largely because of high interest rates and a shortage of readymade lending products.

"The second phase of the stimulus package is aimed at bringing rates down further," he said, adding that a cut in the policy rate would help.

Mostaqur said the central bank has cut rates by half a percentage point and hopes to ease further. But high inflation limits room for rate cuts.

He said lending has also become concentrated in a few corporate borrowers over the past decade, with corporate loans making up 70-80 percent of the total.

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Risky banks need loan reviews, recovery plans

Knowledge Hub Institute says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) should independently review loans at high-risk banks, step up cash recovery from defaulted borrowers and prepare separate plans to restore or resolve troubled banks based on their financial condition, said the Knowledge Hub Institute (KHI).

In its quarterly banking sector review, the private think tank also called for greater transparency in the use of public funds to support struggling banks, regular updates on deposit repayments and closer monitoring of government-backed credit programmes.

The institute set December 2026 and March 2027 as key deadlines for implementing the proposed measures, identifying loan loss verification, uninterrupted payments and productive use of funds as priorities for restoring confidence in the banking sector.

The private think tank called for greater transparency in the use of public funds to support struggling banks

The review was presented at a press briefing at the institute's office in Dhaka yesterday.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, president of KHI, said independent loan assessments are essential to establish the actual losses at troubled banks and determine their capital needs.

Banks should also consider selling assets transparently where appropriate. Any transfer of distressed assets must be backed by independent valuation and checks on the buyer's ownership, he added.

Presenting the report, Shah Md Ahsan Habib, component lead of the institute, said BB should complete independent loan reviews at high-risk banks by December and require them to submit monthly reports on cash recovery.

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SPOTLIGHT

Women in small business got just 7.5% of loans in Q4 2025: BB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh received just 7.5 percent of total Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (CMSME) loans disbursed in the final quarter of 2025, despite accounting for more than a third of total enterprise borrowers, according to a Bangladesh Bank (BB) report.

Banks and finance companies disbursed a total of Tk 70,171 crore in CMSME loans during the quarter ended December 2025.

Of the total, women-owned enterprises received Tk 5,284 crore, while male-owned firms received Tk 64,890 crore, according to the Financial Inclusion Report 2025, published by the central bank this week.

The report shows that just over 1,61,200 women-owned enterprises received formal CMSME loans during the period, accounting for 37.6 percent of total enterprise borrowers.

The BB said women's share of total bank loan accounts fell to 18.6 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025 from 20 percent a year earlier, as male borrowers captured a larger share of overall credit expansion.

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Sourcing expo opens today with more exhibitors, no export target

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The second Global Sourcing Expo Dhaka begins today with more exhibitors, wider product coverage and buyers from several countries, but no export target has been set for the three-day event.

Organised by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the Ministry of Commerce, the expo will run till November 17 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal.

It brings together 161 organisations from 12 sectors, up from 125 organisations representing eight sectors last year, EPB officials said yesterday at a press briefing in Dhaka.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice chairman and chief executive of EPB, said the bureau expects better results this year, citing the higher number of exhibitors, broader sectoral participation and greater interest from foreign buyers.

Asked about last year's results and this year's target, he could not immediately provide the figures.

As an example of the event's potential, Hasan cited a $10 million pharmaceutical export agreement with an Afghan buyer at last year's expo.

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Fertiliser stock rises to 16.07 lakh tonnes in four months

BSS

The country's chemical fertiliser stock rose by 262,100 tonnes to 16.07 lakh tonnes in July-October of FY27, compared to 13.45 lakh tonnes in the same period of FY26, ensuring adequate supplies ahead of the upcoming Rabi season, according to officials.

The stock situation is satisfactory, officials from the Agriculture Ministry and other government agencies said.

The current stock comprises 606,900 tonnes of urea, 407,000 tonnes of triple superphosphate (TSP), 331,100 tonnes of diammonium phosphate (DAP) and 262,100 tonnes of muriate of potash (MOP), according to the Agriculture Ministry.

The government has set the fertiliser demand for FY27 at 58.05 lakh tonnes. A total of 19.50 lakh tonnes had been distributed nationwide until November 2, while another 714,200 tonnes had been allocated for November.

The government has instructed deputy commissioners and deputy directors of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to assess actual demand, monitor stocks and ensure proper distribution to prevent artificial shortages.

Field-level officials have also been directed to identify shortage-prone areas, prepare advance supply plans for the Rabi season and ensure fertiliser sales at government-fixed prices.

DAE Director General Md Abdur Rahim told BSS that fertiliser stocks were highly satisfactory compared to last year, with adequate supplies available ahead of the Rabi season.

He said the DAE and field administration were monitoring distribution to prevent artificial shortages and ensure farmers received fertiliser on time at fair prices.

Field-level officials have also been directed to identify shortage-prone areas, prepare advance supply plans for the Rabi season and ensure fertiliser sales at government-fixed prices

Urging farmers not to stockpile fertiliser, he said the country had been divided into 14 regions, each overseen by an officer to coordinate supply and monitoring activities.

Agriculture Secretary Md Selim Khan told BSS that the government was taking measures to ensure uninterrupted fertiliser supplies at fair prices.

He said district administrations and the DAE had been instructed to prevent artificial shortages and ensure farmers were not harassed.

To monitor supplies, the government has appointed 26 senior officials in 26 districts across Rajshahi, Khulna and Rangpur, he said, adding that there would be no fertiliser shortage during the Rabi season.

Prime Bank renews partnership with icddr,b for TB care in Sylhet

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has renewed its strategic partnership agreement with icddr,b, a Dhaka-based international health research institute, to continue providing essential healthcare services to presumptive and diagnosed tuberculosis (TB) patients at the Sylhet TB Screening and Treatment Centre (TBSTC).

The MoU was recently signed at the bank's head office in Dhaka by Md Ziaur Rahman, additional managing director and chief risk officer of Prime Bank PLC, and Nnamdi Chukwuma Nnadozie, acting executive director of icddr,b, according to a press release.

Commenting on the partnership, Ziaur Rahman said, "At Prime Bank, we believe that access to timely healthcare is a fundamental right."

"Partnering with icddr,b enables us to take tangible action against TB in Sylhet, ensuring thousands of patients receive the screening, diagnosis, and treatment they deserve," he added.

The renewed collaboration will run until August 31, 2027, supporting ongoing operations and ensuring uninterrupted care for vulnerable communities. The initiative builds on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in September 2025.

Between September 2025 and August 2026, 15,338 people with presumptive TB symptoms visited the centre, and 1,843 were diagnosed with the disease. The approved funding will ensure uninterrupted access to diagnostic, screening and treatment services at the Sylhet TBSTC over the coming year.



Nnamdi Chukwuma Nnadozie, acting executive director of icddr,b, and Md Ziaur Rahman, additional managing director and chief risk officer of Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing a memorandum of understanding at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Bangladesh delegation attends ICC global banking meeting in London



Members of the Bangladesh delegation pose for a group photograph with delegates from other countries at the "ICC Global Annual Banking Commission Meeting 2026" in London recently.

PHOTO: ICC BANGLADESH

STAR BUSINESS DESK

A 26-member delegation of bankers from nine banks, led by Ataur Rahman, secretary general of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh, attended the "ICC Global Annual Banking Commission Meeting 2026" in London from November 9 to 11.

The meeting, jointly organised by ICC headquarters and ICC UK, drew around 400 delegates from across the world, according to a press release.

The Bangladeshi delegation included Md Altaf Hossain, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh; Shabbir Ahmed, additional managing director of ONE Bank PLC; Mahtab Osmani, deputy managing director of Bank Asia PLC; Faruk Ahmed, deputy managing director of City Bank PLC; Mohammad Esha, deputy managing director of Pubali Bank PLC; and Syed Sazzad Haider Chowdhury, deputy managing director and chief information officer of Prime Bank PLC.

Senior officials from BRAC Bank PLC, Pubali Bank PLC, Mutual Trust Bank PLC, City Bank PLC, Eastern Bank PLC and Bank Asia PLC also joined the delegation.

ICC Bangladesh will host the "ICC Global Annual Banking Commission Meeting 2027" in Dhaka from November 8 to 10 next year.



PHOTO: IFIC BANK PLC

Officials of IFIC Bank PLC and Best Electronics pose for a photograph after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at IFIC Tower in Dhaka on November 11.

IFIC credit cardholders to get interest-free EMI at Best Electronics

STAR BUSINESS DESK

IFIC Bank PLC credit cardholders will be able to purchase products from Best Electronics, a privately owned consumer electronics and home appliances retail and manufacturing company in Bangladesh, in up to 12 monthly instalments without paying interest under a new agreement between the two organisations.

The agreement was formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed at IFIC Tower in Dhaka on November 11, reads a press statement.

Helal Ahmed, chief of branch business at the bank, and Syed Tahmid Zaman Rashik, managing director of the electrical and electronics manufacturing company, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Md Zakir Hossain, head of cards and digital banking at IFIC Bank, and Md Marjuman Rahman, senior deputy general manager and head of business at Best Electronics, among others, were also present at the signing ceremony.

UCB launches innovation hub to advance smart banking

STAR BUSINESS DESK

United Commercial Bank PLC (UCB) has launched the UCB Innovation Hub to advance technology-driven, innovative, and customer-centric banking services.

Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, formally inaugurated the hub on Thursday at the bank's head office in Dhaka. Members of the bank's board of directors and management committee were also present at the inauguration ceremony, according to a press release.

Established under the tagline "Innovating Today, Building the Future", the UCB Innovation Hub is expected to play a significant role in shaping the future of banking through technology, creativity, collaboration, and continuous innovation.

The hub will work towards positioning UCB as an AI-powered, innovation-driven, and customer-centric financial institution by transforming technology into sustainable business growth and exceptional banking experiences.

One of the key objectives of the hub is to explore and ensure the effective application of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), generative AI, machine learning, intelligent process automation, data analytics, open banking, API ecosystems, and emerging fintech solutions.

By leveraging these technologies, the initiative aims to simplify and accelerate banking operations, enhance operational efficiency, strengthen risk management, and deliver secure, personalised, and seamless digital banking experiences to customers.



Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, is seen inaugurating the UCB Innovation Hub alongside other bank officials at the bank's head office in Dhaka on Thursday. PHOTO: UCB

The hub will serve as an integrated collaborative platform, creating opportunities for cooperation among technology professionals, business leaders, fintech innovators, startups, academic institutions, and global technology partners.

It will also place special emphasis on AI-powered customer services, fraud detection, digital transactions, innovative lending solutions, process efficiency, and enhancing customer-centric banking experiences.

NRB Bank promotes cashless payments in Chattogram

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRB Bank PLC organised a cashless payment awareness programme at Southern University Bangladesh in Chattogram recently, aiming to promote digital financial inclusion and encourage the use of Bangla QR among young people.

The initiative was organised in line with Bangladesh Bank's vision of building a cashless Bangladesh , according to a press release.

It aimed to raise awareness on digital payment systems and encourage students, faculty members and other stakeholders to adopt cashless transactions.

Mahbubul Alam, director of Bangladesh Bank and Tarek Riaz Khan, managing director and CEO of NRB Bank, were present at the event, as well as Sharif Ashrafuzzaman, vice-chancellor and president of Southern University Bangladesh.

Rashedul Islam and Mahfuzur Rahman, joint directors of Bangladesh Bank; Kimiwa Saddat, additional managing director of NRB Bank; and Khaja Wasiullah, head of the bank's Cards Division, were also present.

Representatives of NRB Bank and Bangladesh Bank held awareness sessions and practical demonstrations to explain how the Bangla QR payment system facilitates convenient and secure digital transactions.

The programme also featured interactive sessions, promotional campaigns and on-campus activities highlighting the convenience, security and accessibility of digital payment solutions. Particular emphasis was placed on encouraging students and young people to use Bangla QR as an alternative to cash transactions.



NRB Bank officials, Bangladesh Bank representatives and Southern University Bangladesh authorities pose for a photograph at a cashless payment awareness programme held at the university in Chattogram on November 11. PHOTO: NRB BANK

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

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Zonal Commander Dhaka Zone e-GP Invitation no: 44.08.2680.100.08.008.26.245 Date: 12 November 2026

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the following procurement:

Ser	Tender ID	Package Name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last Selling	Closing and opening
1.	1363454	Repair of various Electrical Equipment and Accessories at the Base, ships, Station and Boats under the Coast Guard Dhaka Zone.	OTM	15/11/2026 11:00 AM	25/11/2026 16:00 PM	26/11/2026 11:30 AM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.
Documents can be downloaded till deadline of Tender/Application/Proposal submission.

ABID-BIN-MANJUR
Lt Commander BN
For Zonal Commander Dhaka Zone
Bangladesh Coast Guard

GD-2765

পরিসংখ্যান ও উপাত্ত বিজ্ঞান বিভাগ
বরিশাল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, কর্ণকাঠী, বরিশাল-৮২৫৪।
Web: bu.ac.bd, E-mail: ahaque@bu.ac.bd

Memo No: BU/STATISTICS/COMPUTER LAB/2025/03 (CHA)-221 Date:15/11/2026

Invitation for e-Tender (OTM)

e-Tenders is invited in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods under the Revenue Budget of University of Barishal.

SL. No.	Tender/ Proposal ID No.	Invitation Reference No.	Name of works	Tendering Method	Tender/ Proposal Publication & Opening Date and Time	Tender/ Proposal Document last selling & Security Submission Date and Time
01	1369856	BU/STATISTICS/COMPUTER LAB/2025/03 (CHA)-221	Supply of Research Equipments for Department of Statistics & Data Science	OTM	15-Nov-2026 09:00 & 26-Nov-2026 16:00	26-Nov-2026 14:00 & 26-Nov-2026 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders 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 Document from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Ahsanul Haque)
Chairman
Dept. of Statistics and Data Science
University of Barishal
E-mail : ahaque@bu.ac.bd
Mobile Number: 01772774307

GD-2764

USDA cuts Bangladesh's rice import projection



PHOTO: STAR/FILE

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has reduced its forecast for Bangladesh's rice imports in trade year 2026-27 by four lakh tonnes, citing higher domestic supplies.

In its November issue of the World Markets and Trade report on grains, released last week, the agency trimmed its projection from 15 lakh tonnes to to 11 lakh tonnes, as higher local grain availability reduces the need for foreign purchases.

As a result of reduced imports by Bangladesh and West Africa, alongside lower export volumes from India, the USDA revised down its forecast for global rice trade in 2026-27.

The report also slashed Bangladesh's rice import estimate for 2025-26 by two lakh tonnes to eight lakh tonnes.

The US agency also lowered its estimate of Bangladesh's national rice consumption and residual utilisation for 2026-27 to 3.86 crore tonnes from its October estimate of 3.88 crore tonnes.

The projected amount of domestic consumption is higher than the 3.83 crore tonnes estimated for 2025-26.

Risky banks

FROM PAGE B1

Bank boards should verify links among borrower groups, collateral values and owners' contributions. They should also report actual cash recovered separately from interest waivers and loan write-offs, he said.

"A fall in reported defaulted loans does not necessarily mean banks have recovered money from borrowers," Ahsan said.

Private-sector credit growth fell to 4.75 percent in August and further to 4.17 percent in September, while bank deposits grew 11.96 percent in August.

This reflects weak investment demand and banks' limited ability to extend fresh loans, he said.

The review identifies weak balance sheets, high non-performing loans, capital shortages and unequal access to finance as major challenges facing the banking sector.

It also cautions that the Tk 60,000 crore in stimulus and refinancing programmes announced for various sectors represents funding limits, not proof that the money has reached productive businesses.

The authorities should publish monthly data on disbursements, repayments and the costs of subsidies and loan guarantees under each programme, the institute recommended.

SEPARATE PLANS NEEDED FOR TROUBLED BANKS

The institute called for bank-specific plans to restore capital or resolve financial problems instead of providing the same support to all troubled lenders.

At the end of 2025, the banking sector's capital adequacy ratio stood at negative 2.64 percent, while the shortfall in required provisions was around Tk 191,441 crore.

By March 2027, BB should approve capital restoration plans for banks that remain viable and resolution plans for those that cannot recover, Ahsan said.

The Finance Division should disclose the cost of any support to the public exchequer. Government assistance should be based on verified financial needs, a fair sharing of losses, governance reforms and a clear exit plan, he added.

The review also recommends appointing professional boards, improving lending practices and recovering more loans from major borrowers at state-owned banks receiving public support.

Any suspected misuse of funds by owners, directors, managers or officials should be investigated, with legal action and recovery of funds where evidence supports them.

Banks should also report their capital positions separately, showing verified provisions, cash contributions from owners and government commitments.

BETTER LIQUIDITY MONITORING, DEPOSITOR PROTECTION

Although banks held Tk 441,954 crore in excess liquid assets above regulatory requirements in August, the review warns that this sector-wide figure may hide cash shortages at individual banks.

Weak banks should submit weekly cash-flow forecasts to BB, detailing their payment obligations and available collateral.

Bank treasury departments should also prepare rolling 13-week forecasts and test their ability to meet large withdrawal demands and foreign currency funding needs.

BB should record the purpose, security and expiry date of all liquidity support. Repeated emergency borrowing should trigger a separate assessment of whether a bank needs capital restoration or resolution.

The review also calls for stronger deposit protection and effective repayment arrangements for customers of banks under resolution.

BB and these banks should test their ability to repay depositors using a single, consolidated record for each customer. They should also publish payment schedules backed by available funds by December.

The statutory deposit protection limit of Tk 2 lakh per eligible depositor at each member institution should be clearly explained and distinguished from any final settlement covering only the principal amount. Banks should also introduce a system to resolve disputed claims.

MAKE FINANCE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO FARMERS, SMALL BUSINESSES

The institute recommends measuring financial inclusion by how regularly people use financial services rather than simply counting the number of accounts.

BB should publish district-level data on the active use of basic bank accounts and farm-loan arrears by March 2027. Banks should ensure farmers receive loans before crop-related expenses arise and monitor repayments after harvest, it said.

Bangladesh had around 3 crore no-frill accounts in June. However, the number alone does not show whether customers use them regularly, the review said.

The institute also called for better access to finance for cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), particularly women-owned businesses.

CMSME loans accounted for around 16 percent of total bank lending in March, against a target of more than 25 percent. Women's share was just 7 percent, well below the 15 percent target, while the classified loan ratio in the segment stood at 26 percent.

Banks should simplify loan applications, verify women's ownership and control of businesses, and monitor first-time borrowers, lending costs and overdue loans, Khondaker said.

Partial credit guarantees could help businesses that lack collateral, provided they have the ability to repay and lenders retain part of the risk, he added.

China, US talk tariffs ahead of Xi-Trump meeting

REUTERS, *Beijing*

China and the United States discussed tariff cuts, agricultural trade and other issues at their first trade council meeting on Friday, China's Commerce Ministry said on Saturday, days ahead of an expected leaders' meeting in Shenzhen next week.

"The two sides held candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges on implementing the outcomes of previous China-US economic and trade talks, including tariffs, a reciprocal '$30 billion-for-$30 billion' tariff-cut arrangement, agricultural trade and other issues of mutual concern," the ministry said.

It did not say whether any agreements were reached. Both sides will continue using the council to address trade concerns, expand cooperation and reduce outstanding issues, the ministry added.

Following a September summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in Washington, the two sides proposed a $60 billion package of reciprocal tariff cuts, including roughly $17 billion worth of US farm goods that China imported in 2024, but the plan has yet to be finalised.

Chinese purchases of US farm goods other than soybeans are on track to hit a seven-year low this year, despite an agreement to buy $17 billion annually through 2028, a Reuters analysis of customs data showed earlier this month, underscoring persistent uncertainty over the deal.

Beijing has repeatedly urged Washington to implement the $60 billion tariff-reduction deal, calling it a prerequisite for increasing purchases of US farm goods.

The White House said Trump will meet Xi on Thursday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Shenzhen.

Decade

FROM PAGE B1

He proposed lending-mix targets for next year to bring the corporate share down to around 45 percent, and urged banks to develop agriculture and SME products, noting that microfinance institutions have lent more than Tk 2.5 lakh crore at around 24 percent interest.

"So why can't banks lend? They haven't prepared the products," he said.

At the programme, Mashrur Arefin, chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB) and managing director and CEO of City Bank PLC, said economic fundamentals remain substantial despite a difficult period of adjustment.

He said gross reserves stood at $30.12 billion under the IMF's BPM6 method and the exchange rate has stabilised after a prolonged period of uncertainty, though rising imports could renew pressure on the exchange rate.

Mashrur said remittances grew 14.2 percent between July 1 and November 11, with about $13 billion received. But it is no substitute for exports, which have recovered after a brief dip to grow by around 6 percent.

The ABB chairman said GDP growth rose to 4.14 percent from 3.49 percent, still below the 6 percent recorded earlier, and inflation has fallen to a 54-month low, although petroleum imports at inflated rates remain a risk.

Private sector credit growth is weak, he said, but the slowdown is temporary, and banks should not be forced to lend.

Mashrur welcomed the Tk 20,000 crore scheme for closed factories, part of a Tk 60,000 crore programme.

He said QR-code payments and similar initiatives could draw about Tk 1.87 trillion held in cash outside the banking system into the formal economy. He urged stakeholders to recognise how far the economy has progressed instead of dwelling on negativity.

Business leaders present at the programme called for steadier policy and cheaper energy.

Meghna Group Chairman Mostafa Kamal said "frequent policy changes" have made it hard for industries to plan. He urged clear industrial and trade policies.

He asked the governor to ensure any renewed monetary tightening does not hurt businesses.

Linking energy costs to inflation, Meghna Group chairman said LPG sold for about $95 in India but $126-$127 in Bangladesh, roughly 33 percent higher, which pushed up prices of many goods.

"Traders alone should not be blamed for high prices, as critics often do on talk shows," he said.

The event was moderated by Bonik Barta Editor and Publisher Dewan Hanif Mahmud.

Women

FROM PAGE B1

Approximately one in five bank borrowers is a woman, highlighting persistent institutional barriers such as collateral requirements and stringent Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures.

Similarly, women accounted for only 14.6 percent of total loan accounts in finance companies. The BB noted that microfinance institutions (MFIs) remain the primary channel for women's access to formal credit in Bangladesh, with female borrowers accounting for 91 percent of 3.20 crore loan accounts.

The findings come despite regulatory requirements under the 2025 CMSME Finance Policy, which stipulates that at least 15 percent of total CMSME financing must go to women entrepreneurs or women-led enterprises.

On the deposit front, women's accounts expanded across multiple channels, reaching 6.4 crore in commercial banks, or 38.5 percent of the total. Women also held 91 percent of savings accounts in microfinance institutions.

Despite this expansion, a substantial gap persists in savings value. Women held 41 percent of total no-frills accounts in late 2025 but accounted for just 36 percent of total deposit value. Rural women held 72 percent of women's no-frills accounts but only 49 percent of their deposit value.

Central bank survey data show that women primarily use formal accounts for savings, Deposit Pension Scheme (DPS) and receiving foreign remittances, whereas men mainly use them for salary receipts and loans.

Food safety

FROM PAGE B1

"That is why these vans are needed," she added.

Visits to the mini lab vans in Dhaka and Barishal found that each can test an average of 70 to 80 samples a month.

The Barishal van can test 32 types of food, including milk, ghee, turmeric, chilli, black pepper, coriander powder, edible and coconut oil, pulses, parboiled rice, sweets, ice cream, green vegetables, honey, bread, fish and salt. Results take from a few minutes to 48 hours.

The van in Barishal city is staffed by a driver, a lab technician and a lab assistant. In October, it received an allocation of Tk 60,000 for engine oil, fuel and other expenses, according to Sagar Mallik, the BFSA food safety officer in Barishal metropolitan.

The vans have limitations too. For example, they cannot reach remote areas and cannot catch every kind of adulteration.

Sagar said the Barishal lab has been unable to reach Bhola because of the ferry crossing. It can detect only vanaspati [vegetable fat or cooking oil] in ghee, not other types of adulteration.

The proposal has drawn a mixed reaction from food safety campaigners and experts. Some welcomed the move to build capacity at the authority, while others questioned whether lab vans are practical in a country with weak road infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the district mini labs in many places were found struggling. Around half a dozen were found to be short of staff or equipment.

STAFF, EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES AT DISTRICT MINI LABS

The district mini lab project began in 2021 to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the authority. It aimed to improve the administration of food safety, strengthen inspection and sample collection, upgrade laboratory operations, raise public awareness and build the skills of the officials concerned.

The project cost Tk 45.29 crore, with the government providing Tk 15 crore and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) the rest, according to a BFSA document. It was due to end on June 30, 2026, but has been extended to December 31, 2026.

Visits to several district offices found the labs short of both staff and equipment.

At the Narayanganj district office, no technician has been appointed to run the lab, leaving the head of the office to take on the extra work.

Narayanganj Food Safety Officer Suraiya Sydun Nahar said the organogram of the authority originally had no technician post at district level.

She said recent revisions have created one, but the number is not enough for an industrial district like Narayanganj.

In Khulna, Food Safety Officer Munni Khatun said the microbiological lab at the metropolitan office is not operating because it lacks a laminar airflow cabinet.

Mohammad Farhan Islam, food safety officer at Chattogram metropolitan office, said the lab has no dedicated staff. So, despite having no technical background, Farhan runs the tests personally.

Sourav Roy, food safety officer at Rangamati office, said the lab is operational but not running at full capacity because, apart from the office head and an office assistant, it lacks adequate staff.

When contacted, BFSA Chairman Md Safiqul Islam said the government has approved 291 additional staff positions, and recruiting and deploying people at district and upazila levels will help ease the manpower shortage.

On equipment that is not working in some districts, he said the authority will give priority to maintenance so the mini labs can be used fully.

EXPERTS URGE FULLER USE OF EXISTING LABS

Latiful Bari, chief scientist at the Food and Nutrition and Agriculture Research Laboratory at the Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences at the University of Dhaka, pointed to the high running costs of mobile testing vans, including driver salaries, fuel, air conditioning and regular maintenance.

He argued that the mobile van model used in countries such as the United States is unsuitable for Bangladesh because of differences in infrastructure, road conditions and available facilities.

He said the BFSA faces a severe staff shortage and should recruit qualified personnel before investing in expensive equipment and infrastructure.

Without enough technicians, he said, the authority will struggle to run its laboratories and carry out the necessary tests.

Instead, Latiful recommended developing locally produced rapid detection kits and giving them to food safety officers for affordable and effective field testing.

He said India, Indonesia and Thailand have developed more than 100 home-grown rapid detection kits for field use. Tackling food adulteration should be the priority before the authority pursues broader food safety initiatives.

AHM Shafiquzzaman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said the government should give priority to the effective implementation and sustainability of existing food safety projects before starting new ones.

He said food safety cannot be ensured through infrastructure and licensing requirements alone. It also needs skilled staff, regular testing, effective monitoring and strong enforcement of regulations.

[The Daily Star correspondents Saurav Hossain Siam in Narayanganj, Dipankar Roy in Khulna, Rikors Chakma in Rangamati, Sushanta Ghosh in Barishal and Sifayet Ullah in Chattogram contributed to this report.]

Sourcing expo

FROM PAGE B1

Bangladesh's total exports to Afghanistan stood at $11 million in fiscal year 2025-26, he said.

However, he did not say how much of the agreement had translated into actual shipments or whether it had led to repeat orders.

The challenge of diversifying exports remains considerable. Apparel accounts for around 81 percent of the country's exports, while 44 percent of shipments go to the European Union, according to Hasan.

The EPB chief executive acknowledged that the concentration of exports in a single product category and a limited number of destinations remain a major weakness for Bangladesh.

To address the imbalance, he said the EPB is focusing on product and market diversification by helping non-apparel sectors access international markets, improve their competitiveness and secure policy support.

Connecting local exporters with international buyers is a key part of the bureau's mandate, he said, adding that the agency helps businesses participate in international trade fairs throughout the year to develop overseas market links.

This year's expo will showcase a wide range of products, including apparel and textiles, leather goods, jute products, handicrafts, agricultural and agro-processed goods, plastics, kitchenware, home decor, pharmaceuticals, ICT, packaging, automobiles, bicycles, and light engineering.

Four sectors -- automobiles and bicycles, paper and packaging, light engineering, and ceramics and tableware -- have been added this year, Hasan said.

Buyers and business delegations are expected from the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, China, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Argentina, among other countries, he informed.

The expo will feature 240 exhibition stalls, up from 165 last year, along with four seminars, business-to-business meetings, factory visits, networking events and a fashion show.

The EPB has also arranged advance matchmaking between exhibitors and prospective buyers, with meetings scheduled before the expo opens.

Hasan said the EPB is pursuing a district-based export diversification initiative under the "one village, one product" or "one district, one product" model.

According to him, the initiative aims to identify products with export potential across the country and help selected businesses improve product quality and design and access overseas markets.

Khagrachhari is the first district where the EPB held consultations with local businesses and exporters.

The expo's seminars will cover Bangladesh's proposed free trade agreement with the European Union, the recently concluded economic partnership agreement with Japan, sustainable packaging and compliance requirements, Hasan added.

The fair will remain open to visitors from 9:00am to 5:00pm daily, with no entry fee.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Commandant
Police Training Center, Rangpur
www.police.gov.bd

Memo No- 2478 /PTC
Date:14-November, 2026

e-Tender Notice

For financial year 2026-2027 e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works as follows.

SL NO	Tender ID NO	Package Name	Online Tender Notice Publication Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Publication Date and Time	Method of Tender
1.	1369136	Repair/renovation work (civil, sanitary, and electrical) for the 4-storied TRC Barrack Building-1 at the Police Training Centre, Rangpur.	15 November 2026 12:00 AM	07 December 2026 12:00 PM	OTM
2.	1369156	Repair/renovation work (civil, sanitary, and electrical) for the 6-storied TRC Barrack Building-2 at the Police Training Centre, Rangpur.	15 November 2026 12:00 AM	07 December 2026 12:00 PM	OTM
3.	1361413	Construction of an RCC road from the PTC, Rangpur main gate intersection to the R.I. office intersection.	15 November 2026 12:00 AM	07 December 2026 12:00 PM	OTM
4.	1359076	Repair of the sewerage line, septic tank, and soak well/inspection pit at the administrative building of the Police Centre in Rangpur, along with civil and sanitary repair works.	15 November 2026 12:00 AM	07 December 2026 12:00 PM	OTM

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 portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for last downloading e-Tender document from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to date & time.
Further information and guideline are available in the national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

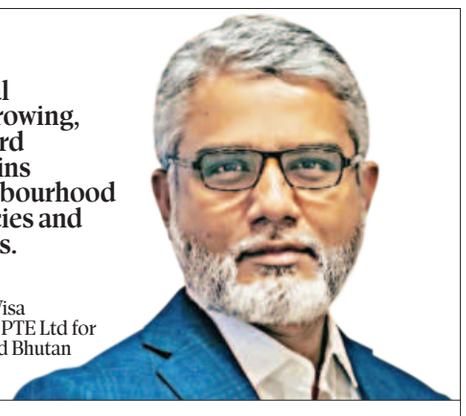
(Rahima Acter Lucky. psc)
BP-8010126897
Superintendent of Police (Admin)
Police Training Center, Rangpur
Telephone: 0521-62296, Fax: 0521-52134
E-mail: cmdptcrgp@police.gov.bd

GD-2766

Smartphones may widen card payment access for small businesses

Although digital payments are growing, the scope for card payments remains limited at neighbourhood shops, pharmacies and small businesses.

Sabbir Ahmed
Country manager of Visa Worldwide Singapore PTE Ltd for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan



Sabbir Ahmed, country manager of Visa, tells The Daily Star

AHSAN HABIB

High transaction costs, expensive payment terminals and limited card ownership are holding back the expansion of digital payments in Bangladesh, particularly among small businesses and consumers outside major cities, said Sabbir Ahmed, country manager of Visa Worldwide Singapore PTE Ltd for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

In an interview with The Daily Star, he said bringing micro and small merchants into the digital payment network would require lower transaction costs, easier merchant registration and wider access to payment instruments.

"One of the main reasons is that purchasing a point-of-sale (POS) machine to accept card payments is expensive for these businesses," he said.

Although digital payments are growing, the scope for card payments remains limited at neighbourhood shops, pharmacies and small businesses. Merchants operating on thin profit margins are often reluctant to accept cards because they have to invest in payment terminals and pay banks a fee for every transaction.

COSTLY INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS A BARRIER

A POS machine generally costs Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000, while merchants may have to pay transaction fees of 1 to 2 percent. These expenses discourage micro and nano businesses from accepting card payments, Sabbir said.

To address the barriers, Visa has introduced Visa Accept, a service that allows merchants to receive card payments using their own smartphones instead of purchasing separate POS machines.

The service, launched through United Commercial Bank (UCB) last month, has so far onboarded about 100 merchants.

Visa aims to bring transaction costs below 50 basis points, or less than 50 paisa for every Tk 100 transaction. It also plans to introduce same-day settlement, allowing merchants to receive their sales proceeds on the day of the transaction rather than the following day.

The initiative will also allow businesses to register digitally through participating banks' mobile apps, replacing the conventional process of submitting documents and obtaining payment terminals through banks.

Merchants will not need separate institutional bank accounts to use the service. They can receive payments through personal accounts maintained with participating banks.

For instance, a roadside coconut vendor can enter the purchase amount into a banking app on a smartphone, after which a customer can tap a card against the device to complete the transaction.

DIGITAL PAYMENTS NEED WIDER REACH

Expanding payment acceptance beyond Dhaka and Chattogram is another major challenge.

Sabbir, who has over 29 years of experience in banking and payments across Bangladesh and Vietnam, said card usage and acceptance were relatively widespread in the two major cities, but opportunities remained limited in district towns and rural areas.

Visiting individual merchants to complete registration involves time and costs. Digital onboarding could remove this geographical barrier, allowing banks to reach businesses across the country.

Visa plans to bring at least 10 lakh micro and nano merchants under its service within the next three years. Visa plans to bring another four to five banks on board in the coming months.

Seven to eight banks account for a large share of the country's card-acquiring market, making their participation important for expanding merchant coverage, according to Sabbir, who was also a former managing director and head of wealth and retail banking at Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

LOAN ACCESS COULD BE IMPROVED

Wider acceptance of digital payments could also help small businesses gain access to formal credit.

Many small merchants conduct transactions in cash, leaving banks without reliable information about their actual sales, income and financial capacity. This makes it difficult for lenders to assess their creditworthiness.

Digital transaction records would allow banks to understand merchants' sales volumes and business activities more easily, potentially improving their ability to extend loans.

Banks could also benefit from increased deposits as more merchants receive payments through their accounts, Sabbir said.

Reducing cash management costs is another potential benefit. Citing a Bangladesh Bank report, he said cash management costs the country around Tk 20,000 crore a year.

Businesses also face the risks of theft, torn notes and counterfeit currency, besides the time and expenses involved in sending employees to deposit cash at banks.

"Digital payments offer an opportunity to reduce these hassles," he said.

LIMITED CARD OWNERSHIP REMAINS A CONCERN

However, expanding merchant acceptance alone will not be enough to accelerate digital transactions. Consumers must also have access to cards and other digital payment instruments.

Bangladesh currently has around 4 crore debit cards, while the number of bank accounts exceeds 19 crore, according to central bank data cited by Sabbir. Debit card penetration remains below 25 percent of the population.

In comparison, 94 to 95 percent of Sri Lanka's population has debit cards. In Vietnam, the figure is 105 percent, indicating that many people hold more than one card.

Lack of awareness also discourages card usage. Some people believe having a debit card could put their bank deposits at risk, while others do not know how or where to use cards for payments.

Sabbir also identified tax evasion and limited financial literacy as barriers to digital payment adoption, saying many businesses prefer cash transactions because they want to remain outside the tax net.

He suggested introducing financial services at an early age by ensuring every student has a bank account and debit card at school. This would help develop savings habits and familiarise young people with formal banking and digital transactions.

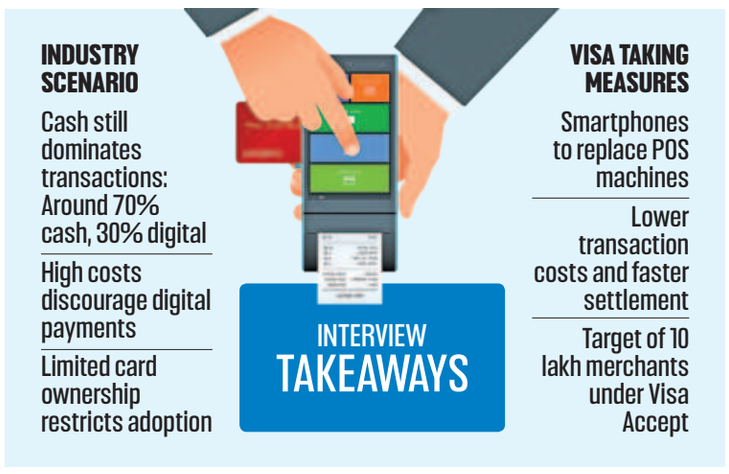
CASH STILL DOMINATES TRANSACTIONS

Sabbir estimated that around 70 percent of transactions in Bangladesh currently take place in cash, while 30 percent are digital.

"Visa wants to reverse this picture, with 70 percent of transactions taking place digitally and 30 percent in cash in the future."

He said security remained the highest priority for digital payment providers, adding that Visa spends substantially every year to protect its payment network.

"So we are 100 percent confident in the security standards," he said, adding that the company conducts necessary tests and security assessments before introducing new services.



What business schools still don't teach

MAMUN RASHID

I have spent more than 37 years in banking, at ANZ Grindlays, Standard Chartered, Citibank and later PwC Bangladesh. I have also spent part of the past 30 years in business schools as a professor, director, academic council member and employer. That dual experience gives me an uncomfortable privilege. I see what we teach. I also see what the market needs. The gap is widening.

Our business schools are not failing because students are weak. They are failing because the curriculum is built for a world that no longer exists. We teach finance, but not risk. In almost every BBA programme, finance means formulas. Students memorise and solve them in examinations. Ask a graduate: a client wants Tk 50 crore and his cash flow looks good on paper. Would you lend? Most cannot answer. They have never examined overstated inventory, fake receivables or money taken out through related parties.

I learnt credit not in a classroom but beside credit officers at Citibank who asked three questions: Where is the cash? Who is the promoter? What happens if the dollar moves Tk 10 tomorrow? We never teach failure. Case studies show success; real life does not. Our banks have officers who can disburse loans but cannot recover them. We teach marketing, but not customers. At a marketing competition I once judged, the slides were flawless: segmentation, targeting, positioning. I asked whether anyone had spoken to a Karwan Bazar shopkeeper or watched a retailer order stock. Silence. Students learn marketing from Philip Kotler, not the bazaar. They do not understand informal retail, a tea-stall owner's biscuit choices or pricing for someone earning Tk 500 a day.

We teach management, but not ethics. I have seen officers asked to approve bad loans and auditors asked to sign false reports. I have seen good managers leave the profession because nobody taught them how to say no. Ethics is one chapter in the last week of the semester. Hallmark, BASIC Bank and the 2010 market crash are discussed as financial irregularities, not ethical failures. Until we teach governance as survival rather than compliance, we will produce managers who can make a profit but cannot protect trust.



Case studies show success; real life does not. Our banks have officers who can disburse loans but cannot recover them

We teach technology, but not data. Management Information Systems courses still teach Excel tables. Meanwhile, a Chattogram shop sells on Facebook, collects on bKash and estimates next month's inventory with a simple tool. Our graduates can write a business plan but cannot build a dashboard or read data, so employers spend six months training them after hiring. We teach entrepreneurship, but not resilience. We romanticise being your own boss and building a unicorn. We ignore government offices, gas shortages, late-paying buyers and banks demanding collateral. We do not teach cash-flow management, surviving 18 months without profit or negotiating with bigger suppliers.

I have met young entrepreneurs. The survivors rarely had the best ideas. They managed cash, people and disappointment. What should we do? Three proposals, drawn from both sides.

Make internships real. Photocopying teaches nothing. Students should sit in credit committees, walk factory floors and face customers. Universities should grade employers, too. Bring practitioners into classrooms as semester-long co-teachers, not one-hour guests. Change the examination. Stop asking students to reproduce definitions. Put a balance sheet in front of them and ask what they would do. Put a real retailer in front of them and ask how they would lift his sales by 20 percent.

The question is no longer how many BBA students we have. It is whether we are teaching them what Bangladesh needs.

The writer is an economic analyst

World oil market is returning to surplus: IEA

REUTERS, *London*

The world oil market will return to a surplus in the fourth quarter of this year, the International Energy Agency said on Friday, as Middle East exports recover faster than global oil demand despite continued attacks on shipping.

The agency also gave more details of remaining volumes to come from a record release of oil from its members' emergency reserves pledged in March, saying 71 million barrels would be made available by the end of February including 15 million barrels of diesel to ease market tightness.

Oil supply will average 105 million barrels per day in the fourth quarter, the Paris-based agency, which advises industrialised countries, said in a monthly report, 1.7 million bpd higher than forecast demand. The IEA had previously forecast a fourth-quarter supply deficit.

"The oil market is showing tentative signs of rebalancing, with global oil supplies surpassing demand for the first time since the outbreak of the war in Iran," the agency said in the report.

Oil prices reversed earlier gains after the IEA report was released at 0900 GMT. Brent crude was last down 0.1 percent at $95.71 a barrel.

ASEAN unity faces test as energy crisis, conflicts loom over summit

REUTERS, *Manila*

Southeast Asian foreign ministers began meetings in Manila on Saturday as the regional bloc seeks a coordinated response to surging energy costs, security tensions, and an approaching El Niño, challenges Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has said demand collective action.

"Especially at a time when we face multiple crises, from rising oil prices to security concerns and the approaching El Niño, ASEAN needs to act as one," Marcos said ahead of the meetings, which the Philippines will chair. "It is very important that we are united and find plans and solutions to address these problems."

The meetings open a weekend of diplomacy culminating in the November 15 to 17 ASEAN summit, where ASEAN leaders will hold talks with counterparts from major powers including the United States, China and Japan, and discuss wide-ranging issues from the economic fallout from the Middle East conflict, Myanmar, the South China Sea to transboundary pollution.

The gathering comes as the Philippines and other import-dependent Southeast Asian economies grapple with higher fuel costs, which have squeezed households and businesses and added to inflation pressures. The crisis has also exposed the limits of regional energy security, with proposals for a shared oil stockpile still under study.

A summit on the Asia Zero Emission Community, a Japan-led framework that aims to achieve energy security, economic growth and decarbonisation at the same time, will also be held next week.

US President Donald Trump, who will be in Manila for the summit, said this week he was unlikely to order new military strikes on Iran after appeals from countries including Qatar. The comments offered some reassurance to energy markets, though the prospect of renewed military action and disruption to oil supplies remains a concern for fuel-importing countries.



Foreign ministers, representatives of ASEAN member states and the bloc's secretary-general pose for a group photo during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

For ordinary Filipinos, the impact of the conflict has been more immediate.

Ahead of the meetings, 50-year-old jeepney driver Lito Albino appealed to Trump to help end the conflict, saying ordinary workers were bearing the consequences of a war they had no part in.

He said the conflict involving Iran had forced him to work longer hours for less money, and with three children and household expenses to cover, higher fuel costs had made it increasingly difficult to support his family. "No one truly wins in a war. It is the poor and marginalised people like us who suffer the most," Albino said.

MYANMAR TEST

Myanmar will also test ASEAN's ability to maintain a common position on the crisis that has engulfed the country since the military seized power in 2021.

Leaders are expected to review the implementation of the bloc's five-point consensus, its main framework for addressing the crisis, Philippine foreign ministry spokesperson Dominic Xavier Imperial said at a press conference on Friday. Their decision will be reflected in a negotiated document to be issued after the summit.

The South China Sea will feature in discussions with China, with negotiations on a long-delayed Code of Conduct about 70% complete, Imperial said. He said the figure represented overall progress in negotiations, not the proportion of text agreed.

Beyond the diplomatic meetings, Trump's visit is expected to draw protests from workers, students and left-wing groups, calling for an end to the Middle East conflict and the US-led Pax Silica to be scrapped.

Myanmar will also feature in protests planned during the summit, with activists demanding that ASEAN maintain its exclusion of coup leader-turned-president Min Aung Hlaing from leaders' meetings.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in a 2021 coup, triggering a civil war that the United Nations estimates has killed 100,000 people and displaced more than 3.5 million.

BYD launches luxury brand Denza in India

Taking on Mercedes, Toyota

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Chinese automaker BYD launched its luxury brand Denza in India on Friday, joining rivals like Mercedes-Benz and Toyota Motor in targeting more affluent consumers in the world's third-largest car market.

India's luxury car market is still small, making up just over 1 percent of the country's total passenger car sales of 4.4 million units in 2025

BYD launched two Denza models - a seven-seater electric SUV called D9, which will compete with the Mercedes V-Class and Toyota, Vellfire, and the Z9 GT, a four-door performance EV. The Denza D9 will be priced at $95,600 and the Z9 GT at $166,600.

"With this brand, we are taking an important step towards addressing the growing demand for distinctive luxury mobility experiences," Rajeev Chauhan, senior vice president at BYD India said in a statement after the launch.

BYD launched Denza in Europe earlier this year to bolster its premium image and enhance profitability and is setting its sights now on India where Mercedes, the biggest seller of luxury cars in the country, reported record revenue in the country in 2025 thanks to strong demand for its high-end models - those priced above $159,000.

Hyundai, which entered India more than two decades ago, will launch its luxury Genesis brand in the country next year.

India's luxury car market is still small, making up just over 1 percent of the country's total passenger car sales of 4.4 million units in 2025. That is mainly because luxury models are largely imported and subject to high tariffs, although margins are higher and there is less competition, making it increasingly attractive.

BYD already sells its mass market and premium passenger cars in India but India's strict investment rules for countries sharing its land border have restricted BYD from bringing money into the country to set up a factory and it continues to import cars from China, with tariffs of up to 100 percent.