



Bangladesh eyes financing options amid rising debt

Two-day int'l conference begins in Cox's Bazar

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, *from Cox's Bazar*

A two-day international debt conference begins in Cox's Bazar today to formulate sustainable debt strategies and identify the best alternative financing options, including sovereign bonds, amid Bangladesh's rising debt risks.

Organised by the finance division in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, the conference will feature discussions on international bonds alongside the International Monetary Fund's new debt sustainability framework.

Representatives from the World Bank, the IMF and several countries -- including the US, Malaysia, Indonesia, Georgia, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- will join the event.

The overarching objective of the conference is to facilitate high-level policy dialogue, international knowledge exchange and professional capacity development to strengthen sovereign debt management in Bangladesh, according to finance division officials.

The conference comes at a critical juncture for Bangladesh: recent WB debt reports show that the country's outstanding foreign debt has nearly tripled over the past decade to $113.43 billion at the end of 2025.

The WB has also warned that Bangladesh's public debt-to-GDP ratio could rise to 45.2 percent by fiscal 2027-28, edging closer to the 55 percent threshold the IMF considers sustainable.

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Residents stand on the edge of the Meghna in Brahmanbaria's Nabinagar upazila. They say years of illegal sand lifting have made the river swallow farmlands and inch dangerously close to homes. Despite a suspension on leases, armed groups allegedly continue to extract sand near the banks. The photo was taken recently in Dharabhanga village of Barikandi union.

PHOTO: **MASUK HRIDOY**

Gangs shake down 3 neighbourhoods

Traders allege demands in top criminal Emon's name in Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar, Hazaribagh



The extortion racket has also extended to property transactions, with both buyers and sellers forced to pay substantial sums whenever land or buildings change hands.

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Businesses in Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar and Hazaribagh are increasingly alarmed by brazen extortion attempts amid a series of attacks on AJR Courier Service vehicles.

Traders alleged that extortionists operating in the name of notorious criminal Sanjidul Islam Emon have stepped up their demands, targeting large commercial establishments, property transactions and building demolition contractors.

Fears have deepened since October 20, when a group of men claiming to be Emon's associates ransacked and looted an AJR warehouse, demanding rent for the land on which it stands. Several attacks on the company's vehicles and facilities have followed.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Saturday, local traders and residents said extortion had spread across multiple sectors in the three adjacent areas.

Several traders at a poultry wholesale market in Rayerbazar, speaking on condition of anonymity, said men had been forcibly taking chickens from their shops without payment since last year.

The traders eventually agreed to pay

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Woman stranded in no-man's land for five days



PHOTO: **COURTESY**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

A woman remained stranded in no-man's land along the Bangladesh-India border in Jamalpur's Dewanganj upazila for a fifth consecutive day yesterday as Border Guard Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force continued to differ over her identity and nationality.

The woman, believed to be around 30, was first spotted by locals on Tuesday morning at the Pathorer Char border in Dangdhara union. Since then, she has been forced to stay at the zero line, as neither side has agreed to take responsibility for her.

According to locals and BGB officials, the woman has provided inconsistent information about her identity and address. She initially identified herself as Fuji Begum and said she was 30 years old.

BGB officials said the BSF attempted to push her into Bangladesh after she arrived at the border, but the move was prevented by BGB personnel and local residents. Since then, the BSF has refused to take her back,

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COST OF LIVING

One person's reject, lifeline for another

Damaged, rotting produce ends up feeding families running on a shoestring

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Vegetables discarded as unsellable at wholesale markets are being purchased by low-income families at a fraction of the regular price to keep household expenses down.

Broken cabbages, cracked bottle gourds, misshapen beans, cut eggplants, partially rotten tomatoes and potatoes with their rotten portions removed are being sold at several low-income neighbourhood markets in the capital, such as Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur and Fokirni Bazar in Nakhalpara, Tejgaon.

At Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, there are around 30 shops at a vegetable market selling the damaged produce.

Laili Begum, 50, was found grocery shopping at the market for her family of six. She bought one kilogram of cut eggplants for Tk 20, a kg of cut potatoes for Tk 15 and around half a kg of partially spoiled tomatoes for Tk 20. Her total



expenditure was Tk 55.

The same quantity of fresh vegetables would have cost her around Tk 125, saving her approximately Tk 70. She used the money saved to buy cooking oil, spices and coarse rice for her family.

For Laili, the appearance of the vegetables is not a major concern amid a cost of living crisis, which is squeezing her authorickshaw driver husband's earnings of late.

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Steam rises from the cooling towers of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna yesterday as Unit-1 undergoes testing. The country's first nuclear power plant recently received regulatory clearance to enter Stage C, paving the way for a gradual increase in reactor power, turbine testing and synchronisation with the national grid.

PHOTO: **AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU**

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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"জরুরী গণ-বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বরিশাল সড়ক বিভাগাধীন ঢাকা (যাত্রাবাড়ী)-মাওয়া-ভাঙ্গা-বরিশাল-পটুয়াখালী জাতীয় মহাসড়কের ১৭৩তম কিলোমিটারে বরিশাল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় সংলগ্ন স্থানে একটি ফুটওভার ব্রিজ এর জরুরী কাজ সম্পন্ন করার জন্য আগামী ১৫/১১/২০২৬ ইং তারিখ রবিবার দিবাগত রাত ০১:০০ টা হতে রাত ০৩:০০ টা অর্থাৎ ১৬/১১/২০২৬ ইং তারিখ সোমবার প্রথম প্রহর (রাত ১:০০টা থেকে ৩:০০টা) পর্যন্ত ২ (দুই) ঘন্টা উক্ত স্থান দিয়ে সকল ধরণের যান চলাচল বন্ধ থাকবে। সরকারি জনগুরুত্বপূর্ণ কাজ সম্পাদনের স্বার্থে জনসাধারণের এ সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য সওজ কর্তৃপক্ষ আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত।

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