

PM Tarique Rahman, Ajay Banga Discuss Strengthening Bangladesh-World Bank Partnership

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and World Bank Group President Ajay Banga discussed ways to strengthen the partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank during a meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Tuesday.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly. Discussions covered Bangladesh's economic situation, increased World Bank support for development projects, energy challenges and opportunities to expand cooperation in the future.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury briefed reporters after the meeting, saying the discussions focused on Bangladesh's existing partnership with the World Bank and how the two sides could work together on upcoming development projects.

"We discussed the partnership and relationship between Bangladesh and the World Bank, particularly what we can do within the World Bank partnership framework for the projects Bangladesh plans to undertake in the coming days," Khosru said.

He said the meeting also covered the government's social programmes, including the **Family Card** and **Farmers' Card** initiatives. According to the finance minister, the programmes have received positive attention from the World Bank and the institution is expected to support such initiatives.

The two sides also discussed expanding programmes for young

entrepreneurs and employment generation. Khosru said Bangladesh has already introduced initiatives based on a financing structure combining **50% grants and 50% concessional loans**, and discussed with the World Bank how such programmes could be expanded.

“We will work together on young entrepreneurship development and employment for young people,” he said.

Energy and supply-chain challenges

Energy security was another issue discussed during the meeting. Khosru said Bangladesh’s oil and gas supply challenges and the possible role of the World Bank in addressing those pressures were discussed.

He said the World Bank had agreed to support Bangladesh in dealing with external economic shocks linked to energy supplies and supply-chain disruptions. The two sides also agreed to work together to ensure that supply-chain problems do not disrupt ongoing development activities.

“We have to keep the projects we have undertaken on track. We discussed how the World Bank can work with us so that supply-chain disruptions do not hinder them,” Khosru said.

Asked about the World Bank’s assessment of sustainable projects, the finance minister said the institution was closely examining them, particularly initiatives focused on youth entrepreneurship and employment. He said both sides agreed on the importance of expanding such programmes.

The meeting was also attended by Finance and Planning Adviser to the Prime Minister Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir and other officials.

The meeting comes as Bangladesh seeks to expand international development cooperation during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s brief visit to New York for the UN General Assembly.