

PKSF

P O R I K R O M A



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PKSF has been awarded the Independence Award 2026 for outstanding contributions to rural development.
Details: Pages 02-03



Nipa Tripura has become self-reliant by repairing solar panels in a remote area of Khagrachari.
Story on page 07

INSIDE

APART FROM UPDATES
ON REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|--|------|
| PKSF allocates additional BDT 6.06b for safe sanitation, microenterprise development | P-4 |
| Call for encouraging women to seek employment at PKSF | P-5 |
| PKSF, BARC to work jointly to achieve inclusive agricultural growth | P-6 |
| Research on 'Performance Analysis of PKSF Partner Organizations' | P-9 |
| PKSF MD calls for optimal use of resources invested for climate-vulnerable communities | P-10 |
| PKSF organizes experience-sharing visit for drought management capacity building | P-10 |
| SMART project promotes resilient green growth | P-12 |
| PKSF signs Credit Guarantee Agreements with five banks | P-13 |
| PKSF to promote nationwide awareness to prevent thalassemia | P-14 |
| PKSF cuts fuel consumption by 50% | P-16 |

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

PKSF Bhaban-1, E-4/B Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207 ☎ 880-222218331-33

☎ 880-222218341 ✉ pksf@pksf.org.bd 🌐 pksf.org.bd 📘 facebook.com/pksf.org.bd

PKSF receives Independence Award 2026



Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has received the Independence Award 2026, the highest civilian honor of Bangladesh, in recognition of its significant and distinguished contributions at the national level. The prestigious award has been conferred upon PKSF for its remarkable role in rural development. The award was formally presented on 16 April 2026 at a ceremony held at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Tarique Rahman, handed over the award to PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan.

At the ceremony, the Hon'ble Prime Minister said, "Your unforgettable contributions in various fields for the country and its people will enrich Bangladesh. I believe that your achievements will be a source of inspiration for the next generations of Bangladesh. We, the people of Bangladesh, firmly believe that your contributions and successful work in your respective fields will soon earn recognition on the global stage as well.... Those who have been honored with the Independence Award today are each a source of pride for the nation. May accomplished individuals like you become role



models for future generations....”

Receiving the award, PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan said, “We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for awarding PKSF the Independence Award 2026. From the very beginning of PKSF’s journey, this achievement has been made possible through the collective contribution of all distinguished individuals associated with the institution, members of the Governing Body, officials, and Partner Organizations (POs) working across the country. Their contributions have enabled us to grow into a world-class development institution today.

“

Those who have been honored with the Independence Award today are each a source of pride for the nation. May accomplished individuals like you become role models for future generations....”

–Hon’ble Prime Minister Tarique Rahman

“The courage, determination, and trust of PKSF’s 21.6 million members—93% of whom are women—remain the true foundation of our success. With a strong focus on employment generation and entrepreneurship development, PKSF is working tirelessly to strengthen agricultural production, processing, and market-based value chain development. Around four million microentrepreneurs receiving PKSF’s financial and non-financial services have contributed to the creation of more than seven million jobs.”

PKSF Chairman further said, “PKSF has developed Bangladesh’s inclusive financial sector into a unique institutional framework. Our POs are providing more than half

of the total financing in the country’s agriculture sector. PKSF has also played a pioneering role in establishing a regulatory framework for the microfinance sector.

“PKSF’s formal accreditation from the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and Fund for responding to Loss and Damage reflects international recognition of Bangladesh’s leadership in inclusive and climate-resilient development. Through its new Strategic Plan, PKSF has set forward-looking goals focused on employment generation, capacity enhancement, and risk mitigation.”

PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan expressed the institution’s commitment to actively contributing to the government’s employment generation and social protection initiatives.

PKSF was established in 1990 by the Government of Bangladesh to reduce poverty through employment creation. Over the past few decades, PKSF has firmly established itself as the country’s leading development finance institution.

By acting as a catalyst for sustainable financing, enterprise development, and social empowerment, PKSF has continued to play a vital role in advancing financial inclusion and inclusive growth. Through continuous innovation, market strengthening, and capacity development, PKSF has evolved into an ‘institution-building institution’, helping establish more than 200 microfinance institutions across the country and playing a leading role in the growth of the microfinance sector. PKSF continues to work tirelessly towards building a prosperous, resilient, and equitable Bangladesh.

In recognition of outstanding contributions at the national level, 15 distinguished individuals and five institutions were awarded with the Independence Award 2026. The government has been presenting this award every year since 1977 on the occasion of Independence Day on 26 March.



PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan (front row, fourth from right) with other award recipients after receiving the Independence Award 2026 from the Honourable Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Tarique Rahman. Date: 16 April 2026; Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium, Dhaka

PKSF allocates additional BDT 6.06b for safe sanitation, microenterprise development

PKSF has allocated an additional BDT 1.065 billion to strengthen its safe water and sanitation interventions. This takes PKSF's total allocation for this sector in the current fiscal year to BDT 4.273 billion. This initiative is expected to further accelerate national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal-6.

The decision was taken on 25 February at PKSF's 264th Governing Body meeting. Besides, an allocation of BDT 5 billion was approved for microenterprise development. With this addition, the total allocation for the sector in the current fiscal year now stands at BDT 57.416 billion. PKSF's Partner Organizations are expected to add funds to this amount from their internal and external sources to, in turn, disburse at the grassroots nearly 19 times the PKSF-allocated amount. This will play a significant role in strengthening micro-entrepreneurs' capacity and adding further dynamism to local economies.



The meeting, held at PKSF Bhaban-2, was presided over by PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan and attended by Governing Body Members Dr Sha hid Akhtar Hossain, Nurun Nahar, Farzanah Chowdhury, Dr Md Taufiqul Islam, Lila Rashid, PhD, and PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader.

PKSF to enhance support for promotion of export-oriented handicrafts

PKSF will increase financing and other forms of support to promote Bangladeshi handicrafts in the nearly one-trillion-dollar global export market. Besides, necessary initiatives will be taken to expand the domestic market. This was stated on 5 February by PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan during a visit to 'Taranga', an export oriented handicraft enterprise in Mirpur, Dhaka.



He was accompanied by, among others, PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader, Deputy General Manager AKM Faizul Haque and Taranga's Chief Executive Officer Kohinoor Yeasmin.

Zakir Ahmed Khan said, "Handicrafts are a promising sector for Bangladesh. To transform this sector into an organized, export-oriented, and sustainable industry, hurdles such as financing constraints, shortage of skilled manpower, infrastructural inadequacies, and weak branding must be overcome. PKSF will implement specialized programs to address these issues."

Md Fazlul Kader said, "Women engaged in the handicrafts

sector do not incur displacement costs. They produce high-quality exportable products while staying in their own localities and bring prosperity to their families through better earnings. With the aim of playing a significant role in reaching the milestone of \$1 billion in handicraft exports, we are taking initiatives to increase appropriate financing alongside technical support for the sector."

Taranga's handicraft activities—supported by PKSF—have generated direct employment for around 32,000 women. More than 40% of the total sales revenue from products—made using natural materials such as jute, water hyacinth, *hogla* leaves, palm fiber, bamboo, natural dyes etc—is spent on workers' wages. Operating on the principles of 'fair trade', Taranga exports a wide range of products to 50 countries.

The annual size of Bangladesh's domestic handicrafts market is estimated at BDT 100–150 billion. In 2024, the global handicrafts market was valued at approximately \$1.1 trillion. However, Bangladesh's share in this vast market remains negligible. In FY 2022–23, Bangladesh exported handicrafts worth \$29.75 million.





Call for encouraging women to seek employment at PKSF

PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan has emphasized on the need to increase the number of female employees at PKSF. Noting that the institution already offers an inclusive, safe, and enabling work environment, he said that a well-planned initiative will be taken to encourage talented female graduates to consider careers at PKSF.

He made these remarks at a meeting held on 31 March at PKSF Bhaban-1 with female officials. The meeting was organized by the 'Complaint Receiving Committee' formed for female employees of PKSF to help maintain a supportive and enabling work environment for all. Such meetings are regularly arranged to help maintain an enabling work environment at PKSF.

In line with the directives of the Hon'ble High Court, PKSF formed this Complaint Receiving Committee in 2015. The seven-member committee includes two external members. Besides, Complaint Receiving Committees are also in place in all Partner Organizations of PKSF.

In his welcome remarks, PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader said that the institution is committed to ensuring a safe and harassment-free workplace for all employees, including women, across PKSF and its Partner Organizations. "To this end, we are regularly implementing gender policies, raising awareness, and putting in place effective mechanisms for addressing complaints," he added.

Highlighting PKSF's ongoing efforts to maintain a women-friendly and enabling work environment, he noted that arrangements will be made for early childhood education at PKSF's daycare center. The center will be equipped with modern CCTV cameras, allowing employees to monitor their children in real time through their mobile phones while carrying out their official duties. He also mentioned that steps have been taken to provide necessary personal care items in women's restrooms within the PKSF Bhaban. At the same time, Md Fazlul Kader appreciated the active role played by male employees in helping maintain an enabling workplace environment at PKSF.

AQM Golam Mawla, Deputy Managing Director of PKSF, also spoke at the meeting. Female employees from all levels of PKSF took part and engaged actively in the open discussion session in a lively atmosphere. They expressed their appreciation to the Management and their male colleagues for helping maintain a congenial work environment at PKSF.

Earlier, on 8 March, PKSF observed the International Women's Day 2026 with the theme 'Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls'. To mark the occasion, a discussion meeting was held at PKSF Bhaban-1 in Agargaon, Dhaka.

The event was presided over by Zakir Ahmed Khan, Chairman of PKSF. Md Fazlul Kader, Managing Director of PKSF spoke on the occasion.

Md Mesbahur Rahman, General Manager delivered the welcome remarks. He said that PKSF is committed to ensuring a safe and enabling work environment for women.

Female officials from different levels of PKSF then gave presentations. PKSF's Manager Mahmuda Morshed presented on the core theme of rights and justice for women and girls. Jesmin Ara, Manager, gave a presentation on work environment for women. Anika Zaman Tasneem, Deputy Manager, presented on the progress of underprivileged women and women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

In his speech, Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader emphasized on PKSF's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment and empowering women through its various developmental initiatives. He said that investing in women's well-being creates positive impacts across society. With this understanding, PKSF's programs have been designed in ways that ensure women benefit from them.

Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan concluded the session by reiterating the importance of collective action to ensure the protection of rights for every woman and girl. He also noted that human values such as mutual respect and empathy form the foundation of a healthy and positive work environment. He praised the women-friendly work environment at PKSF.

Officials from different levels of PKSF took part in the open discussion.



PKSF, BARC to work jointly to achieve inclusive agricultural growth



Although agriculture is one of the main pillars of the country's food security and employment, its contribution to GDP remains limited to 12%. Meanwhile, nearly 47% of the country's total labor force is engaged in this sector. Sluggish agricultural growth at 3.21%, shrinking agricultural land, declining soil fertility, and rising production costs have emerged as major challenges. Against this backdrop, PKSF and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) will work together to strengthen the linkage between agricultural research and extension in order to achieve inclusive growth.

This was stated in a discussion meeting held on 29 January at PKSF Bhaban-1. The meeting was chaired by PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan. Dr ANM Mahbub-ul Alam, Emeritus Professor at Kansas State University, USA, was the Chief Guest and Md Abdus Salam, Executive Chairman of BARC, was the Special Guest. PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader delivered the welcome remarks.

Emphasizing on the need for balanced coordination between public and private initiatives for sustainable agricultural development, Dr ANM Mahbub-ul Alam said, "Our goal is to ensure food and nutrition security for the people of the country."

Md Abdus Salam stated that PKSF could serve as a complementary force to the Government of Bangladesh in implementing Transforming Bangladesh Agriculture: Outlook 2050.

PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan said, "The main objective of today's meeting is to enhance mutual cooperation between PKSF and BARC for the overall development of the country's agricultural sector. Through coordinated efforts, we will also undertake some creative initiatives beyond conventional activities." He expressed hope that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions would be signed soon.

Highlighting that nearly 50% of the total agricultural credit disbursed in the country is provided by PKSF and its Partner Organizations, PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader said, "By offering services for diversification and value addition of agricultural products, we are working to expand markets and establish agricultural micro-entrepreneurship as an attractive and dignified profession." He also noted that PKSF is giving special emphasis to expanding ecological farming practices to reduce production costs, increase farmers' income, and restore soil fertility.

National Safe Food Day observed

On 2 February, under PKSF's Special Program—Development (Agriculture), 35 Partner Organizations jointly celebrated the National Safe Food Day 2026 at the grassroots with the theme 'Ensure Safe Food, Build a Healthy Life'. To mark the day, rallies and processions were organized across the country, with students taking part. Essay and quiz competitions were also held with the participation of students. Besides, a discussion session on safe food was organized. Local dignitaries, government officials, officers from food safety and agriculture-related departments, agricultural scientists, journalists, and representatives of POs participated in the session.



From jhum worker to skilled electrician: Nipa Tripura's story



As dawn breaks over the sloping hillsides of Amrit Para village in Khagrachari Sadar upazila, the air fills with the earthy scent of jhum fields. Here, life begins each day with preparations for jhum farming and the quiet struggle against poverty. For girls in this community, marriage and domestic life have long been considered the natural course of life. But Nipa Tripura (24), who grew up working with her farmer father in jhum fields, was quietly weaving a different dream to work with electric wires and switchboards.

Since childhood, she had a deep fascination with electronics. Watching a friend work as an electrician, she started repairing broken electronic appliances at home on her own. After her three elder sisters were married off, Nipa regularly helped her father and brother with agricultural work, but her heart remained restless. She wanted to lift her family out of hardship. To do that, she would have to take a different path altogether.

In 2019, Nipa enrolled in the electronics trade at Khagrachari Government Technical School and College. In 2021, she passed the SSC (Vocational) examination. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and mounting financial hardship brought her education to a halt. During this period, she worked as a sales assistant at a handicraft shop in Khagrachari.

One day, while working in the jhum field, a public announcement opened an unexpected door of possibility in Nipa's life. She heard about a free three-month training program on 'electrical installation and maintenance' being offered by the Ananda Vocational Training Centre in Khagrachari under PKSF's SICIP project. She promptly collected a leaflet. After discussing it with her parents and encouraged by her father, she made the decision to enroll.

A new chapter in Nipa's journey began in August 2025, she

started her residential training free of cost. In a batch of 25 trainees, Nipa was one of only two women. Classes ran from 9am to 5pm, combining theory with hands-on practice. In the beginning, she was afraid of handling wires, but the guidance of her instructors quickly helped her overcome that fear. Nipa says with confidence, "With safety gloves and proper footwear, the risk comes down significantly. During training, we were taught to follow safety protocols very strictly."

In December 2025, shortly after completing her training, Nipa joined the Ananda Vocational Training Centre's Solar and Cookstove project as an Assistant Solar Technician. She now earns BDT 12,000 per month. From regularly repairing solar panels to handling household wiring in the remote areas of Khagrachari, Nipa has now mastered it all. Learning the trade of an electrician was not without its social obstacles. Many within her own community looked at her with suspicion. Some would say, "This is men's work. Why didn't you learn sewing instead?" Her answer was unwavering, "I love this work. As long as my family stands beside me, I will not be stopped by what others say."

Nipa's success has brought the greatest sense of relief to her father, Khupendra Tripura. For years, working on remote jhum fields had left him with various ailments. With an emotion-filled voice, Khupendra Tripura says, "There was a time when we couldn't properly eat three meals a day. Now Nipa is paying for my treatment. Besides, she has bought a paddy thresher machine with her savings and a loan. Threshing crops with it, she earns an additional BDT 500 every day."

Md Masud Rana, instructor at the Ananda Vocational Training Centre, said, "Nipa was an exceptionally enthusiastic trainee. From house wiring to industrial panel control boards, motor controlling, coil winding, and every tool used in solar system installation — she mastered everything. Her ability to work collaboratively and complete tasks within set deadlines is what has helped shape her into a truly skilled technician."

Nipa does not wish to limit herself to employment alone. She dreams of establishing a solar panel sales and servicing center in her own area in Khagrachari. Besides, she hopes this venture will create livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth of her community.

With the aim of reducing poverty and developing a skilled workforce, PKSF is implementing activities under the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP), a project under the Finance Division of the Government of Bangladesh. Through 24 partner training institutes under SICIP, training and employment support is being provided to youth from marginalized communities and small ethnic groups across the country. So far, 2,800 trainees have been enrolled in various partner training institutes. Of them, 1,155 have already secured employment. Through the SICIP project, PKSF is working to help 20,500 youth across the country achieve their aspirations by providing them with training and employment support by 2028.

'Women are making significant contributions to rural economy'

Md Abu Zafor

Executive Director, Daridra Bimochon Shangstha (DBS)



Daridra Bimochon Shangstha (DBS), a non-governmental development organization, was established in 1992 with the dream of transforming the socio-economic conditions of the disadvantaged people of Meherpur. The visionary behind this initiative is Md Abu Zafor, who has led the organization with dedication and wisdom as its Executive Director for nearly 34 years since its establishment. For sustainable development at the grassroots, DBS was enlisted as a Partner Organization (PO) of PKSF in 1997. Currently, DBS is implementing multidimensional development programs through 38 branches across Meherpur and four neighboring districts. Currently, around 350,000 families are directly benefiting from DBS. For PKSF Porikroma, this interview — covering Md Abu Zafor's extensive experience, and achievements and future plans of DBS — was conducted by Mohammad Minhaz Uddin Shaikh, Assistant General Manager of PKSF and translated into English by Sabrina Sultana, Assistant Manager, PKSF.

PKSF: What inspired you to become a doctor? And why did you later switch to full-time social development work?

Md Abu Zafor: I was born and raised at Subidpur village in Kutubpur Union of Meherpur. In 1970, I completed a diploma in dental and oral medicine and entered the medical profession, where I worked for nearly 27 years. Prevalent health crises of marginalized people, along with my personal experiences, inspired me to join this profession. I observed that the poor people tend to accept their circumstances as unchangeable, and underestimate their own potential. Their mental poverty gives rise to financial poverty, and the lack of education further prevents skill development. I started working in social development to help eradicate mental poverty.

PKSF: What was the primary objective behind establishing DBS?

Md Abu Zafor: Meherpur was once rich in agriculture, but the full potential of agricultural production could not be realized due to the lack of linkage between agriculture, industry, and

trade. DBS was established with the aim of bridging that gap.

PKSF: How much importance has DBS given to health and nutrition programs?

Md Abu Zafor: In the beginning, DBS mainly focused on microcredit along with limited healthcare services. Over time, I observed that when loan money was spent on medical treatment, people's productivity did not improve. For this reason, we introduced primary healthcare and awareness programs at the group level — such as encouraging hygienic practices and prioritizing loan access on that basis. Subsequently, through PKSF's ENRICH program, we integrated health and nutrition alongside microcredit. We will provide services once a week through health visitors and once a month through specialist doctors at satellite clinics.

PKSF: What were the early days of DBS like?

Md Abu Zafor: The early period was extremely difficult—a shortage of funds, a small office, limited furniture, and meetings often held in open spaces. The greatest challenge was earning people's trust. Many were suspicious; some borrowers would abscond with loans; field workers were frequently subjected to humiliation. Yet we never gave up. We maintained regular contact with people and made every effort to understand their problems. In the beginning, I had to carry out the roles of both a field worker and an accountant myself.

I began working with locally unemployed youth, divorced women, and widows. For the first six months, we could not even pay salaries to the staff. Eventually, I paid them from my own earnings. Gradually, small groups began to form. Some survived. Through regular monitoring, we ensured the proper use of loans.

PKSF: How would you evaluate PKSF's role in strengthening the institutional foundation of DBS?

Md Abu Zafor: For DBS, PKSF has been a guiding force for professionalism and integrity. In the early days, we learned from PKSF officials that it is more important to properly assess a member's condition before disbursing a loan than to spend time chasing repayments afterward.

There are two particularly important aspects of PKSF's way of working. First, while they may forgive mistakes, they never tolerate dishonesty. Second, instead of imposing uniform policies, they provide practical guidance based on local realities and professional diversity at the field level. We learned from PKSF that labor-intensive areas like Kushtia and agriculture-based regions like Meherpur require different strategies. PKSF's core philosophy—"An organization can thrive only when its members are doing well"—has played a key role in building DBS as a strong and sustainable institution.

PKSF: How can microcredit serve as a sustainable solution to poverty?

Md Abu Zafor: To understand the impact of microcredit, one must first understand the income and expenditure patterns of marginalized people. Day laborers earn on a daily basis but retain no surplus; farmers, on the other hand, incur daily expenses but receive income only once every three months.

In both cases, they have no capital or surplus funds to build a long-term source of income. In this context, microcredit gives marginalized people the opportunity to invest in productive activities. This increases their cash flow. Once they repay the loan through instalments, the asset—whether a power tiller or a cow—becomes their permanent property. The culture of savings that microcredit cultivates among them ultimately serves as a shield in times of crisis and contributes to the sustainable eradication of poverty.

PKSF: Many people believe that the interest rates charged on microcredit are excessively high. What is your view on this?

Md Abu Zafor: It is more accurate to describe the interest rate as comparatively high rather than excessively high. Microcredit fundamentally follows a high-touch delivery model, where field visits are conducted repeatedly for each loan, and close monitoring along with personalized services must be provided to grassroots. Due to this labor-intensive and time-consuming process, the operational cost per loan is far higher than that of conventional banking services. In addition, since microcredit is entirely collateral-free, the level of risk is considerably high. Beyond financial services, clients also receive technical assistance and phased monitoring — services that are embedded in the interest rate. Ultimately, whether the interest rate is high or low should be judged in the context of specific determinants and the successes achieved through the program.

PKSF: In this long journey, what do you consider to be the greatest achievement of DBS?

Md Abu Zafor: As a healthcare professional, based on my own experiences, I believe that life's greatest achievements cannot be measured by numbers alone. The biggest achievement of DBS is the qualitative and positive changes it has brought to the lives of its members. When a member takes a loan and establishes a wooden furniture workshop, or when an unemployed youth becomes self-reliant by opening a salon, being able to stand beside them in that success is a matter of immense pride for DBS.

Women, too, are making significant contributions to the rural economy. The smiles on people's faces and the positive impact DBS has been able to create in the broader economy are, to me, the greatest achievements of this long journey.

PKSF: Thank you very much. We wish you good health.

Md Abu Zafor: Thank you and PKSF. I also congratulate all officials and staff of PKSF on receiving the Independence Award 2026. As a Partner Organization of PKSF, we are equally delighted and proud of this achievement.

Scan to read the full interview in Bangla



Presentation on findings of research on 'Performance Analysis of PKSF Partner Organizations'



A meeting was held on 13 January at PKSF Bhaban-1 to present the findings of a research study titled 'Performance Analysis of PKSF Partner Organizations'. The findings were presented by Tanweer Hasan, PhD, Rolf A Weil Professor of Finance, Heller College of Business, Roosevelt University, Chicago, USA.

PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan and Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader, along with senior officials, were present at the meeting. The presentation highlighted the role of PKSF's

financial support in ensuring the financial sustainability of microfinance institutions alongside social development. The research revealed that PKSF's financial support plays a significant role as a form of governance in addressing mission drift—a major contemporary challenge facing microfinance institutions that is receiving particular attention at the policy level. The presentation further illustrated the influence of various supply-side determinants on institutional performance.

PKSF MD calls for optimal use of resources invested for climate-vulnerable communities

PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader has called for ensuring the most effective and optimal use of resources invested to address the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh. He said that transparency, efficiency, and accountability are indispensable for the sustainable development of livelihoods of coastal and marginalized poor communities in Bangladesh, and emphasized on the need for constructing climate-resilient housing for the poor.

Presiding over the 'Activity Progress Review Workshop' of RHL project held on 7 January at PKSF Bhaban-1, the PKSF MD said that climate-resilient housing is indispensable for ensuring a sustainable life for the poor, and RHL must prioritize the marginalized and the poor in housing construction.

The then PKSF Deputy Managing Director Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed delivered the welcome speech. A presentation and an open discussion session were held on the progress of the RHL project, activities of the 18 project-implementing organizations, new initiatives, and challenges. PKSF Senior General Manager Dr AKM Nuruzzaman moderated the session. Executive Directors, project focal persons, and project coordinators of RHL-implementing organizations participated in the workshop. PKSF has been implementing the five-year RHL project, financed by the Green Climate Fund, in seven coastal districts since 17 August 2023.



Under RHL, a consultation meeting on 'Review of Crab Export Policy' was held on 8 January at PKSF Bhaban-1. It was chaired by PKSF Deputy Managing Director Dr Akond Mohammad Rafiqul Islam and moderated by Senior GM Dr AKM Nuruzzaman. Faculty members and researchers from Bangladesh Agricultural University, crab exporters, and farmers, along with officials from various ministries, the Department of Fisheries, the Forest Department, the Department of Environment, and representatives from non-government organizations, participated in the meeting. Participants emphasized on the urgent need for formulating a comprehensive crab policy to boost exports, protect farmers, and ensure sustainable coastal economic development.

PKSF organizes experience-sharing visit for drought management capacity building



Drip irrigation activities in a dragon fruit orchard in a hilly area

An experience-sharing visit was organized from 16-20 January in Matiranga upazila of Khagrachari district. A total of 113 officials from 18 project-implementing organizations of PKSF's ECCCCP-Drought project participated in the visit. They witnessed various activities being implemented through PKSF's Partner Organization 'Integrated Development Foundation (IDF)' to address drought and climate risks in the hilly areas. These included sprinkler and drip irrigation systems to address acute water scarcity in remote hilly areas, biodiversity conservation by rearing of the



Coffee cultivation in the hills

near-extinct Red Chittagong Cattle (RCC) and the wild cattle Gayal, goat/sheep rearing on slatted sheds to reduce disease in the humid hill environment, and coffee cultivation activities. Participants were provided with black pepper saplings during the visit. Under the ECCCCP-Drought project, 70 ponds and 28 kilometers of canals have so far been re-excavated, 598 rooftop-based Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) systems have been installed, and financial support has been extended to approximately 6,500 farmers for cultivating drought-tolerant fruits and crops.

Capacity enhancement

The PKSF Training Centre (PTC) conducts year-round training programs on various subjects to enhance the professional competence, innovative thinking, and positive outlook of PKSF and Partner Organization (PO) officials. Currently, PTC is conducting training on 15 modules focused on capacity development. All training activities under PKSF's various projects are also being conducted through the PTC.

A meeting on 'Future Work Plan of the PKSF Training Center' was held with PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan on 10 February. He suggested that training programs be made more modern, demand-driven, and technology-oriented. Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader emphasized on ensuring the quality of training and its practical applicability.

Training for PO officials

As part of capacity development of PO officials, the PTC provided classroom-based training to 153 senior and mid-level officials on seven courses in seven batches at PKSF Bhaban-1 during January–March.

Training for PKSF officials

A total of 12 training programs and workshops were held at various institutions across the country and at PKSF Bhaban-1 during January–March. In these, 122 PKSF officials participated. During this period, one PKSF official participated in a Graduation Ceremony held in Saudi Arabia, organized by the World Bank.



A group of students participating in PKSF's internship program

Internship program

A total of 18 students completed their internships at the PTC during January–March, including 15 from the University of Dhaka, two from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), and one from the American International University–Bangladesh.

In addition, 14 students from the Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka, have joined as interns. They are now engaged in preparing a research paper titled 'Nexus Between Economic Condition and Malnutrition in Bangladesh: A Household-Level Study'.



Fifteen PKSF officials participated in a training program titled 'Addressing Challenges of Access to Safe Drinking Water for Climate-vulnerable Marginalised People in Bangladesh', held in Australia from 18 January to 18 February, under the Australia Awards Fellowship of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with support from RMIT University.

SMART project promotes resilient green growth

PKSF has been implementing the Sustainable Microenterprise and Resilient Transformation (SMART) project since August 2023 to promote resilient green growth by adopting climate-resilient, resource-efficient practices in microenterprises. This project, implemented with the support of the Government of Bangladesh and jointly financed by the World Bank and PKSF, provides various financial and technical services to micro-entrepreneurs.

Under SMART, 70 sub-projects are currently being implemented at the field in 54 districts through 54 Partner Organizations (POs). Under these sub-projects, BDT 12.47 billion has been disbursed as loans, and BDT 780.3 million has been disbursed as grants to the POs as of 10 March 2026.

Financial and technical assistance has been provided to 43,517 micro-entrepreneurs as of January 2026. The supported entrepreneurs are independently implementing at least two Resource-Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) practices on their own initiatives. Furthermore, SMART has already provided training to 32,281 micro-entrepreneurs covering topics such as environmental vulnerability awareness, knowledge and management strategies, the need for preparatory steps for adopting this practice, as well as branding and certification.

A total of 335 business cluster-based environmental clubs have been formed to serve as a common platform, engaging both the community and entrepreneurs within their respective business clusters. In addition, Environment and Climate Change Units (ECCUs) have been established in 50 POs with the support of the project.



Micro-entrepreneurs are producing diversified and more products with Rapier Looms with the help of the SMART project.

The quarterly progress review meeting for the sub-projects of the SMART project was held from 2-8 March. The progress of 66 sub-projects being implemented through 51 POs was presented at the meeting. On this occasion, three POs were honored with mementos in recognition of their significant achievements during October 2025-January 2026.

SMART-implementing POs celebrated the International Women's Day across the country on 8 March 2026 with the theme 'Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls'. Additionally, the success stories of two women entrepreneurs from the SMART project were featured on the World Bank's official Facebook page.

Special initiative to promote products of micro-entrepreneurs

PKSF has recently taken a special initiative to strengthen the promotion of products manufactured by micro-entrepreneurs across the country. In alignment with the goals and objectives of PKSF's Strategic Plan 2025-2030, the establishment of a new unit named the ME Promotion Centre (MPC) was approved at PKSF's 263rd Governing Body Meeting. An integrated marketing hub is being developed at PKSF Bhaban-2 in Shyamoli, where

product exhibition, branding, and market linkage activities will be conducted. This is expected to improve the quality of agricultural and non-agricultural products of micro-entrepreneurs, expand sustainable markets, and increase access to national and international markets.

A meeting on the action plan of the MPC unit was held on 10 February. It was presided over by PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader. He emphasized on region-based product branding, QR code-based packaging and labelling, live display of production processes, video teasers and storytelling, digital promotion and marketing, formation of business cluster-based producer associations, and developing the MPC as a knowledge hub for products. The meeting also discussed increasing sales of value-added and certified products, ensuring fair competition among entrepreneurs, and providing exhibition-based incubation support. It was informed in the meeting that over 300 marketable products of micro-entrepreneurs are currently available. Of these, more than 100 are certified by ISO, BSTI, HALAL, and HACCP, and are export-ready. PKSF's Deputy Managing Director Dr Akond Mohammad Rafiqul Islam and other officials were present at the meeting.



Safe and traceable chicken meat produced with the support of PKSF

PKSF signs Credit Guarantee Agreements with five banks



PKSF has signed five separate Credit Guarantee Agreements with Jamuna Bank PLC, Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC, Trust Bank PLC, Mercantile Bank PLC, and NCC Bank PLC under its ongoing Credit Enhancement Scheme (CES). Under these agreements, the banks will be able to provide BDT 10 billion in guaranteed loans to PKSF's Partner Organizations (POs).

The signing ceremony was held at PKSF Bhaban-1 on 26 January. On behalf of PKSF, the agreements were signed by Md Fazlul Kader, Managing Director, PKSF. On behalf of the respective banks, the agreements were signed by Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director & CEO, Trust Bank PLC; Haily Algewatte, Deputy CEO & Chief Operating Officer,

Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC; Mohammad Jahangir Alam, Deputy Managing Director, Jamuna Bank PLC; Md Habibur Rahman, Deputy Managing Director, NCC Bank PLC; and Md Zakir Hossain, Deputy Managing Director, Mercantile Bank PLC.

Speaking at the ceremony, Md Fazlul Kader said, "PKSF is working to transform low-income people into entrepreneurs. To successfully implement this initiative, the Credit Enhancement Scheme has been introduced to formally engage commercial banks. Under this scheme, PKSF's POs will receive loans from banks and disburse them to eligible clients at the field level, while PKSF will provide guarantees against the credit risk at the bank level."

PPEPP-EU working for sustainable development of the extremely poor



PKSF is implementing the Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People – European Union (PPEPP-EU) project for sustainable socio-economic development of the extremely poor. Under the project, intensive technical support, access to soft loans, and market linkage opportunities are being provided to expand project participants' enterprises and diversify income sources.

PPEPP-EU is expanding 'cluster-based agricultural hubs', which are helping farmers access quality inputs, technical advice, and reliable markets, thereby improving both productivity and income. The project is promoting agro-climatic specific adaptations, including mini-pond-based integrated farming in coastal areas, stress-tolerant rice production, and climate-neutral livestock production.

To ensure the nutritional rehabilitation of children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) or Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM), PPEPP-EU is providing specially designed food packages. Through direct collaboration with Community Clinics and Family Welfare Centers, the project is strengthening the government's Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition program. The project is also working to ensure that Persons with Disabilities receive the 'Shuborno Nagorik' card and are included in Union Parishad budget allocations.

PKSF to promote nationwide awareness to prevent thalassemia

PKSF will implement nationwide awareness activities to address the growing risk of thalassemia in Bangladesh. The initiatives will be carried out under PKSF's Preventive Healthcare Program through its Partner Organizations (POs) across the country.

The announcement was made at a voluntary blood donation and thalassemia awareness program held on 4 January at PKSF Bhaban-1. The program was jointly organized by PKSF and Bangladesh Thalassemia Samity and Hospital. PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan, Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader, and Executive Director of Bangladesh Thalassemia Samity and Hospital Dr A K M Ekramul Hossain spoke at the event.

Addressing the gathering, Zakir Ahmed Khan said there is no alternative to public awareness in preventing thalassemia. Considering the severity of the disease and the high cost of treatment, he stressed on the need for strong preventive

measures. He noted that coordinated efforts, regular screening, and increased social awareness can effectively prevent thalassemia in Bangladesh.

PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader said that PKSF's POs currently provide health, financial protection, and various development services to around 22.5 million people across the country. By utilizing this extensive network, PKSF will take effective steps to prevent thalassemia through premarital screening of prospective brides and grooms, identification of carriers, and promotion of behavioral change.

Highlighting the alarming rise in thalassemia cases, Dr A K M Ekramul Hossain said that approximately 15,000 children are born with thalassemia every year in Bangladesh, and about 11.4% of the population are carriers of the disease. He emphasized on the urgent need to raise mass awareness to curb the growing burden of thalassemia.

Speakers noted that thalassemia is a preventable genetic blood disorder. A child is at risk of developing the disease only if both parents are carriers; if one parent is a carrier and the other is healthy, the disease will not occur. Therefore, they stressed on the importance of knowing one's carrier status before marriage and proposed including thalassemia screening in the marriage registration process. Examples from countries such as Cyprus, Italy, and Greece were cited, where discouraging marriages between carriers and enforcing mandatory screening have reduced thalassemia cases to nearly zero.

Later, PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan formally inaugurated the blood donation program and expressed gratitude to the voluntary donors and encouraged them to continue this altruistic work. Officials and staff members from various levels of PKSF enthusiastically took part in the blood donation campaign.



PKSF bids farewell to three employees

Three PKSF officials retired upon completion of long and distinguished careers during January–March 2026. They are Deputy Managing Director Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed; Deputy Manager Md Deloar Hossain; and Driver Md Abul Khayer.



It was under Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed's leadership that PKSF's Environment and Climate Change Unit was built on a strong foundation, and he played a pioneering role in securing PKSF's international accreditation as an Accredited Entity of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund.

Deputy Managing Director Dr Ahmed retired on 31 January 2026 after 15 years of service, having previously served as a Deputy Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh.

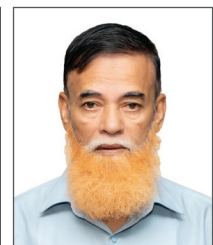
Md Deloar Hossain retired on 9 February 2026 after 25 years

of service. Prior to retirement, he served as Deputy Manager in the General Services Department.

Driver Md Abul Khair retired on 31 March 2026 upon completion of 34 years of dedicated service.



Md Deloar Hossain



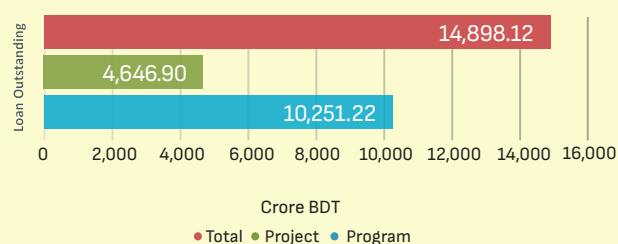
Md Abul Khair

Separate farewell programs were held in honor of each of the three officials, attended by PKSF Chairman Zakir Ahmed Khan, Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader, Deputy Managing Directors, and other senior officials, who commended each retiree for their professional competence, dedication, and integrity. On behalf of the PKSF family, they were wished good health and a joyful retirement.

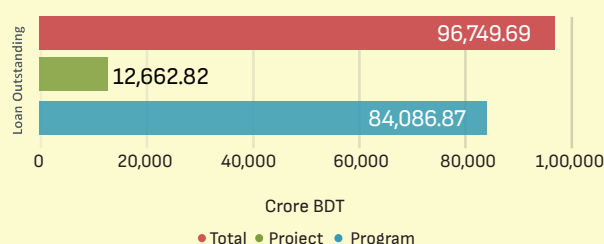
PKSF's loan program

Up to January 2026, the amount of loan disbursed from PKSF to its Partner Organizations (POs) was BDT 77,918.34 crore and from POs to borrowers was BDT 10,21,668.94 crore. The amount of loan outstanding of PKSF with POs was BDT 14,898.12 crore and POs with borrowers was BDT 96,749.69 crore. Besides, members' savings at the POs amounted to BDT 39,225.83 crore.

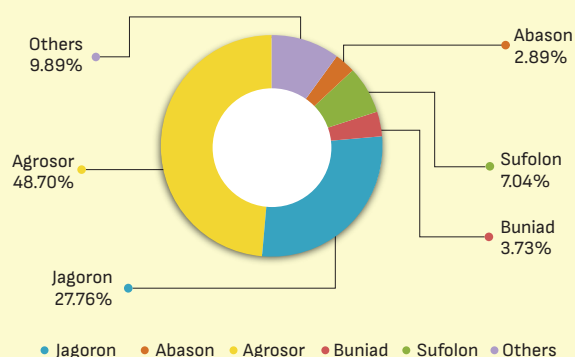
Loan outstanding (PKSF with POs): As of January 2026, the amount of loan outstanding of PKSF with POs was BDT 14,898.12 crore, of which the loan outstanding under the core program was BDT 10,251.22 crore (68.81% of the total loan outstanding) and the same under the projects was BDT 4,646.90 crore (31.19% of total loan outstanding).



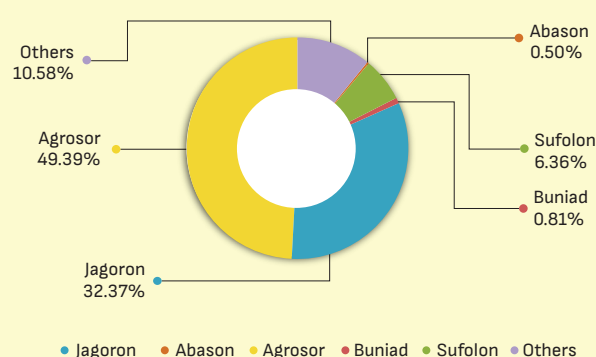
Loan outstanding (POs with borrowers): As of January 2026, the amount of loan outstanding of POs with borrower was BDT 96,749.69 crore, of which the loan outstanding under the core program was BDT 84,086.87 crore (86.91% of the total loan outstanding) and the same under the projects was BDT 12,662.82 crore (13.09% of the total loan outstanding).



Sector-wise loan outstanding (of PKSF with POs): As of January 2026, the total amount of loan outstanding of PKSF with POs was BDT 14,898.12 crore -- BDT 7,254.77 crore in microenterprise loan (Agrosor), BDT 4,135.99 crore in microcredit for moderate poor (Jagoron), BDT 555.01 crore in microcredit for extremely poor (Buniad), BDT 1,048.09 crore in agriculture loan (Sufolon), BDT 430.47 crore in housing loan (Abason Loan), and BDT 1,473.79 crore is others loan.



Sector-wise loan outstanding (of POs with borrowers): As of January 2026, the total amount of loan outstanding of POs with borrowers was BDT 96,749.69 crore -- BDT 47,785.66 crore in microenterprise loan (Agrosor), BDT 31,320.43 crore in microcredit for moderate poor (Jagoron), BDT 779.88 crore in microcredit for extremely poor (Buniad), BDT 6,149.63 crore in agriculture loan (Sufolon), BDT 482.51 crore in housing loan (Abason Loan), and BDT 10,231.58 crore in others loans.



Members and borrowers: As of January 2026, the total number of members of POs was 2.16 crore, of whom 2.02 crore were women (93.52% of the total members). At the same time, the total number of borrowers was 1.65 crore, of whom 1.54 crore were women (93.33% of the total borrowers).

Loan recovery rate: As of January 2026, the recovery rate of loans from POs to PKSF was 99.82% and from borrowers to POs was 99.15%.

Non-financial services: Along with financial services, PKSF is providing different non-financial services through its POs including health and nutrition, training and development, uplifting the quality of the lives of the elderly, education scholarships, value chain development, agricultural technology extension, flood- and salinity-tolerant crop cultivation, ensuring safe drinking water supply in salinity-prone areas, cultural and sports activities for the adolescents, and capacity-building activities.

PKSF, WB sign \$150.75m agreement to promote youth employment, entrepreneurship



A RAISE apprentice working on a car engine

PKSF and the World Bank signed an agreement worth USD150.75 million as additional financing for the RAISE project to support skills development and employment generation for youth in Bangladesh on 16 February. The agreement was signed by PKSF Managing Director Md Fazlul Kader and Jean Pesme, Division Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan at the World Bank, on behalf of the World Bank.

With the extension of the project to December 2030, the budget for the extended phase will stand at USD 280.65 million, with the remaining funds to be sourced from PKSF and its Partner Organizations (POs). As a result, the total budget of RAISE for the period from 2022 to 2030 will amount to USD 530.65 million. Under the project, more than 400,000 people will benefit directly, while four to five times more may benefit indirectly.

In the extended phase, an additional 25,000 youth from low-income households will receive market-oriented technical training through the traditional Ustad-Shagred

model, along with initiatives to link the trained youth with suitable employment opportunities in specific trades. At the same time, 130,000 young micro-entrepreneurs will receive accessible financing along with capacity development training to support business expansion, enabling them to create additional employment opportunities for others.

In addition, 20,000 micro-entrepreneurs from climate-vulnerable areas will receive financing along with training on risk management and business continuity, while 1,600 young women will receive training in childcare services with the aim of developing them as entrepreneurs.

The Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) project, jointly funded by PKSF and the World Bank, is being implemented across urban and peri-urban areas of the country through 89 POs. Under the project, 246,500 youth from low-income households and micro-entrepreneurs are receiving capacity enhancement alongside inclusive financial services.

PKSF cuts fuel consumption by 50%

PKSF has decided to reduce fuel consumption by 50% in response to the situation arising from instability in global fuel oil supply. The decision will apply to all entitled officials, including the Chairman and the Managing Director of PKSF. A number of measures have been adopted with the aim of using public transport instead of official vehicles and conducting office activities in as energy-efficient a manner as possible. As part of these measures, officials at all levels of PKSF will use public transport instead of official vehicles for work-related travels both within and outside Dhaka. Instructions have also been issued to limit the use of air conditioners in office buildings and to exercise restraint in the use of electrical equipment.

