CASE STUDY

March-April 2025

Total marks: 100 **Time allowed:** 4:30 hours.

Instructions:

1. Check that your question paper contains all the exhibits as mentioned in page 3. The consecutive page numbering may be found under the base line at the foot of each page.

2. Use the answer script provided by the Institute. Write your name, roll no., registration no. and name of the subject on the upper portion of the cover page of the answer script.

3. Candidates are asked not to write any particulars of identification in any other place of the answer script and additional pages if taken.

4. Questions must be answered in English.

5. The answer should be referenced to the relevant workings.

6. Answer script and additional page(s) taken to write answer, used or unused, must not be removed or taken away from the Examination Hall.

Requirements & Marks Allocation:

You are Azizul Hakim, Senior Manager at J. Rahman & Co., Chartered Accountants (JRC). You report to Mr. Jamshedur Rahman FCA, Senior Partner at JRC, who have forwarded you an email (**Exhibit-1**) he received from Mr. Billal Hossain, Managing Director of Apon Bazar Limited (Apon). Mr. Hossain on his email requested advice on several matters and shared relevant information for consideration. Mr. Rahman have assigned you for the assignment and asked you to prepare a draft report for Apon covering all the requirements stated in Mr. Hossain's email. In addition to email from Apon managing director, Mr. Rahman also shared a business articles and news clips (**Exhibit-7** and **Exhibit-8**) which he considers useful and wants you to consider in preparation of the report.

Requirements:

You are required to prepare a draft report for Mr. Billal Hossain which should comprise the following elements:

- ❖ An executive summary
- ❖ Your responses to the detailed requirements (a), (b) and (c) set out in Exhibit-1.
- ❖ State clearly of any assumptions used in preparing the report.

Marks Allocation:

All of allocated marks in the Case Study are awarded for the demonstration of professional skills, allocated broadly as follows:

Requirements	Professional Skills					Total
	Assimilating and using information	Structuring problems and solutions	Applying judgment	Conclusions and making recommendations	Integrative & multidisciplinary skills	
Executive Summary	4	4	2	3	2	**15**
Requirement (a) (i)	3	4	3	3	2	**15**
(ii)	4	2	2	2	0	**10**
Requirement (b) (i)	3	3	3	2	2	**13**
(ii)	2	3	2	2	0	**9**
(iii)	3	3	2	2	2	**12**
(iv)	2	2	2	2	0	**8**
Requirement (c) (i)	2	2	2	2	2	**10**
(ii)	2	2	2	2	0	**8**
Total	**25**	**25**	**20**	**20**	**10**	**100**

In planning your report, you should be aware that not attempting one of the requirements, including an executive summary, will have a significantly detrimental effect on your chances of success. In addition, as indicated above, all skills areas will be assessed under each element of your report.

You should be clear that marks are awarded for demonstrating your professional skills, not for reproducing facts from the case. To be successful, you will need to:

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the case material and make use of your analysis.
- Carryout relevant analysis of the problems and structure your proposed solutions.
- Apply your judgment based on the analysis that you have carried out.
- Draw conclusions from your analysis and judgment in developing practical commercial recommendations.
- Ethical issues may cover the following topic-
  - Lack of professional independence or objectivity
  - Conflict of interest among stakeholders
  - Doubtful accounting or commercial practice or market competition or Market proximity
  - Inappropriate pressure to achieve a reported result.
  - Compliance of local laws and regulations
- Integrative & multidisciplinary skills may cover the following areas-
  - Depletion and wastage of natural resources and its impact on environment and climate change.
  - Impact on pollution, on the public health and productivity and on the national health budget.
  - Social impacts, e.g., social unrest for allowing use of alcohol, bar, etc.
  - Economic impacts, e.g., on employment generation and improvement in connectivity using ICT.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

List of persons in the Case and their Roles

SL.	Names	Roles
1	Azizul Hakim (You)	Senior Manager at JRC
2	Jamshedur Rahman FCA	Senior Partner at JRC
3	Altaf Hossain Apon	Founder of Apon Bazar Limited & Chairman of the board
4	Billal Hossain	Managing Director of Apon board
5	Kabir Hossain	Director, Market & Communication
6	Anisur Rahman FCA	Director - Finance & Accounts
7	Shohana Shahid	Director - Human Resource
8	Jahidul Alam	Director - Internal Audit & Compliance
9	Nazmul Hoque	Head of Financial Reporting

<u>EXHIBIT</u> – 1

<u>E-MAIL</u>

From	: Mr. Billal Hossain, Managing Director, Apon Bazar Limited
To	: Mr. Jamshedur Rahman FCA, Senior Partner, JRC
Subject	: Appointment for advisory engagement and request for advisory report on several matters.
Date	: 25 April 2025

Dear Mr. Rahman,

Congratulations! It is my pleasure to inform you that board of Apon Bazar Limited (Apon) have accepted your fees proposal and appointed you for advisory services with following scope of work but not limited to:

- Assessing and analyzing business operations and performance for formulating business strategies.
- Evaluating strategic options and viability of financing for investment opportunities considering past performances & prospects of the company and related business issues.
- Assisting us in raising funds through initial public offering (IPO) of shares, issuance of Bond and perform necessary evaluation of investment options, Risk Management, Governance, Due Diligence, Restructuring, etc.
- Reviewing and advising on various Accounting, Tax, financial and internal control related issues of the company.
- Supporting on various regulatory and secretarial matters as and when solicited.
- Modelling a range of scenarios to help evaluate the viability of proposed initiatives.

We have prepared a draft of financial statements of Apon Bazar Limited for 31 December 2024. Board of directors are currently evaluating the draft along with several strategic options available at hand. Board has requested your input in strategic options evaluation. We need your analysis and advice on our financial positions and strategic alternatives as early as possible as final decisions will be taken in our forthcoming board meeting. I have attached with this email a brief background of Apon including its business operation **(Exhibit 2)**. I have also attached the extracts of our latest draft financial statements (**Exhibit 3)** and a recent article published in a business magazine regarding *Retail Super Shop industry in Bangladesh* (**Exhibit 4**). In addition, you will receive emails from our Head of Financial reporting (**Exhibit 5**) and Finance Director (**Exhibit 6**) regarding accounting & compliance issues and prospective investment options. We expect you to consider other relevant information available (**Exhibits 7 & 8)** while drawing your conclusion and sharing recommendations to us on the requirements stated below.

We expect a ***draft report*** along with your workings (where applicable) addressing to the board. Your report should include an ***Executive Summary*** and cover:

(a) (i) Make a schedule of adjustments required for reporting and compliance issues stated in **Exhibit-5.** Evaluate adjusted financial performance & position taking non-financial information into consideration.

(ii) Perform a SWOT analysis on Apon's business and operations.

(b) (i) Analyze the investment options using NPV method and recommend to the board with justifications the option to be selected considering compatibility with Apon's missions & vision statement.

(ii) Perform financial analysis to evaluate whether leveraged buy-out would be a viable financing option.

(iii) Evaluate whether expected share premium might be acceptable to BSEC. If the expected share premium is not approved, determine the maximum share premium can be charged. Also determine the number of shares to be issued in IPO and whether it exceeds Apon's acceptable ownership threshold.

(iv) Discuss the non-financial factors to be considered for both financing options.

(c) (i) Comment on the ethical issues involving Apon's existing and planned business, suppliers, customers, and service providers.

(ii) Assess Human, Social, Economic and Environmental sustainability in Apon's business operations.

I look forward to receiving your draft report on or before 05 May 2025.

Yours sincerely,
Billal Hossain
Managing Director,
Apon Bazar Limited

EXHIBIT – 2

A brief note on Apon Bazar Limited and its business operations.

About Apon Bazar Limited

Apon Bazar Limited (Apon) is a prominent retail super shop in Bangladesh, offering a broad selection of products that meet the everyday needs of its customers. Apon was established in 2000, at a time when the retail super shop industry in Bangladesh was beginning to experience significant growth and transformation. Apon's founder Mr, Altaf Hossain Apon, recognized the growing demand for modern retail outlets offering convenience, variety, and quality at competitive prices. Known for its high-quality products, exceptional customer service, and competitive pricing, Apon has become a trusted name in the retail industry.

From a single small retail outlet, Apon Bazar Limited has expanded its presence, now operating twenty-five locations across major cities in Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Barisal. Five of these outlets was inaugurated in current year and five more outlets are in consideration. Known for its diverse range of products, including groceries, electronics, apparel, and home goods, Apon has solidified itself as a trusted name in the retail sector. Apon's dedication to quality, customer satisfaction, and continuous adaptation to market trends has allowed it to thrive in a competitive environment.

Products and Target Customers

Apon Bazar Limited offers a wide variety of products to meet the needs of its diverse customer base. The key product categories include:

- **Groceries:** A full selection of fresh produce, packaged food items, snacks, and beverages.
- **Electronics:** Consumer electronics, mobile phones, home appliances, and accessories.
- **Stationery:** pen, pencil, paper, sticky notes, scissors, calculators, clip boards etc.
- **Apparel:** Trendy and everyday clothing for men, women, and children.
- **Household Goods:** Furniture, kitchenware, home décor, and personal care products.
- **Beauty and Personal Care:** A range of cosmetics, skincare products, and personal hygiene items.

Apon's primary customer base includes middle-income families, working professionals, and urban dwellers who value convenience, quality, and affordability. The company also caters to small businesses and corporate clients through bulk purchases and special business solutions.

Mission & Vision

Apon Bazar Limited's mission is to provide a wide array of high-quality products at affordable prices while delivering exceptional customer service. The company is committed to enhancing the shopping experience and become a trusted partner for families and businesses by combining the convenience of physical stores with the accessibility of online shopping.

Apon's vision is to be the leading retail brand in Bangladesh by setting new standards of in retail for commitment to quality, customer satisfaction, and sustainability. The company aims to continuously innovate and expand to meet the evolving needs of consumers, while maintaining its reputation for excellence.

Board of Directors and Key Management Personnel

Apon Bazar Limited is guided by a team of experienced leaders:

- **Altaf Hossain Apon** – Founder and Chairman (55% Ownership): Mr. Altaf hossain is a prominent businessman. His leadership has been pivotal in shaping Apon into the prominent retail brand it is today.
- **Billal Hossain** – Managing Director (25% Ownership): Mr. Billal Hossain is elder son of Mr. Altaf Hossain currently oversees the day-to-day operations and strategic direction of Apon.
- **Kabir Hossain** – Director of Market & Communication (20% Ownership): Kabir Hossain is the youngest son of Mr. Altaf Hossain. He leads Apon's marketing and communication efforts to strengthen the brand and engage with customers.
- **Anisur Rahman FCA** – Director of Finance & Accounts. Qualified chartered accountant with 15 years of retail industry experience.
- **Shohana Shahid** – Director of Human Resource – HR professional with 12 years of experience.
- **Jahidul Alam** – Director of Internal Audit & Compliance – Qualified internal auditor and joined last year.
- **Nazmul Hoque** – Head of Financial Reporting – Partly qualified chartered accountant with 8 years of experience.

Business Model
Apon Bazar Limited operates a multi-channel business model that caters to both consumer and business markets. Its model includes both physical stores and a robust online presence, enabling customers to shop according to their preferences.

- **Business-to-Consumer (B2C)**
  Apon's core business revolves around its B2C segment, where it serves individual customers through Retail outlets and E-commerce. Apon's 25 retail stores across major cities provide easy access to a variety of products. These stores are designed to offer a convenient, high-quality shopping experience. Apon offers a seamless shopping experience with well-organized aisles, competitive pricing, and a wide selection of products. Apon's user-friendly e-commerce platform allows customers to shop online, providing convenience & access to exclusive offers and promotions. Customers can place orders for home delivery or pick up from their nearest outlet.

- **Business-to-Business (B2B)**
  In addition to serving individual consumers, Apon Bazar Limited also caters to businesses through bulk orders. This B2B segment includes supplying products to corporate offices, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that require essential items like office supplies, cleaning products, and hospitality ware. Businesses looking for office supplies, bulk grocery items, or other goods benefit from Apon's B2B offerings. Apon provides competitive pricing for bulk purchases, offering tailored solutions for businesses. Special discounts and a dedicated account management service ensure that business clients receive personalized attention and competitive pricing. Apon supplies tableware, kitchenware, and cleaning products to hotels, restaurants, and event venues, providing essential items to support the hospitality industry.

Value Chain
Apon's value chain consists of primary activities and support activities. Primary activities are Procurement & Sourcing, logistics & distribution and marketing. These primary activities are supported by support services activities which includes Customer Service, Human Resources Management, Infrastructure & Facilities Management and Financial Management.

Primary Activities:

Procurement & Sourcing:
Procurement is centralized and handled by an experienced sourcing team based at the head office. Bulk procurement helps Apon secure volume discounts, contributing to competitive pricing. Regular supplier audits, price benchmarking, and alternate vendor lists reduce risks. Apon also encourages local SME suppliers for unique items like artisan snacks or handicrafts. Yet, long lead times for imported goods and occasional overstocking of low-demand items are areas where procurement could still be optimized. The company has built strong relationships with trusted vendors to maintain a steady flow of goods at competitive prices.

Apon also does commission and consignment business through partnership with FMCG companies and other brands. This helps Apon manage its working capital and overstocking. These companies deliver their products in Apon's outlet or in the central distribution warehouse. Apon only makes payment to these companies if their items are sold. However, if the inventories are not sold within certain period or expires, inventories are returned to supplier at their own cost.

Logistics & distribution:
Apon's distribution strategy includes efficient logistics for stocking its physical stores and delivering orders to customers through its online platform. Apon works with reliable delivery partners to ensure timely and secure delivery to customers across Bangladesh.

Apon Bazar Limited manages inbound logistics through a combination of direct sourcing and distributor partnerships. Fresh items like fruits, vegetables, fish, and meat are sourced daily from local farms and fisheries, while packaged goods come from national distributors and multinational companies operating in Bangladesh. The centralized warehouse near Dhaka acts as the first checkpoint for goods where quality control teams inspect shipments for freshness, packaging integrity, and expiration dates. Technology like RFID tagging is slowly being introduced to track shipments. Challenges occasionally arise during monsoon seasons with transport delays, causing inconsistencies in stock availability.

In the retail model, outbound logistics are focused on moving goods from the distribution center to retail outlets efficiently. Apon Bazar uses dedicated third-party logistics providers for daily deliveries to stores, with a priority given to fast-moving items like rice, cooking oil, and dairy. For online orders (limited to certain zones in Dhaka and Chattogram), a fleet of small delivery vans and motorbikes ensures timely delivery. It has partnered with food delivery and ride sharing company to deliver products to customer. Stock replenishment at stores happens 3-4 times per week based on dynamic sales data. However, during festivals or flash sales, logistics sometimes struggle to meet increased demand, leading to occasional shelf gaps.

Marketing & Sales:

Apon's marketing efforts focus on building strong customer relationships through mix of digital and traditional media. The company uses social media platforms, television, and print advertising to raise brand awareness, while in-store promotions and loyalty programs encourage repeat purchases. Seasonal campaigns, like "Eid Mega Sale" or "Boishakhi Bonanza," are marketed via TVCs, billboards, leaflets, and Facebook ads.

As part of sales policy and to enhance customer loyalty, Apon introduced the Apon Card, a membership program that rewards customers for their purchases. The Apon Card allows customers to collect loyalty points with each transaction, which can later be redeemed for discounts, special offers, and exclusive deals. For every purchase made at any Apon Bazar location or online, customers earn 1 point for every 100 Taka spent. Periodically, customers can earn bonus points on select items or during special events and holiday seasons. Apon Card holder enjoys member-only discounts, early-bird offers, receive personalized coupons based on shopping habits, and are invited to exclusive pre-sale events.

The Apon Card is designed to create a long-lasting relationship with customers by offering tangible rewards that enhance the shopping experience. The company also encourages its members to share feedback and participate in surveys to help improve products and services. Despite these efforts, Apon Bazar faces tough competition from newer digital-first supermarkets and evolving customer preferences toward online shopping.

Support Activities:

Support activities are essential for ensuring the smooth operation and continued success of Apon. These activities provide the necessary infrastructure, resources, and services that enable the company to deliver high-quality product.

Innovative Customer Service:

Apon Bazar Limited places a strong emphasis on delivering exceptional customer service. Customer service includes in-store support, after-sales services, and feedback handling. It has a dedicated customer service team that handles inquiries, resolves issues, and supports customers throughout their shopping experience. Stores offer refund and exchange policies that are communicated clearly at service desks. Apon's helpline number and WhatsApp chat service allow customers to lodge complaints, request product availability, and even pre-book items. Apon continuously works to improve the shopping experience through technological innovations, such as its e-commerce platform, mobile app, and inventory management systems. The company also seeks customer feedback to refine product offerings and services. Loyalty program members get priority service in customer queues. However, the training level of customer-facing staff varies by outlet, sometimes affecting consistency, especially in newly launched branches outside Dhaka.

Infrastructure and Operation:

Operational efficiency is at the heart of Apon Bazar's retail model. Each of the 25 stores follows a standardized store layout designed for easy navigation, placing high-demand items at the back to encourage impulse purchases along the way. Operations involve daily stock audits, freshness inspections, shelf replenishment, and frequent promotional displays. Apon stores are staffed with category-specific supervisors who oversee operations in food, non-food, and apparel sections. While urban stores like those in Dhaka and Chattogram perform consistently, newer outlets in smaller cities sometimes struggle with staffing and maintaining standardized service quality during peak times.

Human Resource Management

High turnover at entry-level roles (cashiers, floor assistants) a massive challenge for Apon, reflecting broader trends across Bangladesh's retail sector. Apon's HR team focuses on attracting, training, and retaining a skilled retail workforce. Training includes customer service, sales techniques, cash management, and food safety standards. Store managers are evaluated quarterly based on KPIs like sales growth, shrinkage reduction, and customer satisfaction scores. Apon Bazar also runs incentive programs where top-performing staff receive bonuses or gift vouchers.

Financial Management

The Finance and Accounts Department of Apon Bazar Limited is responsible for managing, recording, and reporting all financial transactions of the company. It plays a crucial role in preparing and monitoring budgets to ensure financial discipline and support strategic decision-making. The department ensures timely filing of VAT, Income Tax, TDS, and other statutory returns, maintaining strict regulatory compliance. It manages accounts payable and receivable, oversees cash flow, and ensures that financial reporting is accurate and timely. Regular financial analysis is conducted to monitor business performance, identify cost-saving opportunities, and support operational and investment decisions. Insights from these analyses are presented to the Board of Directors to aid in strategic planning. Additionally, the department enforces cost control measures, strengthens internal financial controls, and works closely with other departments to align financial planning with business objectives.

Financial reporting & Auditing

Apon is a Public Interest Entity (PIE) as defined by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) of Bangladesh. According to FRC regulation, Apon prepares its financial statement in accordance with IFRS Accounting Standards. Its financial year has recently ended on 31 December 2024. Accounts department has prepared its draft financial statements (**EXHIBIT- 3**) which are to be shared with Auditor Mahfuz Abed & Co., Chartered Accountants (MAC). MAC has been providing audit and tax services for several years. Apon's board consider MAC as valued business partner as MAC identified several significant risk areas in Apon's operation and financial reporting and assisted to design and implement internal controls to address them. MAC is not currently enlisted with FRC.

Investing & financing strategy

Apon Bazar Limited focuses its investments on expanding retail outlets, upgrading store formats, enhancing supply chain infrastructure, and adopting advanced technologies like ERP systems and data analytics for inventory management. Financing is managed through a mix of internal earnings, bank loans, and supplier credits. For larger projects, Apon is exploring syndicated loans and considering a future Initial Public Offering (IPO) to access long-term funding and strengthen its market presence. The company maintains a cautious approach by monitoring its debt-equity ratio, ensuring financial stability, and subjecting major investments to strict board approval.

Health & Safety policy

Apon Bazar Limited is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its employees, customers, suppliers, and visitors. The company enforces health and safety protocols that align with national regulations and fundamental international practices. All employees receive mandatory health and safety training during their onboarding process, and personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided in applicable areas, such as warehouses and logistics operations. Fire drills are conducted periodically, and emergency exits, first-aid kits, and basic on-site medical support are available at each retail location.

Daily food safety inspections are carried out to ensure hygiene standards are maintained, particularly for perishable goods that require strict cold chain management. Warehouses are operated under organized storage and inventory handling practices, and drivers transporting goods undergo regular vehicle maintenance and basic road safety training. Apon performs 'Safety audit' on annual basis which randomly test safety of few outlets. Apon plans to investment in more advanced safety technologies remains limited, primarily due to budgetary constraints. Despite challenges, Apon Bazar Limited continues to foster a proactive safety culture, regularly updating its policies and reinforcing best practices to ensure a secure, hygienic, and customer-friendly environment at all its locations.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Apon Bazar Limited is committed to contributing to the community and maintaining sustainable practices. Its CSR initiatives include:

- ***Community Engagement:*** Apon runs programs that support education, healthcare, and skill development for underprivileged communities.
- ***Sustainability:*** The company prioritizes sustainable practices and works to minimize its environmental footprint and actively participates in promoting sustainability within the retail sector.
- ***Employee Welfare:*** Apon invests in employee welfare through training programs, competitive compensation, and a positive work environment that encourages professional growth and creativity.

Summary and Extracts of Draft Financial Statements of the Apon Bazar Limited

Statement of Financial Position
As of 30 June 2024

	Notes	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Assets			
Property, plant & equipment		1,158,473,921	1,012,628,450
Capital work in progress		84,267,582	65,114,735
Investments		145,000,000	140,000,000
Non-Current Assets		**1,387,741,503**	**1,217,743,185**
Inventories		1,356,482,221	1,186,392,857
Trade & other receivables		418,739,681	389,273,145
Advance, deposits & prepayments		212,849,537	198,627,193
Advance income tax	4	211,471,092	176,389,471
Cash & cash equivalents		201,065,966	162,804,370
Current Assets		**2,400,608,497**	**2,113,487,036**
Total Assets		**3,788,350,000**	**3,331,230,221**
Equity and Liabilities			
Share capital (FV @ BDT 10)		500,000,000	500,000,000
Retained earnings		931,332,750	948,705,000
Shareholders' Equity		**1,431,332,750**	**1,448,705,000**
Long term loan		812,748,271	650,932,481
Deferred tax liability		119,217,491	102,804,740
Security deposits from suppliers		12,506,474	11,825,779
Non-Current Liabilities		**944,472,236**	**765,563,000**
Long term loan (current portion)		168,426,893	128,275,419
Short term borrowings		987,175,397	764,729,030
Trade & other payables		123,792,349	110,842,618
Provisions & accruals		56,421,982	49,317,554
Provisions for income tax	5	76,728,393	63,797,600
Current Liabilities		**1,412,545,014**	**1,116,962,221**
Total Liabilities		**2,357,017,250**	**1,882,525,221**
Total Liabilities & Equity		**3,788,350,000**	**3,331,230,221**

Statement of Changes in Equity
As of 30 June 2024

Description	Share Capital	Retained Earnings	Total
Balance as of 31 December 2023	500,000,000	920,331,000	1,420,331,000
Profit for the Year	-	178,374,000	178,374,000
Dividend	-	(150,000,000)	(150,000,000)
Balance as of 31 December 2023	**500,000,000**	**948,705,000**	**1,448,705,000**
Profit for the Year	-	182,627,750	182,627,750
Dividend	-	(200,000,000)	(200,000,000)
Balance as of 31 December 2024	**500,000,000**	**931,332,750**	**1,431,332,750**

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the year ended on 31 December 2024

	Note	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Revenue	1	5,643,275,000	5,087,462,000
Cost of revenue	2	(4,330,947,250)	(3,863,718,000)
Gross profit		**1,312,327,750**	**1,223,744,000**
Operating expenses		(1,050,000,000)	(970,000,000)
Operating profit		**262,327,750**	**253,744,000**
Other income		15,500,000	12,000,000
Finance costs		(14,000,000)	(11,370,000)
Profit before tax		**263,827,750**	**254,374,000**
Income Tax Expense	3	(81,200,000)	(76,000,000)
Profit after tax		**182,627,750**	**178,374,000**
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income		**182,627,750**	**178,374,000**

Extracts of Notes to the financial statements

	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Note -1: Revenue		
Food and Grocery Sales	3,845,237,219	3,421,126,389
Apparel and Lifestyle Products	892,671,493	825,526,782
Home and Kitchen Items	522,814,653	492,784,829
Electronics and Accessories	382,551,635	348,024,000
	5,643,275,000	**5,087,462,000**
Note -2: Cost of Revenue		
Purchase of Food and Grocery	2,913,928,119	2,612,390,889
Purchase of Apparel and Lifestyle Products	648,924,219	590,982,738
Purchase of Home and Kitchen Items	380,715,319	325,206,043
Purchase of Electronics and Accessories	293,379,593	255,138,330
Freight Inward, Warehousing, and Handling	89,000,000	76,000,000
Membership Servicing Costs	5,000,000	4,000,000
	4,330,947,250	**3,863,718,000**
Note -3: Income tax expense		
Current tax expenses	64,787,249	60,876,000
Deferred tax expenses	16,412,751	15,124,000
	81,200,000	**76,000,000**
Note -4: Advance income tax		
Opening balance	176,389,471	162,657,408
Add: advance during the year	86,938,077	63,856,456
Less: Settlement with liabilities	(51,856,456)	(50,124,393)
	211,471,092	**176,389,471**
Note -5: Provisions for income tax		
Opening tax provision	63,797,600	53,045,993
Add: Current tax provision	64,787,249	60,876,000
Less: Settlement from advance	(51,856,456)	(50,124,393)
	76,728,393	**63,797,600**

Note -6: Accounting policies

Policy Area	Description
Basis of Preparation	The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in accordance with IFRS.
Revenue Recognition	Revenue is recognized when goods are delivered, risks and rewards are transferred, and collection is probable.
Cost of Revenue	Cost of revenue includes purchase cost, inbound logistics, and related warehousing expenses.
Property, Plant & Equipment	PPE is stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is charged using straight-line method.
Inventories	Inventories are valued at lower of cost and net realizable value.
Income Taxes	Income tax is calculated based on applicable tax laws in Bangladesh.
Employee Benefits	Employee benefits are accounted for as per IAS 19 including gratuity and leave encashment.
Cash and Cash Equivalents	Cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank and on hand, short-term highly liquid investments.

5 Year Financial Highlights

Figures in BDT

Highlighted Area	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Revenue	5,643,275,000	5,087,462,000	4,335,340,000	3,812,576,000	3,235,188,000
Gross Profit	1,312,327,750	1,223,744,000	958,075,000	890,257,000	742,098,000
Profit Before Tax	263,827,750	254,374,000	319,109,000	319,872,000	269,445,000
Profit After Tax	182,627,750	178,374,000	223,486,000	238,029,000	197,809,000
Shareholders' Equity	1,431,332,750	1,448,705,000	1,420,331,000	1,321,845,000	1,183,816,000
Total Assets	3,788,350,000	3,331,230,221	4,863,421,000	4,618,292,000	4,051,187,000
Total Current Assets	2,400,608,497	2,113,487,036	2,174,123,000	1,892,764,000	1,642,983,000
Total Current Liabilities	1,412,545,014	1,116,962,221	1,028,217,000	952,134,000	854,376,000
Total Non-Current Liabilities	944,472,236	765,563,000	2,414,873,000	2,344,313,000	2,012,995,000

EXHIBIT – 4

A brief note on Retail Super Shop industry in Bangladesh.

The retail industry in Bangladesh has witnessed profound changes since the late 20th century, evolving from small local shops to large-scale, organized retail super shops. This shift in consumer behavior is largely attributed to urbanization, changing lifestyles, and economic development. The growth of the retail super shop industry has not only transformed the way consumers shop but has also created new opportunities for investment, employment, and economic development.

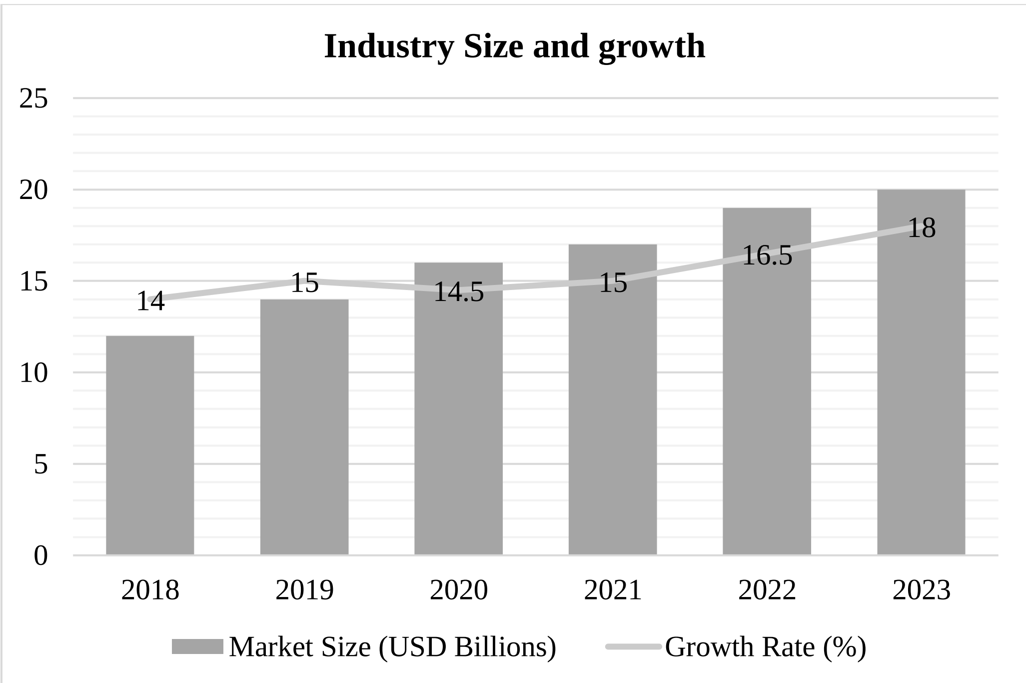
The retail landscape in Bangladesh was traditionally dominated by small, informal shops and local bazaars. However, the advent of modern retailing can be traced back to the early 2000s with the establishment of the first major supermarket, Agora, in 2001. Founded by the Rahimafroz Group, Agora set a precedent for modern retail formats in Bangladesh by offering a wide variety of products under one roof, targeting middle-class consumers seeking convenience and quality.

Following the success of Agora, other major super shops such as Shwapno (2008) and Meena Bazar (2002) were launched, each contributing to the changing dynamics of the retail market. These super shops introduced organized retailing and helped establish consumer trust in modern shopping experiences.

As the retail sector evolved, it attracted attention from international players. Carrefour entered Bangladesh in collaboration with a local company, signaling the potential for global retail chains to tap into the rapidly growing market. The retail super shop sector continued to grow, supported by a rising middle class and the increasing preference for one-stop shopping experiences.

The retail super shop industry in Bangladesh is currently dominated by a few key players who have established a strong foothold in the market. These key players are Shwapno, one of the leading retail super shop chains in Bangladesh, with over 100 outlets nationwide. Meena Bazar is another one that has grown into a major retail player by successfully targeted middle-class consumers in urban areas, expanding its presence throughout the country.

Agora was the first modern supermarket in Bangladesh and remains a market leader. Agora is recognized for its high-quality offerings and strong brand identity in the Bangladeshi retail space. Unimart has also expanded its footprint in the retail sector. Known for its customer-centric approach, it has gained a loyal customer base, particularly in urban markets.



The retail super shop industry in Bangladesh has witnessed robust growth in recent years, with the market size estimated at approximately USD 20 billion in 2023. The sector has experienced a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15-20% over the past five years, driven by rising incomes, increasing urbanization, and evolving consumer preferences. The market is expected to continue growing at a strong pace, with urban centers like Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet leading the way. The growth of the middle class, estimated to represent more than 30% of the population by 2030, is expected to further fuel demand for modern retail experiences. In addition, the growing penetration of smartphones and internet connectivity has paved the way for the rise of online shopping platforms, creating additional opportunities for retail super shops to expand their customer base.

In recent years, the government of Bangladesh has implemented several policies aimed at boosting the retail sector, including removing certain VAT impositions on retail businesses. These policy changes have provided some relief to retailers who have long struggled with high tax burdens. The relaxation of VAT and other taxes is expected to foster a more conducive environment for business growth, encouraging both domestic and foreign investment in the sector.

Moreover, the government is focusing on improving infrastructure, particularly in transportation and logistics. This will help streamline supply chains and reduce operational costs for retail super shops. As part of its broader vision for economic development, the government also plans to improve the retail ecosystem. However, frequent changes in tax policies, including VAT impositions, create uncertainty and increase operational complexity for super shop chains. Retailers are often burdened with navigating shifting regulatory landscapes, which impacts their ability to scale effectively.

The retail super shop industry in Bangladesh faces High Operating Costs. The cost of prime retail space in urban centers is rising, making it difficult for new entrants to compete with established players. Additionally, labor costs and logistics expenses further strain profitability for many retail chains. The supply chain infrastructure in Bangladesh is still developing, with challenges related to transportation, storage, and inventory management. These inefficiencies can lead to stock-outs and product inconsistencies, which can erode consumer trust.

Informal retail markets and small local shops still dominate large parts of the Bangladeshi retail space. These informal markets often provide products at lower prices, presenting significant competition to organized retail outlets.

Despite many challenges, there are significant opportunities for growth in the sector: First is digital Transformation. The rise of e-commerce and digital platforms presents a major opportunity for retail super shops to enhance customer engagement and expand their reach. Online ordering, home delivery services, and mobile apps can complement brick-and-mortar stores and cater to the growing demand for convenience.

Second, Bangladesh presents a compelling case for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the retail sector. The country's large, youthful population, growing middle class, and increasing disposable income make it an attractive destination for global retailers. FDI can bring in new technologies, modern retail practices, and high-quality products, enhancing competition and improving consumer experiences.

Finally, Rural Market Penetration. While urban areas remain the primary focus, there is significant untapped potential in rural and semi-urban regions. As the retail super shop concept continues to gain popularity, retailers could expand their reach into these markets and cater to underserved populations.

The retail super shop industry in Bangladesh is poised for continued growth, driven by urbanization, technological advancements, and evolving consumer preferences. While the sector faces challenges such as high operating costs, supply chain inefficiencies, and competition from informal markets, significant opportunities exist for digital transformation, FDI, and government support. The future of the retail industry looks promising, with the potential for substantial investment, innovation, and market expansion.

EXHIBIT – 5

E-mail on Reporting and Compliance issues

From	**:** Nazmul Hoque, Head of Financial Reporting
To	: Jamshedur Rahman FCA, Partner, JRC
CC	: Anisur Rahman FCA, Director of Finance & Accounts
Subject	: Accounting, reporting and compliance issues.
Date	: 27 April 2025

Dear Mr. Rahman

We have shared the draft financial statements (EXHIBIT-3) of Apon Bazar Limited that we have prepared for the year ended 30 June 2024. As mentioned in email to you from our Managing Director, I am sharing few matters that yet to be incorporated in the draft. We are requesting you to make appropriate adjustments in the financial statements in accordance with IFRSs before analyzing them for your report purpose.

Customer Loyalty Program:

During the year Apon introduced "Apon Card" as customer loyalty program for its frequent customers. The card holders receive various exclusive offers and priority services. The card allows customers earn 1 point per BDT 100 spent, redeemable at BDT 1 per point. During the year, 2,821,638 was already utilized by customers. At the end of reporting date, total 33,859,650 point was accumulated against all Apon cards issued. Based on our customer consumption pattern, we are expecting 80% of these points will be redeemed by our customers.

Forward contract with vendor:

Devaluation of Taka against US Dollar lead to increase cost of imported goods which forces Apon to sell at increased price. To save the customers from price increase, Apon entered in a forward contract with one of its vendors on 01 December 2024 when exchange rate was BDT 120 per USD. Contract entails Apon to receive 500 cartoon of imported snacks item worth USD 200,000 on 31 January 2025 at exchange rate agreed on contract date. On 31 December 2024 the exchange rate was BDT 122 per USD.

Penalty by Bangladesh Food Safety Authority:

In the last week of December, there was a surprise visit by Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) in one of our Chattogram outlets. Their inspection found out several expired packed food and bakery item in the shelf and not marked as expired. Accordingly, BFSA fined Apon with BDT 500,000. Apon's compliance team run an investigation and identified many other expired products in all the outlets which accumulates to BDT 1,700,000. Apon already kept 50% provisions on these as slow-moving items.

Lawsuit by ex-employee:

In October 2024, five ex-employees filed lawsuits against Apon in the Labor Court, claiming wrongful termination and underpayment of final settlements. The total amount claimed was BDT 7,500,000. Apon's legal advisors assessed that it is probable that Apon may have to pay approximately BDT 5,200,000.

Purchase of self-checkout kiosk:

To modernize the outlets, Apon decided to install self-checkout kiosk at each of its existing outlets. Accordingly, Apon ordered 25 kiosks from a vendor in Germany with term Free on Carriage (FCA). LC value for these machines was Euro 250,000 when exchange rate was BDT 120 per Euro. On 31 December 2024, the Kiosk has been shipped from Germany. Exchange rate on 31 December 2024 was BDT 135 per Euro.

Vandalism at under construction outlet:

In August 2024, during anti-discrimination student movement, one of our under-construction outlets has been vandalized by unknown offenders leading to destruction of asset worth BDT 12,000,000 which was replaced later. Cost of destroyed asset has been included in the capital works in progress on the ground that construction was not yet completed.

EXHIBIT – 6

E-Mail on Strategic investment options and financing alternatives

From	**:** Anisur Rahman FCA, Director of Finance & Accounts
To	: Jamshedur Rahman FCA, Partner, JRC
Subject	: Strategic investment options and financing alternatives.
Date	: 28 April 2025

Dear Mr. Rahman

Our board members have requested your input on the investing and financing decisions that are currently being discussed. At present our board is considering two investment options which are mutually exclusive. For analysis purpose, the board disregards any tax effect unless explicitly mentioned. It is also assumed that all cash flows, other than initial cash outflow, accrue at the year end. For apprising the investment options, board requires the discount rate be determined applying Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM). For investment, Apon considers coupon rate of 10-year government bond as risk free rate. As of 31 December 2024, relevant information was as below:

Coupon rate of 10-year government bond- 12%	Market Return : 14.5%	Current Market beta : 1.6

Option 1: Acquisition of InstaBuy Limited

InstaBuy Limited is an emerging e-commerce company which has been founded by two young entrepreneurs. The company owns InstaBuy.com which has gain popularity as e-commerce site for grocery shopping. It has its own delivery network across major cities of Bangladesh. Customers can order online and receive actual delivery within a couple of hours. It also has an app which can be installed in mobile devices. Customers can place order with the app and track the delivery with live location. To strengthen Apon's own online platform and e-commerce site, Apon plans to acquire the business, brand, website and the mobile app from InstaBuy. Board members already had a preliminary meeting with founders of InstaBuy who have also shown interest to explore the interest. The have shared following 5-year forecast (2025 to 2029) with Apon board members.

Instabuy is expected to earn revenue of 150,000,000 at the end of 2025 which will increase at 35% for following two years and 20% in 2028 and 2029. Insta expects to incur 60% cost of revenue consistently. However, it expects to incur operating expenses equal to 25% of revenue in 2025 which is estimated to grow at 25% in first two years and 20% in subsequent periods. InstaBuy also expects to incur capital expenditure of BDT 10,000,000 in 2025 which will increase 10% annually every year. It is estimated that free cash flow will increase 5% perpetually. Apon plans to offer BDT 300,000,000 to the board of InstaBuy.

Option 2: Acquisition of outlets of Daily Mart Limited:

Daily Mart Limited is another popular super shop and a direct competitor of Apon Bazar. Daily Mart is currently going though financial distress due to excess debt. To avoid company liquidation, Directors of Daily Mart has been considering selling of some of its outlets. They have approached Apon to acquire two of its outlets for BDT 200,000,000. These outlets are located where Apon has not yet established presence.

Daily Mart has provided a 5-year forecast which shows 1st year Revenue would be BDT 135,000,000 which would grow by 25% in the second year and 20% in the third year. From 4th year and onwards, revenue is expected to grow by 15%. Cost of revenue will remain consistent at 75% of revenue. For first two years, operating cost would be 22% of revenue in 1st two years and 15% from 3rd year and onwards. Cash flows after 5th year is likely to grow at 3% perpetually. Apon estimates that it will have to spend BDT 25,000,000 for renovation immediately after the acquisition.

Financing options:

To finance the most favorable investment options, Apon's board of directors are considering two possible financing sources.

Leveraged Buy Out:

Apon management believes that its gearing is still at lower side and there is sufficient scope to sustainably increase gearing position. Accordingly, Board is considering a Levered Buy Out (LBO) where Apon will finance 10% of the required fund from its own fund and rest 90% will be financed through 5-year term debt financing backed against the cash flows being generated against the asset being acquired. Apon's bank has agreed to sanction a loan with condition of 14% annual interest payment where the entire principal payment will be due at the end of loan term.

Issue of shares in IPO:

As an alternative financing options, Apon's board is considering raising fund by issuing maximum 15% shares in IPO. Board is expecting to raise fund with 500% premium subject to approval of Bangladesh Securities & Exchange Commission (BSEC). However, they are not sure whether expected premium is justifiable to get BSEC's approval. Board is also keen to know the maximum premium it can charge if 500% premium offer is not approved. BSEC have equal consideration for the NAV, EPS and sectoral PE ratio while approving the premium rate. Apon will determine the issue price by averaging the price determined using NAV, EPS and sectoral PE ratio. The market capitalization of all securities listed in DSE Ltd. as on March 2025 was BDT 6,738,662 million and market P/E Ratio for all listed securities is 9.27, whereas sectoral Market Capitalization was Tk. 1,18,453 million and sector's Price earnings (P/E) ratio was 18.1. Market price and EPSs of other comparable companies of the sector were as follows:

SL.	Company Name	Face Value (BDT)	NAV on March (BDT)	3-month average market price (BDT)	EPS on March 2024 (BDT)
1	Bangla Mart PLC	10	26	43.30	3.38
2	Supreme Trading PCL	10	102	90.20	19.37
3	Modern Agro Trade PLC	10	82	64.50	8.48
4	Cosmic Retail Product PLC	10	136	148.40	4.79
5	Best Consumer Products PLC	10	16	11.20	1.84

Apon's board is planning to utilize the entire IPO proceed, net of issue cost, for financing the selected investment option. It is estimated that issue cost will be 3% of the IPO proceeds. During initial 5 years, no new bank loan can be availed without the consent of new shareholders and the BSEC. If additional fund is required for expansion or selection of new project, fund must be raised through right share at face value during this period.

DSE Listing Rules require that the listed company shall follow BSEC code of corporate governance which includes submission of quarterly financial statements and induction of independent directors higher of two or 1/5th of the board. Further, board need to introduce different committees including an audit committee headed by an independent director. All directors including the independent director shall be entitled to receive BDT 10,000 for each board and committee meeting attended. Usually, board and audit committee meetings are mandatory before submission of quarterly and annual financial statements.

For your reference, following 'Present Value Interest Factor' table has been attached which you may use.

Year / Rate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10%	0.9091	0.8264	0.7513	0.6830	0.6209	0.5645	0.5132	0.4665	0.4241	0.3855
11%	0.9009	0.8116	0.7312	0.6587	0.5935	0.5346	0.4817	0.4339	0.3909	0.3522
12%	0.8929	0.7972	0.7118	0.6355	0.5674	0.5066	0.4523	0.4039	0.3606	0.3220
13%	0.8850	0.7831	0.6931	0.6133	0.5428	0.4803	0.4251	0.3762	0.3329	0.2946
14%	0.8772	0.7695	0.6750	0.5921	0.5194	0.4556	0.3996	0.3506	0.3075	0.2697
15%	0.8696	0.7561	0.6575	0.5718	0.4972	0.4323	0.3759	0.3269	0.2843	0.2472
16%	0.8621	0.7432	0.6407	0.5523	0.4761	0.4104	0.3538	0.3050	0.2630	0.2267
17%	0.8547	0.7305	0.6244	0.5337	0.4561	0.3898	0.3332	0.2848	0.2434	0.2080
18%	0.8475	0.7182	0.6086	0.5158	0.4371	0.3704	0.3139	0.2660	0.2255	0.1911
19%	0.8403	0.7062	0.5934	0.4987	0.4190	0.3521	0.2959	0.2487	0.2090	0.1756
20%	0.8333	0.6944	0.5787	0.4823	0.4019	0.3349	0.2791	0.2326	0.1938	0.1615

EXHIBIT – 7

Article on "Environmental, Health and Ethical issues of Retail Super Shop industry in Bangladesh"

The retail super shop industry in Bangladesh has witnessed rapid growth over the past two decades. From early beginnings in the late 1990s, the sector now caters to an expanding urban middle class, offering a wide range of products under one roof. However, alongside its contribution to modernizing the retail landscape, the industry faces critical scrutiny concerning environmental sustainability, health standards, and ethical business practices. This article examines these pressing issues, outlining the challenges and opportunities for the sector to evolve responsibly.

One of the most significant environmental concerns associated with the super shop industry is plastic waste. Super shops heavily rely on plastic packaging for fresh produce, meat, groceries, and promotional materials. Despite national efforts to ban polythene bags, supermarkets continue to contribute substantially to plastic pollution. According to the Department of Environment (DoE), urban areas in Bangladesh generate around 3,000 tons of plastic waste daily, with retail outlets, including super shops, being a key contributor. Discarded materials and perishable products often end up in landfills, releasing methane—a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Moreover, energy consumption is another critical issue. The refrigeration, lighting, and air conditioning systems used in super shops consume vast amounts of electricity, much of which is generated from fossil fuels. Inefficient energy management not only escalates operational costs but also amplifies the industry's carbon footprint. However, some leading retailers have begun initiatives such as introducing biodegradable bags, optimizing energy usage through smart technology, and partnering with NGOs for food waste management. However, sector-wide adoption of sustainable practices remains limited.

The super shop industry also faces health-related concerns that affect both consumers and workers. A major issue is food safety. While branded packaging may suggest hygiene, several investigations have revealed cases of expired products being sold, improper cold chain management, and inadequate sanitation standards in storage and handling areas. The risks are particularly acute for perishable goods like meat, fish, and dairy. Moreover, occupational health risks for employees are often overlooked. Long working hours, inadequate rest breaks, and minimal workplace ergonomics expose staff to physical strain and chronic health conditions. There is also a lack of adequate training regarding the safe handling of chemicals used for cleaning and preservation, which can pose serious health hazards. Although government bodies such as the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) are trying to enforce stricter regulations, monitoring and compliance remain inconsistent across the sector. Public awareness and third-party certifications could help push the industry toward higher health and safety standards.

Ethical concerns in Bangladesh's retail super shop industry are multi-faceted, ranging from labor rights to fair sourcing practices. Many workers in the super shop sector, particularly entry-level cashiers and floor staff, receive wages barely above the minimum threshold, without access to significant benefits like health insurance, paid leave, or career development opportunities. Labor unions are weak or absent in many companies, restricting workers' ability to negotiate better terms.

Another pressing issue is ethical sourcing. A significant portion of food and textile products sold in super shops are sourced from supply chains that lack transparency. Concerns over the exploitation of small-scale farmers, unfair pricing, and the absence of certifications such as Fair Trade highlight the need for responsible sourcing policies.

Consumer rights are also frequently compromised. Cases of misleading labeling, deceptive promotional offers, and hidden charges have damaged consumer trust. Moreover, there is little emphasis on promoting products that are organic, locally sourced, or sustainably produced products that would support both ethical consumerism and the local economy.

In recent years, the government has taken steps to regulate the retail sector through acts like the Consumers' Right Protection Act 2009, the Competition Act 2012, the Food Safety Act 2013, and initiatives for environmental sustainability. However, implementation is still in early stages for super shops. Encouragingly, some retailers have independently introduced Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs focusing on better labor practices, environmental stewardship, and ethical marketing, but these remain exceptions rather than the norm.

EXHIBIT – 8

News clips and articles about Apon and retail super shop industry in Bangladesh

Retailers in tight spot as shoppers tighten belts *(16 Nov 2024 on The Daily Star)*
Retailers in Bangladesh are experiencing reduced sales as consumers cut back on spending due to rising prices and economic uncertainties. The macroeconomic crisis, intensified by the Russia-Ukraine war, has led to a decade-high inflation rate. Households are prioritizing essential purchases, affecting retail businesses. The situation underscores the need for economic stabilization measures. Retailers are adapting strategies to navigate these challenging times.

Allegations aplenty in super shops: are consumer rights being aptly ensured?
(13 Dec 2022 on Press Xpress)
Concerns have arisen regarding consumer rights violations in Bangladesh's super shops. Issues include pricing discrepancies, product quality, and customer service. Stakeholders call for stricter regulatory oversight to protect consumers. Ensuring transparency and accountability is deemed essential. The discourse emphasizes the need for ethical business practices in the retail sector.

Super shops are now open for franchising *(10 Feb 2025 on The Business Standard)*
Meena Bazar has initiated a franchising model to expand its retail footprint. This approach allows entrepreneurs to operate under the Meena Bazar brand. The move aims to accelerate growth and reach underserved markets. Franchisees will benefit from established operational frameworks and brand recognition.

Growing trend of super shops: impact, development, and prospects in Bangladesh
(24 Jan 2024 on Daily Prothom Alo)
The super shop culture in Bangladesh is gaining momentum, offering consumers convenience and variety. Urbanization and lifestyle changes contribute to this trend. Super shops are reshaping the retail landscape by introducing organized retailing. Challenges include competition from traditional markets and regulatory hurdles. The sector holds promising prospects with strategic investments and policy support

The rise of super shops in Bangladesh: a transforming retail landscape
(Published: March 2025 on LinkedIn Newsletter)
The super shop industry in Bangladesh is projected to capture 25% of the retail market by 2030. Advancements in smart retailing solutions, such as AI-driven customer insights and self-checkout systems, are supporting this growth. Expansion into tier-2 and tier-3 cities is expected to further drive the industry's development. These changes are solidifying organized retail as a vital component of Bangladesh's evolving retail ecosystem. The sector's transformation reflects the country's broader economic progress and modernization efforts.

Economic challenges impact retail sector stability *(Published: March 2025 by LightCastle Partners)*
Bangladesh's retail sector faces significant challenges due to economic instability and governance issues. Moody's downgraded the country's credit rating in November 2024, citing political instability and economic uncertainty. These factors have affected investor confidence and the overall business environment. Super shops, as part of the retail sector, are not immune to these challenges. Improving the investment climate and streamlining trade policies are essential for stabilizing the economy and supporting retail growth.

UK retailers embrace automation amid rising Costs *(21 Jan 2025 on The Guardian)*
UK supermarket chains like Sainsbury's and Tesco are increasingly turning to automation to cope with rising labor costs. They are deploying smart technologies such as electronic shelf labels, automated checkout stations, and AI-powered cameras. These technologies enhance operational efficiency but reduce opportunities for entry-level retail jobs. Shoppers are also adapting to new systems like SmartShop and Scan as you Shop. Automation is seen as a long-term strategy to maintain profitability amidst financial pressures.

Controversy over underaged workers at Apon Bazar outlets *(05 Feb 2025 on Dhaka Business Chronicle)*
Retail giant Apon Bazar Limited faces criticism after reports revealed underaged employees were appointed in the packing area of its outlets. However, Apon management claims the initiative is part of its CSR efforts, providing income and education support through night schools. While many appreciate the intent, labor rights groups however show concern over child exploitation. Authorities are currently reviewing the matter.

---The End---