

DCCI REVIEW

US TARIFF: **IMPACT ON** **BANGLADESH'S EXPORT**





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Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)

Dhaka Chamber Building (4th floor)

65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area

Dhaka-1000, Phone : +88-02-47122986 (Hunting)

Fax : 88-02-47122475

E-mail : info@dhakachamber.com

Website : www.dhakachamber.com

For online version: dhakachamber.com/publication/review

DCCI Gulshan Centre

bti Landmark (Level-11), Plot-16, Block-CWS (A)

Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.

Tel: +88-02- 222264246

Mohammadpur Service Zone

75C Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.

Tel: +88-09-666-319655

US tariff: Impact on Bangladesh's export

The announcement of the US president Donald Trump of the imposition of reciprocal tariffs on what was labeled as 'liberation day' on April 2 on export to the United States came as a shock to all the countries, including Bangladesh. The reciprocal tariff would lead to increased costs for businesses and consumers. This would impact inflation, trade deficits and slow down economic growth. The rates of US tariff range from 0 per cent to 99 percent, with unweighted and import-weighted average of 20 percent and 41 percent. Donald Trump has, however, imposed a 37 percent reciprocal tariff on imports from Bangladesh, which could majorly affect apparel and it has caused alarm among exporters. Washington has said that the step is taken as what Bangladesh charges in the effective rate of tariff on US goods, which encompasses both taxes and regulatory compliance costs, is 74 per cent.

But, what remains a good piece of news for Bangladesh and the world that Donald Trump on April 9 announced a suspension of the retaliatory tariff for three months for more than 75 countries. The excluded include China. He has, rather, increased the tariff on Chinese goods to 125 percent. The imposition of Trump's tariff could make goods of Bangladesh, especially apparel, more expensive for US consumers that would lead to a decrease in demand for products from Bangladesh. This will, in turn, impact Bangladesh's export revenue. This would also cause buyers in the United States to shift to suppliers in countries that are not subject to the same tariff. And, Bangladesh would lose its market share in the United States, which is a major export destination for Bangladesh. Because of a likely decrease in demand for Bangladesh's apparel, which is still the mainstay of the country's economy, would not only decrease exports but also create joblessness primarily and mostly in the apparel sector.

The apparel sector is reported to have employed more than four million workers, mostly women. Although the number of workers in the sector is reported to have gone down, especially in the event of the Covid outbreak and some other issues that has gripped the apparel sector, the number of people employed in the sector is still significant. Such a situation could, therefore, strain the apparel sector and put the workers, if they would lose their job, into uncertainty.

Uncertainty that might surface around the reciprocal tariff and trade policies could also result in a decreased foreign direct investment in export-oriented industries in Bangladesh. Bangladesh had trade in goods worth \$10.6 billion with the United States. The worth of the total goods exported to the United States in 2024 was \$8.4 billion and imports from the United States was \$2.2 billion.

The additional reciprocal tariff would, therefore, expose Bangladesh's export, especially apparel, to threat. Bangladesh as a least developed country has not been allowed duty- and quota-free access for its apparel to the US market since 2013 and Bangladesh pays a 15 percent tariff for its apparel products to enter the US market. Yet, the imposition of reciprocal US tariff could goad Bangladesh into exploring new export destinations to reduce the reliance on the US market. This would also help Bangladesh to invest in high-value products and diversify the export basket to mitigate the impact of the US tariff. The tariff proposition would also help Bangladesh to adopt and implement policies to support the export sector and attract investment. Bangladesh could also step up diplomatic efforts to negotiate a resolution with the United States to mitigate the negative impact of the reciprocal tariffs.

As the imposition of the reciprocal tariffs of the United States would stand Bangladesh's economy before serious challenges, especially its export sector, the government should shore up the issues with the exploration of new markets, export product diversification, high value addition and diplomatic efforts. An approach involving the private and the public sector and commensurate strategies appears essential to deal with the tariff challenge. The private sector also thinks that Dhaka should start negotiations with Washington aiming that the import of US goods and services from third countries should be considered direct import from the United States.

Bangladesh needs to respond this initiative of USA diplomatically and strategically along with the move for policy reform to protect and sustain our export sectors. Moreover, Bangladesh needs to diversify its exportable products as well as try to explore new export market **■**

Quick diplomatic response urged on US tariff issue

DCCI holds seminar on “US Reciprocal Tariffs and the Way Forward for Bangladesh”



Dhaka Chamber President Taskeen Ahmed (third from left) seen speaking at the seminar on “U.S. Reciprocal Tariffs and Way Forward for Bangladesh” organized by DCCI in collaboration with Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) held on May 17. Secretary, Ministry of Commerce Mahbubur Rahman (second from left), President, International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh Mahbubur Rahman (second from right), Distinguished Fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya (left) and BUILD Chairperson Abul Kasem Khan are also seen in the picture.

The United States imposed 37 percent tariff on Bangladesh's export to the United States although the decision has temporarily been suspended for 90 days. This move, however, threatens the largest export market for Bangladesh, which needs to respond to the initiative diplomatically and strategically. It is now important to diversify trade partners and reduce over-dependence on a single market. “We must consider both immediate and long-term solutions such as expanding non-traditional markets, expediting free trade agreements, fostering deep and strategic economic diplomacy, improving competitiveness through technology and skills development and addressing long-standing issues in our trade facilitation system.”

Concentrated private and public sector-led approach and strategies are essential to deal with this tariff challenge, said Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of

Commerce and Industry at a seminar on “US Reciprocal Tariffs and the Way Forward for Bangladesh” that the Dhaka Chamber organized along with Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) on May 17.

Commerce secretary Mahbubur Rahman said that Bangladesh was positive about reducing trade deficit with the United States by increasing import from the United States. After the imposition of tariff, Bangladesh has interacted with the United States properly. “We are responding in a right way,” he added. He also said that a warehouse could be set up in Bangladesh to expedite cotton import from the United States. A long-term liquefied natural gas import agreement has been made with the United States, which will further bilateral trade by almost \$1 billion. The import of US goods and services from third countries could be presented in the first discussion session of negotiation so that the

United States would treat it as a direct import.

Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh suggested an effective, continued negotiation. As an active member of the World Trade Organization, the way the United States has imposed reciprocal tariffs is not desirable, he said. The private sector's interaction with the government is not up to the expected level. It should, however, be strong. He suggested a reduction in reliance on a single market by expanding exports to new regions, especially in Asia, Middle East and Africa. He said that diversifying product range into high-value and knowledge-based sectors would improve competitiveness and growth.

BUILD chairperson Abul Kasem Khan emphasized examining the feasibility of signing free trade agreements with the United States.

He said that adequate policy support was needed for the diversification of export products and urged working out a road map to export market expansion. It would be better for Bangladesh if the country could be a member of ASEAN. For better trade facilitation and the ease of doing business, the government should provide policy support for the private sector at a fast pace, he said. He requested the government to allow offshore investment of Bangladeshi companies which would facilitate better supply management for reduced cost.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the Center for Policy Dialogue, presented the keynote paper. He said that every crisis had made a new opportunity. This tariff war will also create an opportunity such as industry relocation that Bangladesh can tap. As for US tariff, he said that it would ultimately impact consumers as they would bear the extra cost. It is obvious that market nature will not accept this move easily, he said. And if the market does not accept it, he doubted how effective it would be in the end, adding that the issue is not only economic but also largely geopolitical.

In this regard, he said that the United States had given more importance to trade in goods instead of services while the tariffs were not realistic. He suggested bringing the services sector trade with the United States in negotiation. Debapriya Bhattacharya

said that although the LDC markets were not important to the United States, the US market was important for Bangladesh. Effective, well-organized and multi-dimensional steps should, therefore, be taken involving the private sector.

Md Mezbaul Haque, executive director of the Bangladesh Bank, said that the tariff shock would create a price war that would lead to the need for increasing efficiency and cost reduction. He said that the supply of money in the market was quite good, but the pressure on the banking system was increasing because of more reliance on banks to meet the financial needs of the industry. If the structural efficiency of the financial market is not ensured, financial management stability may not take place, he said.


Dr M Masrur Reaz, chair of the Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, suggested charting the political economy of the United States, first, and make good preparations. He said that Bangladesh's import demand for cotton, soybean and liquefied natural gas was continuously increasing. So, bilateral talks with the United States should continue with a focus on benefits for the both. He emphasized enhancing the logistics-sector capacity to increase competitiveness because logistics cost is higher than that in neighboring countries.

Shams Mahmud, a former president of the Dhaka Chamber and managing director of Shasha Denims Ltd,

said that because of tariff increase, "we will be fighting for orders as the demand for products may fall on the US market." He said that Bangladesh's import of US products from third countries should be considered direct import by the United States and "we have to raise this issue during negotiation."

He also said that the reforms taken by the government should not be mere routine work. The government is keen on changing business environment and "it is essential for us now." He urged the government to ensure adequate power and energy supply to industries for smooth production.

Engineer Razeeb Haider, director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills' Association, said that about 45 percent of the production of the textile sector went down because of gas supply. Gas pressure has gone down drastically. He said that US cotton was relatively expensive and the quality was very good, but the entrepreneurs here are discouraged from importing cotton as the import takes more than three months. He said that if American cotton exporters are provided with warehouse facilities in Bangladesh, cotton import by Bangladesh would increase fourfold.

Former DCCI presidents Aftab-ul Islam, Osama Taseer and Barrister Md Sameer Sattar, Senior Vice-President Razeev H Chowdhury and Vice-President Md. Salem Sulaiman and board members attended 

No business scope without stable law & order: DCCI chief

In recent times, businesspeople have lost confidence in expanding trade and investment because of insecure business environment, extortion, fraudulent online activities, transport risks, corruption, cyber threat, etc,

said Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a roundtable discussion on law and order at the Dhaka Chamber on May 21. He urged the government to ensure a conducive environment

for business in a smooth, transparent and secure manner. He said that there was a need for collective efforts of stakeholders to improve the business environment and urged all to come forward to cooperate with



DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed (center) seen speaking at the view exchange meeting titled “Necessity of Improving Law & Order for Facilitating Business” organized by Dhaka Chamber held on May 21. DCCI Senior Vice President Razeev H Chowdhury (left), Vice President Md. Salem Sulaiman (right) and members of the Board of Directors among others are also seen in the picture.

the law enforcement agencies. He said that while every citizen has the right to exercise democratic freedom, it is equally important to uphold the rights of the business owners to run their business without disruption. He urged all concerned to remain vigilant so that the day-to-day activities of the people were not disrupted.

For improvement in law and order, he recommended more community policing, fast-track response centers to tackle extortion and fraud, special mobile teams for night-time patrolling on the highway to secure goods transport and coordination among all the law enforcement agencies. He said that administrative and commercial decentralization was necessary to reduce the pressure on the capital Dhaka, which will further consolidate the development of the country’s marginal areas.

Former senior vice-president of the Dhaka Chamber Alhaj Abdus Salam said, “We are concerned about law and order because it is not even restored up to the expected level. Although businesspeople pay taxes and VAT, their businesses are hampered in an unstable law and order situation which is not acceptable.” He urged

the law enforcement agencies to respond sternly to crimes.

Former vice-president of the chamber M Abu Horairah recommended parking facilities in Dhaka’s south and the relocation of the office of the traffic wing of the south from Shantinagar to Gulistan. He suggested keeping battery-run rickshaws off the city area. He demanded a proper implementation of strategic transport plan of Dhaka city.

DCCI director Enamul Haque Patwary suggested regular coordination meetings among stakeholders and community awareness programs. He requested the law enforcers to free the footpath and roads of makeshift shops.

Golam Mowla, president of the Bangladesh Edible Oil Traders’ Association, said that law and order had not improved to the expected level after the political transition. He said that the cost of goods import through land ports was increasing because of hiring trucks through brokers. He said that because of the uncontrolled truck stand at Moulvibazar, traffic congestion is created on the Babubazar Bridge,

hampering business activities. He said that there was a need for stepped up police patrolling at Lalbagh, Kotwali and Chawkbazar in the evening for the safety of traders.

Haji Md Abul Hashem, president of the Bangladesh Sugar Traders’ Association, urged the government to reduce the tax on sugar import as the price had increased because of an increased tax. It has also increased the capital investment of traders. Although the government has 14 sugar mills, many of them are closed and they can meet only 2 percent of the demand.

Moreover, there are only three sugar mills in the private sector which also cannot produce much. He said that the government should run at least two sugar mills round the year under a pilot project to ensure a better supply. He said that the supply chain and balanced competition would help to reduce sugar prices.

President of the Moulvibazar Traders’ Association Haji Syed Mohammad Bashir Uddin suggested the import of sugar and oil by private-sector importers. He said that this would

increase competition on the market, stop hoarding and reduce prices.

Nesar Uddin Khan, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Pulses Traders' Association, said that the businesspeople were concerned about the juvenile gang, seeking a strict intervention of the police administration to prevent it.

Hazi Foyezuddin, vice-president of the Bangladesh Manihari Merchants' Association, said that trucks carrying goods could not go to Chawkbazar and other places as the entry roads to Old Town of Dhaka are closed because of processions. He said that although the place is a business

hub, the absence of any traffic management at Chawkbazar and Moulvibazar areas was creating congestion. He said that small entrepreneurs were sometimes not getting adequate loans.

President of the Mohammadpur Town Hall Kachabazar Traders' Association Lutfur Rahman Babu said that law and order at Mohammadpur was deteriorating and the law enforcement agencies were not taking effective steps. He called for continued action against encroachment on footpaths in front of the Town Hall market.

Inspector (investigation) of Motijheel Police Station Md Mahaimenul Islam

said that law and order situation after August 5 is not as similar as now. It has, rather, improved. But he agreed that it was not still conducive for business activities. He said that the agencies concerned were trying to ensure a friendly environment and police alone could not be successful without the help of people. He said that the police were stern against juvenile gangs.

Senior vice-president of the Dhaka Chamber Razeev H Chowdhury, vice-president Md Salem Sulaiman and the law and order standing committee convener Waliul Islam Dollar attended **r**

Reviewing relevant policies mandatory for post LDC challenges: DCCI chief

The export sector, heavily concentrated on apparel, as a major engine of economic growth, accounts for more than 84 percent of export earnings. Other sectors such as pharmaceuticals, leather, jute, agro-processed goods, automobile industry and information & communications technology are not

gaining traction the way the apparel sector does. In the export basket, the overall export base remains narrow and mostly dependent on few markets, said Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a seminar on "Export-import policies in Bangladesh: Requirements and

Challenges upon LDC Graduation" in the DCCI auditorium on May 24.

He said that Bangladesh's import composition reflected a strong industrial reliance on foreign inputs, including capital machinery, raw materials and intermediate goods. This structural dependence has made the economy vulnerable to



DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed (third from left) seen speaking at the seminar on "Export-Import Policies in Bangladesh: Requirements and Challenges upon LDC Graduation" held on May 24. Special Envoy to the Chief Adviser on International Affairs Lutfey Siddiqi (second from left), Special Assistant, Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury (third from right), Member of NBR (Customs: Audit, Modernization & International Trade) Kazi Mostafizur Rahman (right), Vice Chairman of EPB Md. Anwar Hossain (second from right), Executive Director of SANEM Dr. Selim Raihan (left) are also seen in the photo.

external shocks. Moreover, the recent inflation surge coupled with ongoing US reciprocal tariffs and export ban by India have exerted significant pressure on the balance of payment, foreign exchange reserve and import control mechanisms. Consequently, businesses are struggling to source essential materials which is undermining the competitiveness and production capacity, he said.

He suggested policy and financial support for the potential non-apparel sectors. He, however, stressed the need for a balanced and predictable tariff policy to facilitate import of raw materials and capital goods. To avoid a mismatch of export and import policy, a comprehensive trade policy is essential as this practice sustains in other neighboring economies, he said.

Dr Selim Raihan, professor of economics in the Dhaka University and executive director, SANEM, said that customs duties and tariff rates in Bangladesh were higher compared with those in neighboring countries. Moreover, Bangladesh has still high dependence on import taxes. Lack of reform in the taxation sector and the government's inability to raise taxes through direct taxation resulted in a high dependence on indirect taxes and import taxes. In terms of export policy, Bangladesh relies heavily on cash incentives and duty drawbacks to support narrowly focused apparel-dominated export base, with limited diversification, a low flow of foreign direct investment and trade facilitation challenges. On the other hand, Bangladesh maintains higher tariffs, non-tariffs and complex para-tariffs compared with its peers, with manual customs and import-substitute protectionist tendencies in some sectors. Keeping all this in mind, he suggested a unified trade policy framework, dynamic tariff adjustments, enhanced

policy coordination and stakeholder engagement.

A successful execution of the national tariff policy 2023 is also crucial for economic diversification, he added. More focus needs to be given on product and market diversification beyond apparel and EU and US markets. He stressed the need for gradual reduction in para-tariffs, modernized import policy, streamlined customs procedures, enhanced trade facilitation, automation and regional and global value chains. Professor Raihan also emphasized improving policy coherence across the trade, industrial and fiscal domains.

Lutfey Siddiqi, special envoy to the chief adviser on international affairs, said that structural and institutional reforms among the government agencies were necessary and the pace of doing the reforms needed to be fast. He said, "We do not have any road map in the industrial sector or even other sectors. But, there should be a road map to national tariff policy." He said that institutionalization and government readiness are master keys to development. He added that ports are the heart of the economy. So, it is important to ensure logistics and keep the management running. He said that as a part of civil society, the business community has its own power. He suggested that the community should present their logical demands to the government as the private sector is the main driving force of the economy.

Dr Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant, Economic Relations Division, said that Bangladesh had to graduate from the LDC status and "we have no option to come back now. We have to focus on producing high-value apparel, medicine and light engineering items to meet the post-LDC challenges." He said that

a national dialogue would soon be held with the participation of all stakeholders to chalk up the next course of action for the post-LDC era. He said, "We have human capital, financial capital and physical capital. Now we need to build trust." He emphasized the integration and coherence of policies to boost the economy.

Kazi Mostafizur Rahman, member (customs) of the National Board of Revenue said that after 1993, the board had implemented ASYCUDA and various other automated systems to ensure that services were transparent. He said that in the post-LDC era, there should be private sector participation. He said that an initiative had been taken to set up a central bonded warehouse and hoped that this facility could be provided for all by July. He urged all to avail themselves of the facility of the national single window. The National Board of Revenue has taken an initiative to introduce electronic data exchange system, which will allow traders to have smooth export and import services.

Md Anwar Hossain, vice-chair of the Export Promotion Bureau, said that effective policy support rather than cash incentives would be the key to meeting challenges of the post-LDC era. He said that there were a lot of non-traditional items that "we can look into for product diversification." He said that the government was working on three issues—trade policy reforms, compliance and standard and private sector preparedness. He urged the private sector to come forward to use artificial fiber in the apparel sector. He said that if the private sector were given proper infrastructure, energy security, credit facility, policy support and logistics services, it would be possible to earn \$100 billion from apparel export in two to three years.

Md Fazlul Haque, a former president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, said that the apparel sector would face no harm even after the LDC graduation. "But we have to be prepared to face a few challenges." He emphasized the production of high-value products manufactured from artificial fiber. He said that after the graduation, there would be no cash incentives. An alternative to cash incentive for the industries needs to be planned.

Md Moshikul Alam, joint chief of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, said that being a least developed country, Bangladesh gives cash incentives to 43 products. But after graduation, this facility would not be available. "We need to observe and do what others do. We need to sign reciprocal free trade agreements."

Syed Almas Kabir, a former president of BASIS, proposed five marketing offices in five countries to expand the export of products. He suggested signing more free and preferential trade agreements. He said that with product diversification, "we should go for product expansion. Now, we should focus on creating our own brand. We need to incentivize innovative research in the private sector."

Dr Md Zakir Hossain, managing director of Delta Pharma Ltd, said that pharmaceutical products were exported to 157 countries although the volume was low. But it is a good sign that "we can produce good-quality medicines." He suggested allowing foreign companies to establish joint research centers in Bangladesh so that Bangladesh can use the technology of the advanced nations.

Fakir Kamruzzaman Nahid, managing director of Fakir Fashion Ltd, said that the discontinuation of GSP facilities following the LDC graduation would lead to a 9.5 percent increase in prices of Bangladesh's apparel, which would significantly hinder the competitiveness on the global market. He emphasized the importance of automating port operation to reduce lead time for export.

Meanwhile, former DCCI directors AKD Khair Mohammad Khan and M Bashir Ullah Bhuiyan and joint convenor Salahuddin Yusuf, among others, participated in the discussion.

The Dhaka Chamber's senior vice-president Razeed H Chowdhury, vice-president Md Salem Sulaiman, board members and stakeholders from both public and private sectors attended **r**

No compliance, certification hinder leather goods export

Leather sector, the second-highest export earner after apparel, is potential for value addition, employment generation and sustainable industrial

growth, especially in the post-LDC era when preferential trade benefits may gradually phase out. Bangladesh, however, lags behind

on the global market, accounting for less than 1 percent of the global leather industry, said Taskeen Ahmed, the president of the Dhaka



Adviser for Ministry of Industries Adilur Rahman Khan (third from left), DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed (third from right), Chairman of BSCIC Md. Saiful Islam (second from right), Administrator of FBCCI Md. Hafizur Rahman (right), Additional Secretary, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce Dr. Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury (second from left), Director General (Strategic Investment) of BIDA Md. Ariful Hoque (left) were present at the focus group discussion titled "Sustainable Export Growth in Post LDC Era: Strategies for Leather Sector" held on May 25.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a seminar on “Sustainable Export Growth in Post LDC Era: Strategies for the Leather Sector” at the Dhaka Chamber on May 25.

To ensure sustainable export growth in post-LDC era, he recommended the green transformation of tanneries, skills development, improved value chain, strong backward linkage, new export destinations and public-private collaboration to make this sector a pillar of sustainable export.

Speaking as chief guest, Adilur Rahman Khan, the adviser on industries said that international certification was crucial for the competitiveness of the leather sector as buyers offer lower prices to exporters that lack environmental certification. “We now have only three Leather Working Group certified tanneries.” Recognizing the realities, the industries ministry is working to create a supportive environment that can enable long-term transformation, he said.

He said that leather industry must move beyond competing on prices to capture a larger share of the \$420 billion global leather goods market. Regarding the capacity building of the central effluent treatment plant at Savar Leather Industrial Estate, he requested owners to establish effluent treatment plant on their own as the government now allows it. He said that the government would play a catalytic role by creating a broad ecosystem along with the industry players, private investors and development partners. He urged tannery owners to be more careful about the climate, environment and rivers.

Md Hafizur Rahman, administrator of the FBCCI, said that image crisis was an issue in attracting foreign direct investment in the leather sector. Inbound foreign investment is low

because of the lack of Leather Working Group certification. He opted for the central effluent treatment plant as it is easy to bear the cost of the central effluent treatment plant collectively. If industry players can maintain the ESG compliance, it will be easier to get the Leather Working Group certification and it will help to attract foreign direct investment because “we have a lot of low-cost raw materials.” He said that the leather sector and other promising export-oriented sectors should get the same treatment as the apparel does.

Md Saiful Islam, chair of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, said that the issue of the central effluent treatment plant was the most important in the leather sector. He said that the capacity of the central effluent treatment plant installed at Savar can handle 14,000 cubic meters and the demand during the peak season is 32,000–35,000 cubic meters. A technical team is working to increase the capacity of the central effluent treatment plant so that the capacity can be increased to 20,000–25,000 cubic meters.

He said that initially six institutions have been given permission to establish effluent treatment plants on their own while 8–10 more tanneries are in the process of getting approval. He urged entrepreneurs to adhere to compliance to prevent environmental pollution.

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Ltd, presenting the keynote paper, said that it had been many years since the tanneries were shifted from Hazaribagh to Savar, but the central effluent treatment plant has not been fully operationalized, which is hampering the export growth. He said that Bangladesh was not becoming competitive on the global market as “we do not have any international certification such as the Leather

Working Group and the products are not getting good prices.”

The leather industry’s annual exports hovers around \$1.2–1.6 billion, but with incentives and policy support as the apparel sector has, it would be possible to export products worth \$5 billion annually by 2030 and increase it to \$10 billion by 2035. He urged the government to help small entrepreneurs in the leather sector so that they can have low-cost financial assistance from the Climate Finance Fund.

Dr Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury, additional secretary to the commerce ministry, said that after LDC graduation, a few challenges would befall all the sectors but “we should not be panicked. We should be ready so that we can grab the opportunity of being a middle income country.” She urged the private sector to ensure compliance in the environment and labor sectors.

She urged the private sector to come forward with the government to increase the capacity of the central effluent treatment plant as the government alone cannot fulfill the requirement. She said that it is the government’s duty to facilitate the private sector with policy support. She said, “We need to move into a public-private partnership model to increase the capacity to gain the ultimate goal of shared interest.”

Md Ariful Hoque, director general (joint secretary), Strategic Investment, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, said that the economy had the potential to double in 15 years and in this regard, a public-private joint coordination is a must. To support domestic investors, foreign investors are also needed, he said. He said that the authorities had come out of the traditional way of finding foreign investors and now the agency goes door to door to attract investment in Bangladesh.

Md Nurul Islam, chief executive officer of the Bangladesh Tanners' Association, said that environmental compliance and the central effluent treatment plant are a hindrance and because of these bottlenecks, "we are lagging behind." He suggested rain-water harvesting and the use of surface water as the tanneries need a huge quantity of water daily.

Ibnul Wara, managing director, Austan Ltd, said that for lack of supply chain management system, especially the absence of backward linkage, the leather sector has to depend mostly on import. Depending on time-consuming import procedures, it is difficult to comply with the buyers'

lead time. He said that with a heavy dependence on import, it was not possible to survive on the global market for a long time.

Md Nasir Khan, managing director, Jennys Shoes Ltd, said that for lack of proper supply chain and the complex customs procedures, export is not increasing. He urged the government to allow value addition for leather goods to achieve the target of \$5 billion dollar export.

Ziaur Rahman, managing director of the Bay Group, urged big companies to come forward to set up effluent treatment plants while he emphasized the use of the central

effluent treatment plants for small and micro entrepreneurs. He said that it would be difficult to attract foreign investment if the customs and tax management were not improved.

In the open discussion, M Abu Hurairah, former vice-president of the Dhaka Chamber, said that although prices of raw materials are low, prices of end or finished product are too high on the local market. He said that producing football still remained untapped by entrepreneurs.

The Dhaka Chamber's Senior Vice-President Razeev H Chowdhury and vice-president Md Salem Sulaiman attended **r**

DEEP CONDOLENCE

President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) Taskeen Ahmed, members of the Board of Directors and all staff of DCCI expressed their deepest condolences at the death of Mr. Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, Khandaker Abdus Salam and Mashuk Hossain, former Directors of DCCI and also extended profound compassion and sympathy to the bereaved family members of the departed. Taskeen Ahmed said that the contribution of them to DCCI and to the business community will be remembered forever. DCCI President and members of the Board also prayed to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed souls.



Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, former Director, DCCI died on 10 May, 2025. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeeun). He was 87. He was born in 8 December, 1937. He served the Chamber during 1985-1987 term as Director. He established his own company named Trade Point Limited.



Khandaker Abdus Salam, former Director, DCCI died on 21 May, 2025. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeeun). He was 70. He served the Chamber twice as Director during the term 1991-1993 and 2004-2006. He was the Chairman of Shawnirvar Group, Metalimpex Limited and Shawnirvar Trading Corporation engaged in different area of businesses like trading of ferrous and non-ferrous metals, steel products, industrial chemicals, edible oil, food grains, civil construction and real estate.



Mashuk Hossain, former Director, DCCI died on 09 May, 2025. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeeun). He was 74. Mashuk Hossain served the Chamber as Director during the term 1996-1998. He was the Chairman of Cock brand Mosquito Coils Ltd. and Proprietor of Beauty Glass Art. Mashuk Hossain was the son of Late Hafez Monir Hossain, one of the founders of DCCI.

Seminar on “U.S. Reciprocal Tariffs and Way Forward for Bangladesh”

Amid escalating global trade tensions, the United States’ recent imposition of a sweeping reciprocal tariff policy, including a 37% duty on Bangladeshi exports, has emerged as a significant threat to Bangladesh’s export-oriented economy. This policy shift directly endangers the competitiveness of the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, which contributes over 80% of the country’s export earnings. It also places additional strain on other emerging sectors such as leather, pharmaceuticals, and footwear. With the U.S. accounting for nearly 18% of Bangladesh’s total exports, these new tariffs raise serious concerns over potential job losses, reduced foreign exchange earnings, and broader macroeconomic instability.

In light of these challenges, the urgency of responding through strategic trade diplomacy, market diversification, and long-term resilience planning has become more critical than ever. Recognizing this need, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), in collaboration with Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), organized a seminar titled “U.S. Reciprocal Tariffs and Way Forward for Bangladesh” on Saturday, 17th May 2025 at the DCCI Auditorium.

The event was graced by Mahbubur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, as the Chief Guest. Dr. Moinul Khan, Chairman (Secretary), Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC), and Mahbubur Rahman, President, International Chamber of Commerce – Bangladesh, attended as Special Guests. The keynote presentation was delivered by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), who provided an in-depth analysis of the geopolitical and economic ramifications of the U.S. tariff policy.

Also present was Mr. Abul Kasem Khan, Chairperson, BUILD, who shared strategic insights on private sector preparedness and public-private collaboration. A distinguished panel of discussants enriched the seminar with their diverse perspectives, including Dr. M. Masrur Reaz, Chairman and CEO, Policy Exchange Bangladesh; Shams Mahmud, Former President, DCCI & Managing Director, Shasha Denims Ltd.; Razeeb Haider, Director, Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA); and Md. Mezbaul Haque, Executive Director, Bangladesh Bank.

The seminar was moderated by Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI. Discussions focused on evaluating the impact of the U.S. reciprocal tariffs on Bangladesh’s export sectors and on devising robust strategies to enhance trade resilience, diversify export markets, and foster long-term competitiveness in an increasingly volatile global trade landscape.

Introductory Remarks by Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI

- The introduction of the U.S. reciprocal tariff policy in early 2025 has become a new source of concern for Bangladesh’s export-oriented economy.

- Under this policy, the U.S. imposed tariffs of up to 37% on selected Bangladeshi ready-made garment (RMG) exports, directly threatening the country’s competitiveness in its largest single export market.
- Although the U.S. has temporarily suspended these tariffs for 90 days, the potential economic damage remains significant and requires an urgent strategic response.
- Despite improvements in labor rights and sustainability practices, the new tariff regime risks reversing the progress made in restoring preferential access to the U.S. market.
- Domestically, the economic situation is under strain, with private sector credit growth falling to 6.82% as of February 2025, the lowest in more than two decades.
- The financial sector is experiencing a liquidity crunch, rising interest rates, and weak investment sentiment from businesses.
- Long-term strategies are essential, including diversifying into non-traditional export markets, accelerating the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), and improving competitiveness through skills development and technological adoption.

Welcome Remarks by Abul Kasem Khan, Chairperson, Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

- Implement labor and environmental standard reforms to meet global benchmarks and support GSP reinstatement.
- Diversify exports beyond RMG by developing sectors such as pharmaceuticals, ICT, agro-processing, and jute-based products, and strengthen efforts to attract U.S. investment.
- Invest in trade facilitation and logistics improvements, including customs automation and digitalization, to reduce non-tariff barriers and improve competitiveness.
- Develop a national strategic roadmap for post-LDC graduation that focuses on securing bilateral and regional trade agreements to offset lost preferences.
- Align with regional alliances and global sourcing shifts like the China+1 policy to position Bangladesh as a reliable and competitive trade partner.
- Higher U.S. tariffs were cautioned to have the potential to reduce demand for Bangladeshi products, intensifying competition among exporters for a shrinking pool of international orders.
- As more countries shift their export focus to the U.S. market in response to new tariff regimes, a global price war is likely to emerge, which may adversely affect Bangladesh’s exporters by compressing margins and weakening competitive advantage.
- It was noted that U.S. origin goods imported through third countries should be accounted for as direct imports during trade negotiations to ensure accurate assessments of bilateral trade balances.

Keynote Presentation

- The U.S. administration believes its trade deficit results from cheaper imports and limited access to other markets, which have negatively affected domestic jobs and investment.
- The reciprocal tariff approach is based on the notion that allies have taken unfair advantage of U.S. market access, which has triggered widespread tariff hikes.
- The formula used to determine reciprocal tariffs assumes fixed elasticity and is criticized for its time-bound nature and inability to account for services or transshipment.
- Tariffs imposed in the past are now ineffective, as most developing countries produce cheaper goods efficiently, and higher tariffs are passed on to consumers, not foreign exporters.
- Tariffs on foreign goods are charged to domestic importers, raising consumer prices and hurting domestic production reliant on global inputs.
- Chronologically, the U.S. began raising tariffs from February 2025, targeting China, Canada, and Mexico, with some rates reaching as high as 145%.
- China, Canada, and others retaliated with significant tariffs on U.S. exports, while ASEAN, AfCFTA, and RCEP initiated collective trade responses.
- U.S. trade tariffs now affect all LDCs with a base 10% rate, but countries like Bangladesh face up to 37% on apparel, with other nations facing even higher rates.
- The U.S. is Bangladesh's largest export destination, accounting for 15.3% of its exports, with a trade surplus of USD 6.56 billion in Bangladesh's favor.
- U.S. tariffs disproportionately impact Bangladesh's apparel sector, raising concerns about job losses, reduced demand, and possible investor shifts to lower-duty countries like India and Mexico.
- While competitor countries face even higher tariffs, this could give Bangladesh a competitive advantage if leveraged through strategic investments and export diversification.
- Bangladesh's exposure to U.S. tariffs is cushioned by its diversified imports from the U.S., including iron, steel, soybeans, and cotton.
- The global market has responded negatively to the trade war; the WTO and IMF downgraded global GDP and trade growth forecasts for 2025.
- Inflation pressures are expected to increase due to trade disruptions, and unemployment is likely to rise globally, especially in countries like China and LDCs.
- The U.S. dollar showed mixed performance in global currency markets, initially weakening and then rebounding following policy announcements.
- The trade war has exposed vulnerabilities in LDCs and SIDS, threatening development gains due to higher unemployment and reduced aid.
- Bangladesh is not among the top 15 countries with the highest U.S. trade deficits and thus may still have space to negotiate better outcome.
- Bangladesh should not be overly concerned about the newly proposed U.S. reciprocal tariff policy and instead should view it as an opportunity for strategic engagement.
- In global trade, there are no permanent adversaries; commerce follows where profit lies, so policy and diplomacy must remain pragmatic.
- The U.S. tariff measures are primarily aimed at addressing trade issues with specific countries and regions, such as China and the European Union, and are not intended to target Least Developed Countries (LDCs) or Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is not included in the group of countries with the highest positive trade balances against the United States, often referred to as the "Dirty 15."
- Beyond ready-made garments (RMG), leather goods and pharmaceutical products represent strong sectors with potential for increased exports.
- Basing tariffs solely on goods trade deficits overlooks the growing significance of the global services sector and presents a narrow view of international trade dynamics.
- The current tariff actions taken by the U.S. administration appear to be more politically motivated than grounded in sound economic logic.
- As the U.S. focused more on China and Vietnam, Bangladesh has an opportunity with regard to its apparel manufacturing.
- Using goods trade deficits as the index for setting tariffs creates volatility; recalculating tariffs annually based on fluctuating trade balances undermines predictability and discourages long-term investment.
- The current disruptions in global trade present an opportunity for Bangladesh to advance long-discussed trade and economic reforms.

Speech by Chief Guest: Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, GoB

- A long-term LNG import agreement with the United States is expected to boost bilateral trade by nearly USD 1 billion, strengthening economic ties between the two countries.
- It was emphasised that U.S. origin goods imported via third countries like Singapore, the UAE, and India should be recognized as direct imports in trade negotiations to accurately reflect bilateral trade volumes.
- Bangladesh is currently engaging in bilateral discussions with the U.S., rather than multilateral negotiations through platforms like the WTO, and believes it is on the right track despite not yet submitting a formal agenda to the organization.

- Ongoing negotiations with the U.S. involve a list of 100 products, with Bangladesh planning to raise specific issues such as third-country import routing and the impact on local trade balance.
- If positive responses are not forthcoming from the U.S., Bangladesh may consider amending its import policy to restrict or ban third-country imports of U.S. origin goods, following existing precedents such as restrictions on vehicle imports.
- The government is actively working to remove various non-tariff trade barriers, including the current radioactivity testing requirement, to facilitate smoother trade flows.
- Bangladesh remains committed to reducing its trade deficit with the U.S. by increasing imports of American goods and services, thereby promoting a more balanced and sustainable trade relationship.

Summary of Recommendations

- Bangladesh should consider removing supplementary and regulatory duties (para-tariffs) to show goodwill to the U.S. and lower effective import tariffs.
- If Bangladesh reduces tariffs on key U.S. imports, it must apply similar treatment to other trading partners to maintain trade neutrality.
- Beyond bilateral talks with the U.S., Bangladesh should align with nations like Vietnam and Sri Lanka to raise tariff issues collectively at the WTO.
- A strategic approach is necessary to attract investment from firms relocating due to U.S.-China tensions, positioning Bangladesh as a competitive alternative.
- Strengthening involvement in regional trade blocs such as BIMSTEC and intensifying cooperation with ASEAN economies can provide new opportunities for trade diversification and regional integration.
- Proactive policy efforts should be taken to attract investments from global firms that may be relocating production due to the trade tensions between the U.S. and China.
- Bangladesh needs to focus on economic transformation by enhancing export diversification, increasing productivity, and improving institutional capacity rather than relying only on short-term trade remedies.
- Establishing a step-by-step national strategy to reduce the trade imbalance with the United States would be a prudent move toward long-term economic stability.
- Efforts should be made to reform labor practices and strengthen intellectual property protections, both to meet international standards and to improve negotiating leverage with key trade partners.
- Engaging in consistent and visible reforms, even without immediate reductions in the trade deficit, would help reassure international partners and investors about Bangladesh's commitment to responsible trade practices.
- Market opportunities beyond ready-made garments should be pursued, especially in sectors like pharmaceuticals and leather, as part of a long-term export strategy.
- Need well-coordinated public-private partnership is essential to tackle tariff challenges without delay.
- Need urgent reforms in areas such as trade facilitation, exploration of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), enhancement of digital competitiveness, and development of workforce skills.
- Accelerate reforms in labor rights and environmental standards to align with U.S. expectations and potentially requalify for the reinstatement of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits.
- Promote export diversification by expanding into high-potential sectors such as pharmaceuticals, ICT, agro-processing, and jute-based products, and encourage deeper U.S. investment engagement.
- Invest in trade facilitation, digitalization, customs automation, and logistics reform to eliminate non-tariff barriers and reduce transaction costs for exporters.
- Develop a comprehensive national strategy for post-LDC graduation, ensuring the continuity of market access through bilateral and regional trade agreements that substitute for lost preferences.
- Establishing a dedicated U.S. warehouse in Bangladesh was proposed as a practical step to streamline delivery times and reduce import delays for essential goods such as cotton.
- Bangladesh may need to consider participating in plurilateral trade arrangements and strengthening engagement with regional blocs like BIMSTEC and ASEAN for diversification.
- Policy focus should move beyond reactive trade remedies and address structural changes through diversification, productivity enhancement, and institutional strengthening.

“ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য সহজীকরণে উন্নত আইন শৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতি বজায় রাখার অত্যাৱশ্যকীয়তা” শীর্ষক মতবিনিময় সভা

দেশে ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য ও বিনিয়োগ সম্প্রসারণে উন্নত ও নিরাপদ আইনশৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতির গুরুত্ব বিবেচনায় নিয়ে ঢাকা চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (ডিসিসিআই) আয়োজিত “ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য সহজীকরণে উন্নত আইন শৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতি বজায় রাখার অত্যাৱশ্যকীয়তা” শীর্ষক মতবিনিময় সভার গত ২১ মে, ২০২৫ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। ডিসিসিআই’র সভাপতি তাসকীন আহমেদ-এর সভাপতিত্বে অনুষ্ঠিত এ সভায় ডিসিসিআই’র প্রাক্তন উর্ধ্বতন সহ-সভাপতি আলহাজ্ব আব্দুস সালাম, প্রাক্তন সহ-সভাপতি এম আবু হোরায়রাহ, বাংলাদেশ ভোজ্যতেল ব্যবসায়ী সমিতির সভাপতি গোলাম মণ্ডলা, বাংলাদেশ চিনি ব্যবসায়ী সমিতির সভাপতি হাজী মোঃ আবুল হাসেম, মৌলভীবাজার ব্যবসায়ী সমিতির সভাপতি হাজী সৈয়দ মোহাম্মদ বশির উদ্দিন, বাংলাদেশ ডাল ব্যবসায়ী সমিতির সিনিয়র সহ-সভাপতি নেসার উদ্দিন খান, বাংলাদেশ মনিহারী বণিক সমিতির সহ-সভাপতি হাজী ফয়েজউদ্দিন, মোহাম্মদপুর টাউনহল কাঁচাবাজার ব্যবসায়ী সমিতির সভাপতি লুৎফুর রহমান (বাবু), ধামরাই ইটভাটা মালিক সমিতির সভাপতি মোহাম্মদ নজরুল ইসলাম, ডিসিসিআই’র পরিচালক এনামুল হক পাটোয়ারী, ঢাকা চেম্বারের প্রাক্তন পরিচালক দ্বীন মোহাম্মদ, মতিঝিল থানার ইন্সপেক্টর (তদন্ত), মোঃ মহায়মেনুল ইসলাম প্রমুখ বক্তব্য রাখেন। ডিসিসিআই’র উর্ধ্বতন সহ-সভাপতি রাজিব এইচ চৌধুরী, সহ-সভাপতি মোঃ সালাম সোলায়মান এবং পরিচালনা পর্ষদের সদস্যবৃন্দ সহ বেসরকারিখাতের প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দ এ সময় উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

স্বাগত বক্তব্য: তাসকীন আহমেদ, সভাপতি, ডিসিসিআই

- বর্তমানে ব্যবসায়িক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনায় উদ্যোক্তাদের সামনে নানাবিধ চ্যালেঞ্জ রয়েছে, তন্মধ্যে অনিরাপদ পরিবেশ, চাঁদাবাজি, প্রতারণামূলক অনলাইন কার্যক্রম, পণ্য পরিবহন ঝুঁকি, জালিয়াতি ও সাইবার হুমকি প্রভৃতি উল্লেখযোগ্য, যা শুধু বিনিয়োগকে নিরুৎসাহিতই করছে না, বরং স্থায়ীভাবে অনেক উদ্যোক্তার আস্থা হারিয়ে ফেলেছে। এ অবস্থায় ব্যবসায়ীরা একটি সুস্পষ্ট ও যৌক্তিক প্রত্যাশা করেন, যেন তাঁরা নির্বিঘ্নে, স্বচ্ছভাবে ও নিরাপত্তার সঙ্গে ব্যবসা পরিচালনা করতে পারেন।
- ব্যবসায়ীরা শিল্প-কারখানা বা দোকানে দিনশেষে নিরাপত্তা নিয়ে চিন্তিত থাকেন, সেই সাথে পণ্য বহনাকরী ট্রাক ছিনতাইয়ের শঙ্কা থাকে।
- ই-কমার্স উদ্যোক্তারা প্রতারণার বিষয়ে দ্রুত কোনো প্রতিকার না পান, তাহলে কখনোই বড় পরিসরে বা দীর্ঘমেয়াদে বিনিয়োগে উৎসাহী হবেন না।
- ব্যবসায়িক কর্মকাণ্ডের টেকসই অগ্রগতির জন্য আইন-শৃঙ্খলা রক্ষাকারী বাহিনী ও নগর প্রশাসনের সঙ্গে ব্যবসায়ী সমাজের পারস্পরিক আস্থা ও সহযোগিতামূলক সম্পর্ক গড়ে তোলা অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজন। একটি নিরাপদ ও সহায়ক পরিবেশ ছাড়া বিনিয়োগে আস্থা সঞ্চার হয় না।
- আমরা একটি ‘বিনিয়োগ বান্ধব বাংলাদেশ’ দেখতে চাই, যেখানে দেশি ও বিদেশি বিনিয়োগকারীরা বিনা দ্বিধায় সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে পারেন, ভবিষ্যতের জন্য দীর্ঘমেয়াদি পরিকল্পনা করতে পারেন এবং নির্ভরভাবে তাঁদের ব্যবসা সম্প্রসারণে আত্মবিশ্বাসী হতে পারেন।
- আইন-শৃঙ্খলা পরিবেশ স্থিতিশীল না থাকলে দেশের ক্রেডিট স্কোরও ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়।
- ব্যবসা সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকাগুলোর নিরাপত্তা জোরদারে কমিউনিটি পুলিশিং-এর কার্যকর উপস্থিতি প্রয়োজন।
- ই-কমার্স ও সাইবার অপরাধ দমন ও প্রতিরোধে বিশেষায়িত ইউনিটের সক্ষমতা ও সময় বৃদ্ধি, চাঁদাবাজি ও প্রতারণার মতো অপরাধের দ্রুত নিষ্পত্তির জন্য একটি কার্যকর ফাস্ট-ট্র্যাক অভিযোগ নিষ্পত্তি ব্যবস্থা গঠন।

- রাজনীকালীন সময়ে পণ্য পরিবহনকে নিরাপদ করতে করিডোর ভিত্তিক মোবাইল টিম সক্রিয়করণ এবং বিশেষ করে এসএমই খাত ও নারী উদ্যোক্তাদের জন্য নিরাপত্তা ও সহায়তার পৃথক ও শক্তিশালী ব্যবস্থা নিশ্চিতকরণ, যাতে করে সকল ব্যবসায়ীরা নিরাপদ পরিবেশে ব্যবসা পরিচালনা করতে সক্ষম হয়।
- বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ আকর্ষণের পাশাপাশি দেশীয় উদ্যোক্তাদের টিকে থাকার জন্য গ্যাস-বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ নিশ্চিত, আইনশৃঙ্খলা বজায় রাখা এবং সুদের হার সহনীয় পর্যায়ে রাখা জরুরি। এসব সমস্যার সমাধান ছাড়া টেকসই বিনিয়োগ পরিবেশ গড়ে তোলা সম্ভব নয়।

মুক্ত আলোচনা

- রাজনৈতিক পরিবর্তনের পর যে ইতিবাচক অগ্রগতির প্রত্যাশা ছিল, বাস্তবে তা বাস্তবায়িত হয়নি; বরং পরিস্থিতি ক্রমেই অবনতির দিকে যাচ্ছে।
- আমরা কিভাবে ব্যবসায়িক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করব, তা নিয়ে চিন্তিত, ব্যবসায়ীরা নিয়মিত ভ্যাট-ট্যাক্স প্রদান করলেও বর্তমানে আনাকাঙ্ক্ষিত ভীতকর পরিস্থিতির মধ্যে দিয়ে ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করতে হচ্ছে, যা মোটেও কাম্য নয়।
- পুরান ঢাকার ব্যবসায়ীরা ৩০-৪০ শতাংশ পর্যন্ত কর পরিশোধ করলেও এর কোনও সরাসরি সুফল পাচ্ছেন না।
- ঢাকা দক্ষিণ এলাকায় পার্কিং সুবিধা বৃদ্ধি এবং দক্ষিণের ট্রাফিক বিভাগের অফিস শান্তিনগর থেকে গুলিষ্ঠানে স্থানান্তর।
- বৈদ্যুতিক ব্যাটারি চালিত রিক্সাগুলোকে ঢাকা শহরের বাইরে সরিয়ে নেওয়ার পাশাপাশি দ্রুত ঢাকার পরিবহনের কৌশলগত পরিকল্পনা প্রণয়ন।
- অনিয়ন্ত্রিতভাবে পুরোনো ঢাকার মৌলভীবাজার এলাকায় ট্রাকস্ট্যান্ড থাকায় বাবুবাজার ত্রীজে প্রচণ্ড যানজট হচ্ছে, ফলে ব্যবসায়িক কার্যক্রম বিঘ্নিত হচ্ছে। এছাড়াও লালবাগ, কোতায়ালি, চকবাজার এলাকার ব্যবসায়ীদের নগদ টাকা পরিবহনে নিরাপত্তার স্বার্থে উক্ত এলাকায় সাক্ষ্যকালীন পুলিশি টহল বাড়ানো প্রয়োজন।
- নিত্যপ্রয়োজনীয় পণ্য হলেও চিনির ওপর অতিরিক্ত ট্যাক্স আরোপের কারণে চিনির মূল্য বৃদ্ধি পায় এবং ব্যবসায়ীদের ক্যাপিটাল ইনভেস্টমেন্টও বাড়ে। তাই সরকারকে ট্যাক্স কমানোর আহ্বান জানান।
- সরকারের ১৪টি চিনিকল থাকা সত্ত্বেও মোট চাহিদার মাত্র ২% চিনি উৎপাদন সম্ভব হচ্ছে, আর বেসরকারি খাতে মাত্র ৩টি চিনিকল রয়েছে। তাই সরকারের পাইলট প্রকল্প হিসেবে অন্তত ২টি চিনিকল সারা বছর চালুর প্রয়োজনীয়তা উল্লেখ করেন।
- চিনি আমদানি ও উৎপাদনে সুষম প্রতিযোগিতা নিশ্চিত করা এবং সাপ্লাই চেইন উন্নত করা হলে চিনির মূল্য হ্রাস পাবে।
- চিনি ও ভোজ্যতেল আমদানিকে সকলের জন্য উন্মুক্ত করার আহ্বান জানিয়ে বলেন, এতে বাজারে প্রতিযোগিতা বৃদ্ধি পাবে, অবৈধ মজুদদারি কমে যাবে এবং পণ্যের মূল্য হ্রাস পাবে।
- আইন-শৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতি উন্নয়নে পুলিশ বাহিনী এখনও সক্রিয় ভূমিকা নিচ্ছে না।
- রাজনৈতিক পরিবর্তনের পর সাধারণ মানুষের মধ্যে নিরাপত্তাহীনতা বাড়ছে। রাতে বাইরে বের হতে মানুষ ভয় পাচ্ছে, ছিনতাইয়ের আশঙ্কায় আতঙ্ক ছড়িয়ে পড়েছে বিভিন্ন খাতে। এমনকি হাইওয়েতে চিনির ট্রাকও ছিনতাইয়ের শিকার হচ্ছে, যা পরিস্থিতিকে আরও উদ্বেগজনক করে তুলেছে।

- ◆ কিশোর গ্যাং-এর নৈরাজ্যে এখন জনজীবনের পাশাপাশি ব্যবসায়ীরা ক্ষতির সম্মুখীন হচ্ছেন, যা প্রতিরোধে পুলিশ প্রশাসনের কঠোর হস্তক্ষেপ কামনা করেন।
- ◆ পুরান ঢাকায় প্রবেশের রাস্তাগুলো বিভিন্ন আন্দোলন কর্মসূচির কারণে বন্ধ থাকায় চকবাজার সহ অন্যান্য জায়গায় পণ্যবাহী ট্রাক যেতে পারছেন না, ফলে ব্যবসায়িক কার্যক্রম ব্যাহত হচ্ছে।
- ◆ ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্যের কেন্দ্রস্থল হলেও চকবাজার, মৌলভীবাজার এলাকায় কোন ট্রাফিক পুলিশ না থাকায় প্রতিনিয়ত যানজট অসহনীয় হয়ে পড়ছে, যা নিরসনে কার্যকর পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা জরুরী।
- ◆ পণ্য আমদানিতে শুল্কের হার বৃদ্ধি, ব্যাংকের ঋণের শর্ত পূরণ করতে না পারায় ক্ষুদ্র উদ্যোক্তারা ঋণ সুবিধা হতে বঞ্চিত হচ্ছেন।
- ◆ মোহাম্মদপুরের আইন-শৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতি ক্রমশ অবনতির দিকে যাচ্ছে, যেখানে আইন-শৃঙ্খলা বাহিনীর কার্যকর পদক্ষেপ দেখা যাচ্ছে না।
- ◆ ঢাকা শহরের আশপাশে প্রায় ৩৭০টি ইটভাটা থাকা সত্ত্বেও সরকার ইটভাটার লাইসেন্স নবায়নের দীর্ঘসূত্রিতার কারণে এখাতের উদ্যোক্তারা ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হচ্ছেন, বিষয়টির দ্রুত সুরাহা কামনা করেন।
- ◆ আইন-শৃঙ্খলা পরিস্থিতি সংশ্লিষ্ট সেক্টরহোল্ডারদের মধ্যকার সমন্বয় সভা, এ বিষয়ে সকলের মাঝে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি এবং ফুটপাতে ভাসমান দোকান উচ্ছেদের প্রস্তাব করেন।
- ◆ ৫ আগস্টের পর আইন-শৃঙ্খলার পরিস্থিতি কিছু উন্নত হলেও বাণিজ্যিক কার্যক্রমের জন্য উপযুক্ত পরিবেশ এখনো নিশ্চিত হয়নি।

সুপারিশমালা

- ◆ ব্যবসা কেন্দ্রিক এলাকাগুলোর নিরাপত্তা জোরদার করতে কমিউনিটি পুলিশিং-এর কাঠামোকে ঢেলে সাজিয়ে, স্থানীয় ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিনিধিদের সম্পৃক্ত করে কার্যকরভাবে সম্প্রসারণ করতে হবে।
- ◆ ই-কমার্স প্ল্যাটফর্ম ও ডিজিটাল লেনদেন ব্যবস্থায় সাইবার অপরাধ দমনে একটি দক্ষ ও আধুনিক প্রযুক্তি-সক্ষম বিশেষায়িত ইউনিট গড়ে তুলতে হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট সংস্থাগুলোর মধ্যে কার্যকর সমন্বয় নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।
- ◆ ব্যবসা সংশ্লিষ্ট চাঁদাবাজি, প্রতারণা ও জালিয়াতির মামলাগুলো দ্রুত নিষ্পত্তির জন্য একটি বিশেষ ফাস্ট-ট্রাক বিচারিক ব্যবস্থা চালু করতে হবে, যাতে ব্যবসায়ীরা দ্রুত আইনি সুরক্ষা পান।
- ◆ রাতে পণ্য পরিবহন নিরাপদ রাখতে মহাসড়ক ও করিডোরভিত্তিক নিরবিচ্ছিন্ন মোবাইল টহল ব্যবস্থা সক্রিয় করতে হবে, যাতে ডাকাতি ও চাঁদাবাজির ঝুঁকি হ্রাস পায়।
- ◆ এসএমই উদ্যোক্তা এবং নারী ব্যবসায়ীদের নিরাপত্তা ও সহায়তার জন্য পৃথক হেল্পডেস্ক, নিরাপত্তা হটলাইন এবং অনলাইন রিপোর্টিং ব্যবস্থা চালু করতে হবে।
- ◆ বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ আকর্ষণের পাশাপাশি দেশীয় উদ্যোক্তাদের টিকে থাকার জন্য গ্যাস-বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ নিশ্চিত, আইন-শৃঙ্খলা বজায় রাখা এবং সুদের হার সহনীয় পর্যায়ে রাখা জরুরি।
- ◆ চিনির উপর আরোপিত অতিরিক্ত রেগুলেটরি ট্যাক্স ও শুল্ক হ্রাস করে বাজারে সরবরাহ ও মূল্য স্থিতিশীলতা নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।
- ◆ চিনি ও ভোজ্যতেলের আমদানিতে উন্মুক্ত প্রতিযোগিতা নিশ্চিত করতে কোটামুক্ত ও লাইসেন্স-সহজীকরণ পদ্ধতি চালু করতে হবে, যাতে একচেটিয়া বাজার নিয়ন্ত্রণ ব্যবস্থা ভেঙ্গে যায়।
- ◆ মহাসড়কে পণ্য পরিবহন চলাচলের সময় নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে সিসিটিভি নজরদারি ও পুলিশের বিশেষ দল মোতায়েন করতে হবে।
- ◆ গুদাম ও পরিবহন ব্যবস্থায় চুরি, জালিয়াতি এবং অপচয় রোধে আইটি-নির্ভর ট্র্যাকিং ব্যবস্থা ও নিয়মিত অভিযানে জোর দিতে হবে।
- ◆ ব্যবসা পরিবেশে আস্থা বৃদ্ধিতে পুলিশ প্রশাসনকে জবাবদিহিমূলক, অংশগ্রহণমূলক ও ব্যবসাবান্ধবভাবে কাজ করার জন্য সকল পর্যায়ে সহযোগিতা নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।
- ◆ ব্রিকফিল্ড লাইসেন্স নবায়নে দুর্নীতি ও দেরি রোধে একটি অনলাইন ও সময়সীমাভিত্তিক আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া চালু করতে হবে।
- ◆ পুরান ঢাকার যানজট নিরসনে বিদ্যুৎ খুঁটি অপসারণ, অবৈধ পার্কিং নিষিদ্ধ এবং ফুটপাতে পুনঃউদ্ধার করতে নগর কর্তৃপক্ষের সমন্বিত পদক্ষেপ নিতে হবে।
- ◆ চকবাজার ও মৌলভীবাজারের ঘনবসতিপূর্ণ এলাকায় ট্রাফিক নিয়ন্ত্রণে পর্যাপ্ত ট্রাফিক পুলিশ মোতায়েন করে যানজট নিরসন করতে হবে।
- ◆ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স পেতে ব্যবসায়ীদের হয়রানি ও অনিয়ম দূর করতে ডিজিটাল আবেদন ও এক জানালা পদ্ধতি চালু করতে হবে।
- ◆ ব্যাটারি চালিত রিকশার অযাচিত চলাচল ও দুর্ঘটনা হ্রাসে রেজিস্ট্রেশন, লাইসেন্স ও রুট নির্ধারণের মাধ্যমে নিয়ন্ত্রণ আনতে হবে।
- ◆ পুরান ঢাকায় ব্যবসায়ীদের নিরাপত্তা জোরদারে নিয়মিত পুলিশি টহল ও দ্রুত রেসপন্স ইউনিট সক্রিয় রাখতে হবে।
- ◆ মোহাম্মদপুর ও আশেপাশের এলাকায় চাঁদাবাজি ও সন্ত্রাসী কর্মকাণ্ড দমনে গোয়েন্দা নজরদারি এবং নিয়মিত অভিযানের মাধ্যমে কার্যকর ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে।
- ◆ বাণিজ্যিক হাব এলাকাগুলোতে রাত ও দিনে আলাদা নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা ও টহল জোরদার করতে হবে, বিশেষ করে আর্থিক লেনদেনের সময়গুলোতে।
- ◆ বন্দরের পণ্য খালাস কার্যক্রমে মধ্যস্বত্বভোগীদের দৌরাভ্য রোধে পোর্ট থেকে সরাসরি ট্রাক ডেলিভারি ব্যবস্থা চালু করে ডিজিটাল ট্র্যাকিং ও রিকনসাইলেশন সিস্টেম চালু করতে হবে।
- ◆ লোকসানী চিনি কলগুলোর দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে আধুনিক প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার ও সরকারি বিনিয়োগ পুনর্গঠন করে স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণতা অর্জনে পদক্ষেপ নিতে হবে।
- ◆ মতিঝিল ও পুরান ঢাকার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বাণিজ্যিক এলাকায় আধুনিক নজরদারি প্রযুক্তি (সিসিটিভি, ড্রোন) ও পর্যাপ্ত নিরাপত্তা জনবল মোতায়েন করে অপরাধ প্রতিরোধে সক্ষমতা বাড়াতে হবে।
- ◆ নাগরিকদের মধ্যে আইন মান্যতা, সামাজিক মূল্যবোধ ও নৈতিক আচরণ বৃদ্ধিতে গণমাধ্যম ও শিক্ষামাধ্যমে সচেতনতা কর্মসূচি জোরদার করতে হবে।
- ◆ চিনি ও ভোজ্যতেলের বাজারে কার্টেল ভাঙতে সরকারি মনিটরিং ইউনিট সক্রিয় করে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক বাজার নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।
- ◆ পরিবহন ব্যবস্থাকে আরও কার্যকর ও দক্ষ করতে কৌশলগত পরিকল্পনা প্রণয়ন এবং বাস্তবায়নে সকল অংশীজনের সমন্বয় নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।
- ◆ ব্যবসা বান্ধব, নিরাপদ ও সহযোগিতামূলক পরিবেশ গড়ে তুলতে ব্যবসায়ী, প্রশাসন ও নাগরিক সমাজের সম্মিলিত অংশগ্রহণ নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।

Seminar on “Export-Import Policies in Bangladesh: Requirements and Challenges upon LDC Graduation

Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture as it approaches graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2026. This milestone brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the area of trade. Key concerns include the loss of preferential market access, the need for greater product and market diversification, and increasing compliance requirements in global value chains. Revisiting and reforming export-import policies is essential to safeguard export competitiveness, ensure smooth integration into the global trading system, and support sustainable economic growth.

In light of this, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) organized a seminar titled “Export-Import Policies in Bangladesh: Requirements and Challenges upon LDC Graduation” held on 24th May 2025 at the DCCI Auditorium in Motijheel, Dhaka to foster dialogue among stakeholders. The objective was to bring together policymakers, private sector representatives, development experts, and academics to discuss the challenges, identify policy gaps, and explore actionable strategies for a resilient post-LDC transition.

Taskeen Ahmed, President of DCCI, delivered the welcome address, setting the tone for the seminar and highlighting its relevance in the context of Bangladesh’s upcoming graduation from LDC status. The keynote paper was presented by Dr. Selim Raihan, Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka and Executive Director of SANEM, who provided an analytical perspective on the challenges and opportunities for export-import policy reforms in the post-LDC context.

Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy on International Affairs to the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh grace the event as chief guest. In addition, Md. Anwar Hossain, Vice Chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB); Kazi Mostafizur Rahman, Member (Customs: Audit Modernization & International Trade) at the National Board of Revenue (NBR); and Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Special Assistant (State Minister Rank) at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance.

A distinguished panel of discussants contributed their insights following the keynote presentation. The panel included Fakir Kamruzzaman Nahid, Managing Director of Fakir Fashion Limited and Vice President (Elected) of BKMEA; Md. Zakir Hossain, Managing Director of Delta Pharma Ltd. and Secretary General of BAPI; Mr. Syed Almas Kabir, Former President of BASIS; Md. Moshiul Alam, Joint Chief of the International Cooperation Division at the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission; Md. Fazlul Hoque, Former President of BKMEA and Managing Director of Plummy Fashions Ltd.

Welcome Remarks by Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI

- Bangladesh has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades, moving from being a least developed country to becoming one of Asia’s fastest-growing economies.

- The country maintained an average GDP growth rate of over 6% for more than a decade, showing resilience even amid global crises and geopolitical uncertainties.
- The export sector remains heavily concentrated in the RMG industry, which accounts for over 84% of total export earnings.
- Other sectors like Pharmaceuticals, Leather, Jute, Agro-processed goods, the Automobile industry, and ICT are not yet performing at a scale comparable to RMG.
- Bangladesh’s export basket is narrow, with over 88% of exports going to North American and European markets, highlighting the need for both market and product diversification.
- The country’s import composition shows strong industrial dependence on foreign inputs such as capital machinery, raw materials, and intermediate goods.
- This structural dependency has increased Bangladesh’s vulnerability to external shocks, particularly during global inflation surges and regional trade disruptions.
- Recent developments such as reciprocal US tariffs and India’s export ban have added pressure on the balance of payments, foreign exchange reserves, and import control frameworks.
- Businesses are currently facing difficulties in sourcing essential inputs, which is negatively impacting their production capacity and overall competitiveness.
- The upcoming LDC graduation in 2026 presents both opportunities (enhanced global image, investor confidence, and FDI prospects) and challenges (loss of preferential trade access and WTO flexibilities).
- Post-graduation, the imposition of tariffs could reduce exports including RMG by an estimated 12–14% if Bangladesh does not diversify its markets and products.
- Compliance with international standards on environmental, labor, and governance issues is expected to become more rigorous in the global value chain.
- There is a need to reform the import system, especially customs and tariffs, to improve productivity while maintaining fiscal discipline.
- The existing protectionist policies in some sectors might need realignment to promote innovation and competitiveness.
- A modern, export-led trade policy that complies with WTO standards is essential for navigating the post-LDC graduation landscape.

Keynote Presentation

- Bangladesh is preparing for its transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2026, which presents both challenges and opportunities for structural transformation through trade policy reforms.

- The Structural Transformation Index (STI) was constructed using three indicators manufacturing value-added share in GDP, industrial employment share, and Economic Complexity Index to evaluate economic transformation over time for 133 countries.
 - Bangladesh shows a negative association between export concentration and structural transformation, indicating that continued reliance on a narrow export base hampers economic advancement.
 - No country has historically achieved a high level of structural transformation while maintaining a high level of export concentration, placing Bangladesh at risk of stagnation if diversification is not achieved.
 - Compared to Sub-Saharan African LDCs, India, and Vietnam, Bangladesh's structural transformation has been relatively limited between 1995 and 2021.
 - If Bangladesh continues with its current concentrated export structure, it is likely to fall into an "infeasible region" where structural transformation cannot progress further.
 - LDC graduation will result in the phasing out of duty-free quota-free (DFQF) market access and loss of relaxed Rules of Origin (RoO), which have benefitted exports like RMG.
 - Bangladesh has a high share of tariff lines with international peaks and relies significantly on trade taxes especially import taxes, as nearly one-third of total tax revenue originates from trade-related sources.
 - The country's tax-to-GDP ratio is low compared to other Asian economies due to a weak direct tax system, leading to overreliance on indirect and trade taxes.
 - Though customs duties have reduced over time, the rise of para-tariffs such as supplementary and regulatory duties has maintained a high rate of effective protection.
 - There is a wide gap between average input and output tariffs, indicating a high degree of effective tariff protection that discourages exports and favors import substitution.
 - Key post-graduation challenges include the loss of trade preferences, pressure to reform tariffs under WTO obligations, rising compliance costs from non-tariff measures, and weak trade logistics and infrastructure.
 - Bangladesh's current export policy framework focuses on RMG with limited diversification; incentives include cash subsidies and bonded warehouses, while import policy remains protective with high tariffs and para-tariffs.
 - Bangladesh lags behind peers like Vietnam, India, and Thailand in trade facilitation, FTA participation, institutional support, and SME export integration.
 - Bangladesh relies heavily on cash incentives to support a narrow export base, while countries like Vietnam and Thailand have developed diversified export portfolios supported by FTAs, FDI, and robust logistics.
 - On import policy, Bangladesh maintains a protective stance with manual customs, complex non-tariff measures, and a lack of integration into global value chains compared to more liberal regimes in Thailand and Vietnam.
 - Export, import, and tariff policies of Bangladesh show limited coordination, although the Export Policy 2024–2027 promotes diversification and the National Tariff Policy addresses anti-export bias.
 - Following LDC graduation, Bangladesh will no longer be eligible for WTO special provisions, rendering many current export subsidies non-compliant and vulnerable to disputes.
 - The transition away from subsidies requires a shift toward WTO-compliant measures such as infrastructure development, technology upgrading, and skills enhancement.
 - Execution of the National Tariff Policy requires a strategic roadmap that balances industrial protection with export competitiveness.
 - Institutional and governance preparedness must be improved through better coordination among key agencies and enhanced trade negotiation capabilities.
 - The shift from a preference-reliant to a productivity-driven trade strategy is essential to ensure long-term competitiveness and resilience in the post-graduation period.
- Speech by Special Guest: Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Special Assistant, ERD, Ministry of Finance, GoB**
- Bangladesh must proceed with its planned graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, as there is no possibility or option to reverse this process.
 - To meet the challenges of the post-LDC era, it is crucial to focus on the production and export of high-value-added goods, particularly in the sectors of ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, and light engineering.
 - A national dialogue will be convened soon with the active participation of all stakeholders, aiming to outline the next course of action and define a comprehensive strategy for the post-LDC period.
 - Bangladesh already possesses the necessary assets to move forward: human capital, financial capital, and physical infrastructure, but what is critically needed now is to build mutual trust among all actors.
 - Policy coherence and integration across sectors and institutions must be strengthened to drive economic growth and ensure a smooth transition after graduation.
 - Coordinated and inclusive efforts involving government, private sector, and civil society are essential to make the graduation process successful and sustainable.
- Speech by Chief Guest: Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy on International Affairs to the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh**
- Business leaders should raise their voices against road blockades and disruptive movements, as these activities significantly harm the national economy.

- The private sector possesses substantial power and must use it responsibly and above political influence to uphold economic stability.
- When roads in Dhaka are blocked, even for just two to three hours, it causes economic losses equivalent to the daily income of approximately five million people.
- If the current trend of frequent and unjustified road blockades continues, it will complicate Bangladesh's upcoming LDC graduation and global positioning.
- The private sector must proactively advocate for an environment conducive to trade, investment, and smooth economic governance.
- There is currently no comprehensive roadmap in place for the industrial sector or other key sectors, which reflects a lack of strategic planning.
- Government institutions require urgent structural reforms to operate more efficiently, particularly in the face of evolving economic challenges.
- The pace of ongoing reforms is significantly slower than necessary, creating a gap between intentions and implementation.
- Enhancing coordination among government agencies is critical to ensure coherent policy actions and institutional efficiency.
- Institutionalization and government readiness are key prerequisites for sustainable development and successful post-LDC transition.
- Research and knowledge-based policy formulation are needed, as people often know what needs to be done but lack clarity on how to do it.
- The national tariff policy must be supported by a clear and long-term roadmap to align trade practices with global standards and promote competitiveness.
- A comprehensive and unified trade policy should be developed to ensure alignment between export and import strategies, as is practiced in neighboring countries.
- It is recommended to promote services exports such as ICT, freelancing, and to develop sectors like agro-processing and pharmaceuticals.
- The country should gradually reduce para-tariffs to rationalize the overall protection regime.
- Export incentives should be redesigned to be productivity-enhancing and compliant with WTO obligations.
- Import policy needs to be modernized to ensure easier access to quality intermediate inputs and support backward integration.
- The business community, as a core component of civil society, should present rational and well-articulated demands to the government to support national development objectives
- Bangladesh needs to fully implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and invest in digital infrastructure for paperless trade.
- It is recommended to negotiate new bilateral and regional trade agreements and pursue GSP+ eligibility by improving compliance in labor and environmental standards.
- The country should leverage its potential role in regional and global value chains to expand market access.
- An integrated trade policy framework should be developed to harmonize export, import, and tariff policies for greater coherence.
- Bangladesh needs to review and adjust tariffs regularly to support emerging export sectors and reduce protectionist distortions.
- Trade policies should incorporate sustainability goals to promote green and environmentally responsible trade.

Summary of Recommendations

- Bangladesh should actively pursue CEPA, PTAs, and FTAs with both emerging and traditional trade partners, including ASEAN, China, and the EU, to preserve market access after LDC graduation.
- Greater policy and financial support need to be provided to non-RMG sectors, particularly in high-value areas such as agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, electrical and electronics, and IT services.
- A balanced and predictable tariff policy should be adopted to ease the import of raw materials and capital goods, while domestic industry protection should be both time-bound and performance-based.
- Investment should be made in ports, customs and tax digitization, bonded warehousing, and integrated transport infrastructure to reduce lead time and enhance competitiveness.
- Bangladesh needs to develop a core team of trade experts and legal advisors who can effectively negotiate in international forums and protect national interests.
- There is a need to strengthen inter-agency coordination among the Ministry of Commerce, NBR, BIDA, and the Export Promotion Bureau.
- Capacity for international trade negotiations and compliance monitoring should be developed.
- Policy coherence across trade, industrial, and fiscal areas should be improved for effective strategy execution.
- Simplify and expedite the approval process for raw material imports to ensure smoother production flow and reduce delays in the supply chain.
- Revise and strengthen cash incentive schemes while promoting local raw material production to enhance competitiveness and reduce dependency on imports.
- Introduce targeted incentives to attract modern technology and investment, enabling faster industrial growth and improved global competitiveness.

FGD on Sustainable Export Growth in Post LDC Era: Strategies for the Leather Sector

With the right investments and strategic support, Bangladesh's leather sector can move up the value chain by producing higher-end products like finished goods and branded items, capturing greater value and profitability in the global market. Post-LDC graduation, the sector is well-positioned to attract foreign investment, provided that skill-based workforce development, a nationwide rawhide collection network, and effective governance at the Savar Tannery Estate are prioritized. In view of the above, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) is organizing a Focus Group Discussion titled "Sustainable Export Growth in Post LDC Era: Strategies for the Leather Sector" on Sunday, 25th May, 2025, at DCCI Auditorium. The discussion aims to identify the current challenges facing the leather industry and to explore strategic pathways for enhancing its export competitiveness in the post-LDC era.

Taskeen Ahmed, President of DCCI moderated the event after delivering his welcome address. The keynote was presented by Syed Nasim Manzur, President, LFMEAB & Former President, MCCI. The event was graced by the Chief Guest, Adilur Rahman Khan, Honorable Adviser, Ministry of Industries, Government of Bangladesh and the Special Guest, Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator, FBCCI and Md. Saiful Islam, Chairman, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

A distinguished panel of discussants contributed their insights following the keynote presentation. The panel included Md. Nurul Islam, Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA), Ibnul Wara, Managing Director, Austan Ltd.; Md. Nasir Khan, Managing Director, Jennys Shoes Ltd.; Ziaur Rahman, Managing Director, Bay Group; Salma Ahmed, Chief Scientific Officer (Officer-in-Charge), Leather Research Institute, Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR); Md. Ariful Hoque, Director General (Joint Secretary), Strategic Investment (Additional Charge), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA); Dr. Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury, Additional Secretary, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh were present as Distinguished Panel Discussants.

Welcome Address by Taskeen Ahmed, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)

- The leather sector is recognized as the second-highest export earner after readymade garments and has significant potential for value addition, employment generation, and sustainable industrial growth in the post-LDC era.

- In the fiscal year 2023-24, Bangladesh's export earnings from leather and leather products reached USD 1.03 billion, which is a slight decline compared to the previous year.
- Despite advantages such as abundant raw materials, low labor costs, and a growing skilled workforce, Bangladesh's share in the global leather industry remains below 1%, which is valued at USD 250 billion.
- Graduation from LDC status will lead to the gradual loss of preferential trade benefits, such as the Duty-Free Quota-Free (DFQF) facility in key markets like the European Union, which currently absorbs most of Bangladesh's leather exports.
- To maintain and expand market access, the leather sector must comply with global environmental, labor, and quality standards.
- The leather industry faces challenges including inadequate waste management and poor compliance with environmental standards.
- There is limited branding and marketing capacity for Bangladeshi leather goods in international markets.
- There is insufficient diversification and innovation in product design and finishing within the leather industry.
- To ensure sustainable export growth after LDC graduation, the sector must focus on the green transformation of tanneries by establishing and effectively operating Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), supported by financial incentives and technology transfer.
- Skill development and building innovation ecosystems are necessary to help the leather sector move up the value chain.
- Establishing backward and forward linkages, especially in accessories, packaging, and logistics, is essential to strengthen the leather value chain.
- Strong public-private collaboration is required to meet Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance and traceability demands.

Keynote Presentation by Syed Nasim Manzur, President, LFMEAB & Former President, MCCI

- Global cattle population exceeds 1.5 billion; leather is a natural by-product of meat and dairy, not a standalone driver.
- Ending leather production would not reduce cattle farming but would result in the disposal of over 300 million hides annually, contributing to 6.6 million tons of CO emissions worldwide.
- Studies confirm that leather usage contributes to waste reduction, supporting sustainability goals when responsibly produced.

- Top-Grain Leather Includes full-grain and corrected-grain; known for strength and aesthetic quality.
- Split Leather: Derived from corium; includes bicast, suede, and bonded variants.
- Chrome Tanning Dominant method globally (75% usage); uses safe trivalent chromium (Cr III) — not the toxic Cr VI as is often misunderstood.
- Responsible tanning practices and strict LWG standards prevent harmful chemical exposure.
- Bangladesh holds 2% of global livestock, fulfilling around 10% of global leather demand.
- Produces 350 million square feet of leather annually, with 40% generated during Qurbani season.
- Despite relocating 220 tanneries from Hazaribagh to Savar in 2017, the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) is still not fully operational.
- Only 20–25% of leather is consumed domestically; the rest is exported or wasted due to systemic inefficiencies.
- Excessive middlemen, lack of traceability, and informal slaughtering degrade hide quality.
- Low-value orders from Chinese intermediaries, overdue loans, and weak working capital prevent reinvestment.
- CETP remains non-compliant with LWG standards—a barrier to export competitiveness.
- Export earnings have sharply declined: From USD 397.5M in FY2014 to USD 123.4M in FY2023.
- The global footwear market is currently valued at over USD 1 billion/day, projected to reach USD 530 billion by 2027.
- Brands like Timberland, Hush Puppies, and Michael Kors are sourcing from Bangladesh, attracted by cost and growing sustainability focus.
- Industry transition in China, Vietnam, and Myanmar creates opportunities for Bangladesh as a sustainable supplier.
- CETP Modernization Lead Operator: BEPZA; hire EU-certified contractors for CETP and waste management.
- Upgrade plant with modern automation, solid waste treatment, Cr recovery, and LWG-aligned systems.
- Use green/climate financing, operate CETP for 10 years, then transfer to GoB.
- Institutional & Financial Measures Form a local supervisory board (Govt-private) to oversee Savar operations.
- Create financial exit schemes for non-viable tanneries and incentivize sustainable entrants.
- Extend RMG-style incentives: duty-free import of capital machinery, simplified FOC system, and export credit insurance.
- Bangladesh faces key post-LDC graduation challenges, including the potential loss of Duty-Free Quota-Free (DFQF) access and special WTO flexibilities.
- At the same time, opportunities arise in building a stronger investment climate, enhancing brand credibility, and diversifying into new export markets.
- The country has set ambitious export targets: USD 5 billion by 2030 and USD 10 billion by 2035 in leather, footwear, and related goods.
- Bangladesh should proactively negotiate Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with key trade partners such as the EU, U.S., UK, Japan, China, and ASEAN.
- To secure GSP+ benefits in the EU, Bangladesh must demonstrate credible progress in ESG performance, labor rights, and regulatory reforms.
- Strengthening compliance with Leather Working Group (LWG) standards—including chemical safety, environmental norms, and social accountability—will be crucial for market access and reputation.
- Climate finance and targeted capacity-building support should be extended, particularly to SMEs, to help them meet international sustainability and compliance benchmarks.
- The government should announce a time-bound action plan to make the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) in Savar fully operational.
- An internationally reputed CETP operator should be appointed, with regular progress reports issued to ensure transparency and accountability.
- A national branding campaign, such as “From Farm to Fashion,” should be launched to highlight the sustainable and agricultural roots of Bangladesh’s leather industry.
- Public awareness and youth engagement initiatives are essential to counter misinformation and build domestic and international support for the industry.

Summary Recommendations

- Accelerate the establishment and effective operation of Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) across all tanneries, supported by targeted financial incentives, technology transfer, and green financing mechanisms.
- Promote industry-specific skill development, research, and innovation ecosystems to support product diversification, higher value addition, and design excellence.
- Enhance domestic capacity in critical input and service areas such as accessories, packaging, logistics, and finishing to improve competitiveness and supply chain efficiency.
- Expand market reach beyond traditional destinations by exploring new opportunities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, supported by trade diplomacy and export promotion.

- Invest in branding and international marketing to establish “Made in Bangladesh” as a credible label for high-quality leather products in global markets.
- Promote adoption of international standards related to environment, labor, and governance (ESG), and improve traceability mechanisms through public–private collaboration and certification (e.g., LWG).
- Actively negotiate Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with key partners, including the EU, USA, UK, Japan, China, and ASEAN to ensure market access and long-term competitiveness.
- Fulfill the criteria for GSP+ eligibility by implementing credible labor and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reforms, positioning Bangladesh as a responsible sourcing destination.
- Accelerate alignment with international benchmarks, particularly the Leather Working Group (LWG) protocols, and enhance chemical safety, environmental protection, and social accountability across the value chain.
- Facilitate access to low-cost climate financing for green technologies and offer technical capacity-building programs, with special focus on SMEs, to promote sector-wide sustainability.
- To extend similar support to the leather sector as provided to the readymade garment sector, including bonded warehouse facilities, duty-free import of CETP-related machinery, and reimbursement of audit costs.
- Announce and adhere to a clear timeline to fully operationalize the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) at Savar, addressing a critical barrier to export certification and environmental compliance.
- Appoint a globally recognized operator to manage CETP and related waste treatment infrastructure, and institute transparent reporting mechanisms for ongoing public and stakeholder updates.
- Promote a national branding campaign that emphasizes the agricultural linkage and sustainability credentials of Bangladesh’s leather industry, reinforcing its value from livestock to finished product.
- Develop targeted awareness programs to combat misinformation about leather and highlight its environmental role. Engage youth through educational outreach to build informed future advocates for sustainable leather.
- Provide government incentives and low-interest Green Fund loans to facilitate the installation of individual Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Encourage large companies to lead by example in setting up ETPs and adopting best environmental practices.
- Establish effective collaboration between the government and private sector to ensure efficient operation, monitoring, and capacity expansion of the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP).
- Make compliance with international environmental and labor standards mandatory to achieve Leather Working Group (LWG) certification.
- Recognize LWG certification as a key to improving the sector’s global image, securing fair pricing, and attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- Reduce dependence on imported raw materials by investing in local sourcing and processing capabilities.
- Strengthen backward linkages to improve lead times and enhance global competitiveness.
- Invest in modern manufacturing technologies, product innovation, and design improvement.
- Encourage research and development to respond to evolving global trends and explore new export markets.
- Simplify customs procedures to reduce export delays and operational barriers.
- Introduce bonded warehouse facilities for the leather sector, similar to those available to the RMG industry, to support faster and more efficient exports.
- Engage directly with global investors through innovative, non-traditional approaches to secure meaningful FDI inflows.
- Treat the post-LDC transition as an opportunity to elevate compliance standards and global positioning.
- Foster inclusive collaboration between public and private sectors to effectively manage the shift and unlock new market advantages.
- Import of fire safety equipment is duty-free in the RMG sector but still taxed in the leather industry. Stakeholders have urged the government to waive these duties to improve safety and capacity in the leather sector.

Difference between social business and commercial venture

M. S. Siddiqui

CEO, Bangla Chemical

e-mail: shah@banglachemical.com

Increasing inequality has been a serious issue in the developing countries as well. Social and economic inequality is on the rise. The rich are becoming wealthier, the income of the middle class is declining, and the poor are struggling to remain afloat. While free market capitalism is thriving globally, almost unopposed now, and bringing unprecedented prosperity to many, half of the world lives on two dollars a day or much less.

The rise in billionaire wealth and the rise in corporate and monopoly power are deeply connected. The richest people are not just the biggest beneficiaries of the global economy. The richest 1% of people globally own a staggering 43% of all financial assets. A new era of monopoly power is supercharging extreme corporate power, enabling a small few to control markets, and set the terms of exchange and profit without fear of losing business. This is the hazard of a free economy.

US President Biden said in the attended the White House Competition Council's meeting on January 24, 2023, that increased competition "results in lower prices for families" and "fair wages for workers". After the assuming the office of President, he had issued an Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy saying "A fair, open, and competitive marketplace has long been a cornerstone of the American economy, while excessive market concentration threatens basic economic liberties, democratic accountability, and the welfare of workers, farmers, small businesses, startups, and consumers.

It is an established economic theory that high corporate concentration, where a few major players dominate an industry, can create dangerous over-reliance where consumers and businesses become dependent on these giants. This is an anticompetitive market situation. Policymakers are leveraging several instruments to tackle the growing challenge of social inequality. Historically, the most common goals of competition policy in global frameworks have been maintaining free and fair competition, safeguarding consumer interests and protecting freedom of trade. Scholars are increasingly advocating for competition law to go beyond efficiency goals and emphasize redistributive justice and equality for broader consumer welfare. Many countries have initiated various social welfare policies as a key response

measure to mitigate the impacts of social inequalities, the effectiveness of those policies still depends on the economic structure of a country, especially competition in the market (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Korpi and Palme, 1998).

To address the problems of societies, the traditional government and economic policy are not sufficient in many countries, especially in developing countries. There is an alternative initiative with social entrepreneurship. social entrepreneur, social enterprise, and social capital.

Social entrepreneurship is defined differently by different groups. One group refers to social entrepreneurship as nonprofit enterprises in search of alternative funding strategies and management schemes to create social value (Austin et al., 2006). A second group considers it the socially responsible practice of commercial businesses (Sagawa & Segal, 2000). A third group views it to alleviate social concerns and facilitate social transformation (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004).

The pioneer of social business, Dr Mohammad Yunus sees social business, as an alternative and potentially more useful way for philanthropists to place their money: Rather than making a one-time donation, they can invest in viable businesses generating recurring benefits. According to Dr Yunus, Social business is a cause-driven business. In a social business, the investors/owners can gradually recoup the money invested, but cannot take any dividend beyond that point. The purpose of the investment is purely to achieve one or more social objectives through the operation of the company, no personal gain is desired by the investors. The company must cover all costs and make profit, at the same time achieve the social objective, such as, healthcare for the poor, housing for the poor, financial services for the poor, nutrition for malnourished children, providing safe drinking water, introducing renewable energy, etc. in a business way."

Social entrepreneurs involve solving and fulfilling the basic needs of society such as food, shelter, education, and basic health and hygiene services through their social enterprises. They work in two important ways to achieve their goals, by building local capabilities and capacities, and giving voice to marginalized groups. Social entrepreneurs, therefore, address social needs that ventures focus primarily on service to the society not only for profits.

According to Thompson & Doherty (2006), social enterprises are “organisations seeking business solutions to social problems”. For the International Labour Office (ILO), social enterprises are defined as:

- Having a primary social purpose, which is clearly stated as its core objective;
- Using a financially sustainable business model, with a realistic prospect of generating sufficient income to exceed costs and of having a significant proportion of its income from earnings (as opposed to grants or donations);
- Being accountable to its stakeholders, with an appropriate mechanism to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and to measure and demonstrate its social impact.

Therefore, social entrepreneurship is a process that involves purposeful individuals (social entrepreneurs) engaging in behaviors (social entrepreneurial behaviors) leading to the formation of social enterprises (Mair & Noboa, 2006).

Social entrepreneurship is a global trend. New initiatives, concepts, and organizational forms are constantly being developed by and for social enterprises. The basic idea behind this movement – to tackle social challenges with entrepreneurial means – has meanwhile also been met warmly by policymakers.

Like the concept of social entrepreneurship, social capital has been defined in a number of different ways. Social Capital is not only the capital to run the business. It is challenging to identify potential social entrepreneurs where rates of trust and engagement are low. In this environment, few people understand how their actions could contribute to their community, let alone the capacity to identify and address social needs.

Definition Social capital is made up of institutions, networks, social norms, values and relationships among and between different groups in a society that impact on the levels of trust and cooperation in social interactions.

Understanding the role of social capital takes on a different meaning when we look at models for nurturing social entrepreneurs from within beneficiary communities. Therefore, social capital can be understood as “the relationships, networks and institutions within a community, society or nation that enable cooperation and participation.” When the intersections between families or kinship groupings, economic status, social

status and religious or ethnic identify are strong. Social capital contributes to social cohesion and inclusiveness.

Regardless of size or scale, successful social entrepreneurs are civically engaged. Their enterprises rely on building credibility and relationships, both within target communities and among wider networks. There is an inter-dependent relationship between social entrepreneurs and the health of the target communities. In order to successfully operate and gain the trust of the community, the social entrepreneur works to strengthen social cohesion and relationships.

In a social business, the investors/owners can gradually recoup the money invested, but cannot take any dividend beyond that point. On the other hand there is no limit of profit for business enterprises except the misuse of dominant position, cartel and anticompetitive merger and acquisition.

The purpose of the investment in social business is purely to achieve one or more social objectives through the operation of the company, no personal gain is desired by the investors. The company must cover all costs and make a profit.

Social business is allowed to make profit with the condition that profit stays with the company; the entrepreneurs don't take profit beyond the amount equivalent to investment. It does not stipulate the end of the existing type of profit-making business. It does not intend to monopolize the market and take the existing option away. It adds to the competition policy of the country.

Therefore, competition policy and socioeconomic equality policies are intrinsically linked. Equality considerations must be directly integrated within evaluation of anti-competitive behaviors and the competition policies should encompass targets for reducing inequality. The social business and profit business should be good players in the markets.

It should be in mind that social business is challenging the misuse of monopoly of the business enterprises through open competition with a fair price offered in the market.

Glimmers of hope amid IMF-ADB's lower growth forecasts

Bangladesh's economy is showing signs of a gradual recovery, though GDP growth remains under pressure due to historically low tax revenues and a struggling banking sector burdened by about 35 per cent of defaulted loans. Professor Selim Raihan of the Economics Department at Dhaka University, and also Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling, said that the International Monetary Fund has downgraded Bangladesh's gross domestic product growth forecast, citing weak revenue collection, persistent inflation and growing fiscal stress.

"This signals a slowing economy characterized by declining job creation, fragile private sector investment and increasing external vulnerabilities. Inflation is likely to remain high, placing further strain on household budgets and eroding purchasing power," Dr Raihan explained. To address these issues, he recommended widening the tax base, cutting subsidies, and enhancing public financial management and stressed the importance of bolstering the central bank's independence, containing inflation and encouraging private investment through regulatory reforms. Dr Raihan also emphasized that diversifying exports, improving infrastructure, and investing in education and healthcare would strengthen economic resilience and support sustainable long-term growth.

Bangladesh's banking system continues to face major challenges, with a large share of defaulted loans constraining the flow of credit to the private sector, contributing to the downward revision of the gross domestic product growth forecasts by global lenders. Dr Raihan also noted that the government's move to reduce allocations for mega development



projects has compounded the slowdown. The International Monetary Fund recently adjusted its gross domestic product growth projection for the current fiscal year (2024-25 fiscal year) to 3.76 per cent — a slight drop from the 3.8 per cent forecast in December 2024 and a notable decrease from the 4.5 per cent projected in October 2024. Despite the revised outlook, Bangladesh ranks as the ninth-largest economy in Asia based on total gross domestic product, now valued at \$450.5 billion according to 2024 data.

The Asian Development Bank, in its 2025 Basic Statistics report, placed Bangladesh as the second-largest economy in South Asia, after India, among 46 countries surveyed (excluding Japan). The International Monetary Fund's projected 3.76 per cent growth would mark the lowest since the 2019-20 fiscal year, when the Covid pandemic severely disrupted economies worldwide. For the 2025-26 fiscal year, the International Monetary Fund has also trimmed its growth forecast to 6.53 per cent from the previously estimated 6.7 per cent. While the International Monetary Fund report did not provide detailed reasons for the downward revision, Chris Papageorgiou, Chief of the Development Macroeconomics Division in the

International Monetary Fund's Research Department and head of a recent mission to Bangladesh, said the economy continues to face "multiple challenges amid elevated global uncertainty."

He highlighted a slowdown in gross domestic product growth to 3.3 per cent year-on-year during the first half of the 2025 fiscal year, down from 5.1 per cent during the same period in the 2024 fiscal year. The decline was attributed to domestic unrest, tighter monetary and fiscal policies, and a general climate of uncertainty that has dampened investment sentiment. The Asian Development Bank's latest outlook closely mirrors that of the International Monetary Fund, projecting 3.9 per cent growth for the 2025 fiscal year, rising to 5.1 per cent in the 2026 fiscal year. The bank also warned of challenges such as subdued domestic demand linked to political transitions, the threat of natural disasters, labor unrest and persistently high inflation. Inflation remains one of the key concerns. The International Monetary Fund expects inflation to stay around 10 per cent during the current fiscal year, potentially easing to 5.18 per cent in the 2026 fiscal year.

The Asian Development Bank, meanwhile, forecasts an increase to 10.2 per cent in the 2025 fiscal year, with a projected decline to 8 per

cent in the following year. Despite these downward adjustments, both the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Fund foresee a gradual recovery in Bangladesh's economic trajectory over the medium term. But, the current outlook underscores the significant headwinds the country must navigate to sustain its previous high-growth momentum. Dr M Masrur Reaz, macroeconomist and Chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, said that despite the sluggish pace, the economy is gradually moving towards recovery. He highlighted that export earnings and remittance inflows are helping to stabilise the foreign exchange reserves and revitalise the rural economy—factors which are contributing positively to macroeconomic stability.

“Severe regulatory lapses in the banking sector and massive loan scams have delayed the recovery of the macroeconomy. However, recent efforts to reform the banking sector and restore public confidence in financial institutions will be vital to reviving GDP growth,” he said. He cautioned that the International Monetary Fund's projections should not be interpreted as an indication that the economy is in dire straits **r**

Strong regional co-op, concessional climate finance urged

Finance adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed has called for enhanced development cooperation, stressing the urgency of digital transformation, climate resilience, and regional integration amid an increasingly volatile global landscape. He said this in a compelling address on May 05, 2025 at the 58th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank held in Milan. The Bangladesh delegation was led by finance adviser Dr

Salehuddin Ahmed, accompanied by Secretary of the Economic Relations Division, Shahriar Kader Siddiky, and other delegation members.

While addressing Asian Development Bank President Masato Kanda and other distinguished representatives, the Finance Adviser stated that under the leadership of Nobel Laureate Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh is undergoing a historic transformation toward transparency, inclusive growth, and sustainable development, said a Finance Ministry press release. He further emphasized, “In this time of crisis, the Asian Development Bank's role is more crucial than ever— not just in financing, but also in promoting structural reforms and building long-term resilience.”

Dr Salehuddin went on saying, “At this pivotal moment, the Asian Development Fund's role as a trusted development partner is more important than ever not just in financing, but in supporting systemic reform and long-term resilience,” he stated. The Finance Adviser emphasized four priority areas for collaboration with the ADB: Digital Inclusion, Climate Action, Regional Integration and Sustainable Financing. Reiterating Bangladesh's vulnerability to global shocks from inflation and climate risk to geopolitical tensions, the Adviser underscored the importance of collective resolve and bold partnerships.

“This year's theme, ‘Sharing Experiences, Building Tomorrow,’ is both timely and inspiring,” he concluded. We look forward to working together to turn today's crises into tomorrow's opportunities.” He added. Additionally, the Bangladesh delegation held a meeting with representatives from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Over the past

five decades, the UK has extended approximately \$ 3.19 billion in official development assistance to Bangladesh, primarily through grants targeting poverty alleviation, health, education, and institutional capacity building.

Despite recent fiscal pressures, the UK remains committed to supporting Bangladesh's key development priorities including climate resilience, humanitarian aid, and inclusive growth. According to the United Kingdom's 2022 International Development Strategy, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office expressed interest in expanding cooperation in renewable energy, trade, climate finance, SME development, digital governance, and the education sector. In response, Bangladesh called for support in green investment, vocational training, river restoration, the private sector, technical assistance, sanitation management, cyber security, and joint research initiatives **r**

Businesses, experts call for business-friendly policies

Businesses and economic experts urged the government to adopt business-friendly policies in the upcoming national budget to help stimulate economic growth and attract foreign investment. The call came during a seminar titled ‘Fiscal Issues for National Budget 2025–26 to Foster Economic and Business Growth,’ jointly organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh, the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and the Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Chairman of the National Board of Revenue Md Abdur Rahman Khan attended the event as the chief guest. In their keynote presentations, Dr M Masrur Reaz and Snehasish Barua

FCA highlighted key challenges such as persistent inflation and declining foreign investment, underscoring the need for structural reforms in governance and debt management.

They also noted positive trends in exports and remittances but stressed that policy consistency and comprehensive fiscal reform are essential. Barua called for expanding the tax base, modernising the VAT system and fostering an investment-friendly business environment. Industry leaders echoed these priorities during a panel discussion. The National Board of Revenue Chairman Khan noted that the government is actively working to resolve tax issues affecting investment and is committed to presenting a responsible and transparent budget. He announced a significant policy move transferring the authority to grant tax exemptions to Parliament, aimed at ensuring greater accountability.

ICAB President Maria Howlader stressed the importance of predictable tax policies and long-term structural reforms. FICCI President Zaved Akhtar advocated for an integrated tax system and recommended separating tax policy formulation from revenue administration. JBCCI President Tareq Rafi Bhuiyan (Jun) welcomed the government's focus on improving the ease of doing business.

The panel discussion featured leading industry figures, including Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, chief executive officer, LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited), Manabu Sugawara (Country Head, Marubeni Corporation), Yuji Ando (joint secretary general, JBCCI, Dr Abdul Mannan Shikder (former revenue board member) and Md Afzal Hossain (Former Secretary to the Government). The seminar brought together a wide range of participants from both business and government sectors **r**

Duty-free trade facilities in post-LDC era signalled

Japan intent on invigorating Big-B initiative

Japan is intent on step up engagement with Bangladesh under the heretofore-dormant Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (Big-B) initiative and also signals continued duty-free trade facilities even after Bangladesh's LDC graduation. The desires of the host were expressed during the 6th round of Foreign Office Consultations with Bangladesh, held in Tokyo on wide-ranging agenda that also focused Indo-Pacific cooperation affairs. Also, the industrially developed country of Asia intends to promote high-quality infrastructure projects and encourage Japanese manufacturing and production companies to expand their value chains into Bangladesh under the initiative codenamed Big-B, said officials of the foreign ministry in Dhaka.

"These efforts are aligned with Japan's broader vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific and its commitment to sustainable development of the region," said a spokesman for the foreign ministry. A significant development happens to be Japan's positive stance on Bangladesh's request to maintain Duty-Free Quota-Free market access for Bangladeshi products during the post-graduation era after the country's exit from the least-developed country club. Japan

also pledged support for improving market access for Bangladeshi fruits and vegetables. The Bangladesh delegation was led by Ambassador Dr Md. Nazrul Islam, Secretary (East) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while Akahori Takeshi, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, headed the host side.

Held in a "warm and congenial environment," the consultations encompassed comprehensive discussions on political, economic, and sectoral cooperation, with special focus on trade and investment, people-to-people connectivity, cultural exchanges, the Rohingya crisis, regional and global developments, and security partnerships, the spokesman added.

The two sides reviewed the progress made since the 5th round of FOC held in June 2024 in Dhaka and looked for future avenues of cooperation, including the upcoming visit of the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh to Japan. Key areas of discussion included cooperation in human-resource development, energy transition through a joint crediting mechanism, climate-change adaptation, disaster and earthquake management, and collaboration on effluent treatment plants, Treatment Storage and Disposal Facilities, solar-power projects, agricultural mechanization, and modernization of shipyards **r**



India to become 4th largest economy by 2025

Niti Aayog, member Arvind Virmani said India is set to become the fourth largest economy in the world by overtaking Japan by the end of 2025. The International Monetary Fund, in its World Economic Outlook report released in April had said that India is expected to be the fourth largest economy in the world with a gross domestic product of \$ 4.19 trillion in 2025, ahead of Japan.

“India is in the process of becoming the fourth largest economy, and I am personally confident that will happen by the end of 2025 because we need (data) of all 12 months gross domestic product to say that, you know, to assert that. So to say till then, it remains a forecast,” Virmani said. Asked to comment on NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam’s remark that India has become the fourth largest economy in the world, the eminent economist said: “So this is a complicated question, and I really do not know what the words anybody has used. Perhaps there



was some word which was missed or something.” Citing IMF data, Subrahmanyam, last week, said that the size of the Indian economy is larger than Japan’s.

“We are the fourth largest economy as I speak. We are a \$ 4 trillion economy as I speak,” the NITI Aayog CEO said. “It is only the US, China and Germany which are larger than India, and if we stick to what is being planned and what is being thought through, in 2.5-3 years, we will be the third

largest economy,” Subrahmanyam had said. Explaining further, Virmani said, “When we discuss the size of economies publicly, we generally use US dollar current prices.” Virmani further pointed out that “when we compare economy, we generally do it in terms of annual gross domestic product.” Virmani said IMF in its WEO report released in April gave a precise number, which showed that India’s GDP for the full year 2025, would become higher than that of Japan **r**

Pakistan set to miss FY25 growth projection

Pakistan’s gross domestic product and per capita income increased in dollar terms at a modest pace in 2024-25, reflecting a sustained recovery in the country’s overall output compared to the previous year, the government said on May 21, 2025. It was announced that the country’s economy is expected to grow by 2.68 per cent in the current fiscal year, a revision from earlier projections of 3.6pc, suggesting that Pakistan will fall short of its GDP target.

The leading global financial institutions’ estimates also show that Pakistan’s economy is expected to grow between 2.6 and 2.8pc in the 2025 fiscal year, a slower-than-

expected recovery with challenges in agriculture, industrial output, and external financing weighing on economic momentum. The lenders have already revised downward their earlier GDP projections for Pakistan. The IMF revised the growth forecast to 2.6pc, citing weaker economic performance. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank estimate a slightly higher growth rate of 2.8pc, reflecting cautious optimism.

The 113th National Accounts Committee meeting, chaired by Planning Commission Secretary Awais Manzoor Sumra, approved revised GDP growth rates for Q1, Q2, and Q3 of the 2025 fiscal year,

along with final figures for the 2023 fiscal year and revised estimates for the 2024 fiscal year. The provisional GDP growth for the 2025 fiscal year stands at 2.68pc compared to 2.51pc in the 2024 fiscal year, a marginal increase. The size of the economy went up to \$410.96 billion in the 2025 fiscal year from \$371.66 billion in the 2024 fiscal year, mainly driven by growth in the services sector, followed by industry and livestock. Higher public and private sector investments, stable exchange rates, moderating inflation, and rising per capita income supported growth.

The per capita income slightly increased to \$1,824 in the 2025

fiscal year from \$1,680 in the 2024 fiscal year. However, it was \$1,551 in the 2023 fiscal year, \$1,766 in the 2022 fiscal year and \$1,677 in the 2021 fiscal year. This suggests the deterioration of the standard of living and well-being of almost all segments of society with no tangible increase in personal incomes. It may lead to decreased disposable income, limiting individuals' ability to afford goods and services, save, or invest.

The agriculture sector will post a modest growth of 0.56pc in the 2025. This indicates that the agriculture sector faced setbacks, with important crops contracting by 13.49pc in the 2025 fiscal year compared to a healthy increase in important crops last year. Important crops dipped due to a decline of 8.91pc in wheat production this year. The provincial crop reporting services estimated that wheat production may fall to 28.98 million tonnes from 31.81m tonnes last year. Maize production fell 15.4pc to 8.24m tonnes from 9.74m tonnes last year, rice production fell 1.38pc to 9.72m tonnes, from 9.86m tonnes, sugarcane by 3.88pc to 84.24m tonnes from 87.64m tonnes and a 30.7pc in cotton production to 7.08m bales from 10.22m bales last year.

The industry provisionally demonstrated a growth of 4.77pc in 2024-25. Despite a 2.84pc rise in coal production, the mining and quarrying sector experienced a contraction of 3.38pc. This decline is attributed to lower production of natural gas, which fell by 7.05pc, crude oil, down by 14.72pc, and other minerals. The Large-Scale Manufacturing, as indicated by the Quantum Index of Manufacturing for the first nine months of the 2025 fiscal year, experienced a decline of 1.53pc, reflecting a mixed trend in the production across different groups. The electricity, gas and water supply sector witnessed a

notable growth of 28.88pc, primarily attributed to the low-base effect from the 2024 fiscal year. The construction sector recorded a rise of 6.61pc, which was attributed to heightened expenditures on construction-related activities by both the private sector and the general government.

The services sector also grew 2.91pc in 2024-25, bolstered by favourable contributions from all its components. The wholesale and retail trade sector experienced a slight increase of 0.14pc, which was attributed to a deceleration in output growth within the agriculture and manufacturing industries **■**

Sri Lanka exports hit \$ 5.5b in first four months of 2025

Sri Lanka's export sector demonstrated remarkable resilience and steady progress during the first four months of 2025, with total exports reaching \$ 5,583.25 million, marking a robust 6.9 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024. This upward trend reflects renewed momentum across key industries and underscores the sector's adaptability in an evolving global trade landscape. Total exports, including both merchandise and services reached \$ 1,292.63 million in April 2025. This marking an impressive year-on-year growth of 8.74 percent over April 2024,

reflecting the resilience of Sri Lanka's export sector and the positive impact of strategic efforts to diversify markets and enhance competitiveness.

Commenting on the positive export performance, Mangala Wijesinghe, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Export Development Board, stated, "This encouraging growth highlights Sri Lanka's increasing integration into global trade and the success of our continued efforts to strengthen export competitiveness and expand market access. Our exporters have once again proven their resilience and adaptability in navigating dynamic global markets." In April 2025 alone, merchandise exports grew by 12.05 percent year-on-year, reaching \$ 983.33 million, according to provisional data of Sri Lanka Customs including the estimates for Gems & Jewellery and Petroleum Products. For the period January to April 2025, merchandise exports totaled \$ 4,334.22 million, reflecting 6.86 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024.

Meanwhile, services exports have emerged as a key driver of overall export growth. In April 2025, estimated earnings from services exports reached \$ 309.3 million. Over the first four months of the year, services exports are estimated to have increased by 7.06 percent, totaling \$ 1,189.63 million **■**



Stimulus helps drive China's industrial profits

China's industrial profits picked up pace in April, official data showed on May 27, 2025 giving policymakers cause for optimism that recent stimulus efforts are helping to keep the economy afloat despite trade tensions with the United States. US President Donald Trump's decision to single China out in his global trade war has stirred significant worries about an economy that has been reliant on an export-led recovery to drive momentum in the face of weak domestic demand and deflationary pressures. Industrial profits rose 1.4 percent year-on-year in the January-April period, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics. This compared with 0.8 percent growth over the first quarter.

In April alone, profits rose 3.0 percent, versus a 2.6 percent rise a month prior. "China's industrial policy priorities look to be working well," said Dan Wang, Eurasia Group's China director. "Commodities involved in new energy and new materials supply chains are doing well, as are those in high-end manufacturing." Policymakers have since September been drip-feeding stimulus measures in a bid to boost domestic demand and investor confidence, with the latest round in early May including interest rate cuts and a major liquidity injection.

Moody's maintained its negative outlook on China, citing unease over tensions with major trade partners could have a lasting impact on its credit profile, but acknowledged that government policy had addressed the credit ratings agency's previous concerns about the health of state-owned firms and local government debt, which prompted a downgrade in late 2023.

Profits at state-owned enterprises fell 4.4 percent over the first four months,



the NBS data showed, while private sector companies and foreign firms enjoyed growth of 4.3 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively. Industrial profit numbers cover firms with annual revenue of at least 20 million yuan from their main operations. "The foundation for stable profit growth still needs to be strengthened," Yu Weining, an NBS statistician, said in a note accompanying the data. "Challenges remain: global uncertainties, insufficient demand and falling prices continue to weigh on the recovery."

Separate data released over the course of April as the US and China ramped up tit-for-tat tariffs painted a mixed picture for the economy, with better-than-expected exports offset by slowing growth in factory output and retail sales and a slump in bank lending. While the world's top two economies reached a truce during talks in Geneva earlier this month with the US and China unwinding most of the tariffs imposed on each other's goods since early April analysts warn the arrangement may not hold and could still derail the Chinese economy.

Some 16 million Chinese jobs could be lost if exports to the US fall by 50 percent, Nomura analysts have warned. "It's encouraging to see that manufacturing enterprises saw

8.6 percent (profit) growth year-on-year despite the more challenging environment," said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING. "But some other industries faced larger challenges, including autos, which have faced severe price competition" **r**

Japan economy contracts first time in year as exports fall

Japan's economy shrank for the first time in a year, contracting 0.2 percent in the March quarter as exports declined sharply, preliminary government data showed on May 16, 2025. The gross domestic product data was poorer compared to the 0.1 percent contraction expected by economists polled by Reuters. On an annualized basis, Japan's GDP contracted 0.7 percent in the first quarter, also more than the 0.2 percent fall expected in the Reuters poll. Exports fell 0.6 percent quarter-on-quarter, shedding 0.8 percentage points off the GDP as uncertainties caused by US President Donald Trump's trade policies affected Japan's export-heavy economy. Domestic demand, however, was a bright spot, growing 0.6 percent in the same quarter and adding 0.7 percentage points to the gross domestic product.

On a year-on-year basis, however, Japan's GDP expanded 1.7 percent, the largest expansion since the first quarter of 2023 and a stronger showing compared to the 1.3 percent growth seen in the fourth quarter. Japan's GDP data comes at a time when the country is locked in trade negotiations with the US, with initial talks between both sides so far not yielding a conclusive deal. Jesper Koll, expert director at financial services firm Monex Group, said that while Japanese companies are "very strong at home," reflecting the rise in domestic demand, exports may continue to see weakness.

He noted that even though the weak yen had given a competitive advantage for Japan's exports, the advantage was "overpowered" by China's machinery and tool exports, which have better after-sales compared to Japan and are of good quality. Japan's top trade negotiator, Ryosei Akazawa, reportedly said that there was no notable impact of US tariffs on Japan's first-quarter gross domestic product.

However, he warned of downside risks to the economy from US trade policy and that the government would "take all necessary steps" to support impacted firms. While improvements in jobs and wages would likely underpin a moderate economic recovery, Akazawa said that risks remained in consumer sentiment and consumption from sustained price hikes.

Krishna Bhimavarapu, Asia-Pacific Economist at State Street Global Advisors, said that while Japan's GDP growth figure was below his estimate, the domestic demand was "very good." Bhimavarapu expects a "reasonable deal with the US" in the coming months, which will mitigate the tariff impact. "All this

will mean that the Bank of Japan will comfortably sit on the sidelines till certainty emerges as we expect just one hike this year, perhaps in Q4," he added. The Bank of Japan held rates at 0.5 percent on May 1 for a second straight meeting. The Bank of Japan had also recently warned on May 13 that the country's economy is likely to moderate going forward, saying that this would be due to the effects of trade policies worldwide.

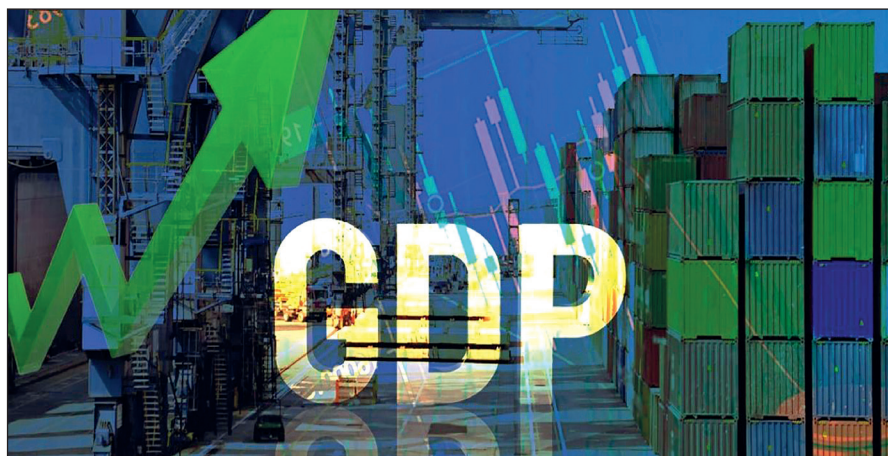
"Negative demand shocks are expected, including the impact of increased uncertainties on business fixed investment and household consumption, a decrease in the volume of exports to the United States and a deterioration in Japan's export profitability," the Bank of Japan wrote. US tariff policy will exert downward pressure on both economic activity and prices in Japan, the central bank noted. Despite these growth concerns, the central bank seems set to continue raising its policy rate, with some BOJ board members saying the bank's inflation target of 2 percent is likely to be realized, and it would continue to raise the policy rate if its outlook for economic activity and prices are achieved.

Inflation in Japan had surpassed the Bank of Japan's 2 percent target for three straight years, coming in most recently at 3.6 percent in April **r**

Singapore economy beats Q1 forecasts

Singapore's economy rose faster than expected in the first quarter year-on-year, official data showed on 20 May 2025, pushed by stronger global demand as businesses rushed to beat the imposition of higher US tariffs. The government, however, warned that downside risks remained as a full-blown trade war between the United States and China could still reignite after the end of a 90-day pause. Singapore's trade-oriented economy expanded by 3.9 percent in the three months to March from the same period a year before, surpassing an advance government estimate of 3.8 percent.

It was, however, weaker than the five percent expansion in the December quarter. And on a quarter-on-quarter basis, the economy contracted by 0.6 percent, signalling the risks ahead. The year-on-year growth in the first quarter was driven by the manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors due to "front-loading activities ahead of anticipated US tariff hikes," the trade ministry said. Although US President Donald Trump imposed a baseline 10 percent tariff on Singapore, the city-state is vulnerable to a global economic slowdown caused by the much higher levies on dozens of other countries because of its heavy reliance on international trade **r**



GCC retail sector enters bold new era, surges to \$390b by 2028

The retail industry in the GCC is undergoing a sweeping transformation. Once dominated by traditional models, the sector has now emerged as a key enabler of economic diversification, technological innovation, and consumer-centric growth. A new report by LOGIC Consulting, titled “Revolutionizing Retail: Unveiling GCC’s Five-Year Transformation”, highlights how the sector is expanding rapidly, projected to reach over \$390 billion by 2028, driven by digital innovation, changing shopper behavior, and strategic government initiatives.

Retail is no longer just a transactional space in the region, it is becoming a cornerstone of national development agendas, fostering private investment and energizing adjacent sectors such as logistics, real estate, and tourism. The report highlights the evolution of consumer expectations across the GCC. Shoppers are now more digitally fluent, time-sensitive, and experience-driven. With 87 percent of consumers in the region using both



online and offline channels to make purchases, the retail experience is no longer linear it is “phygital.”

The GCC’s retail ecosystem is broadly split into two pillars: food and non-food, each showing robust but distinct growth paths. Food retail is expected to grow from \$127.2 billion in 2023 to \$162 billion by 2028, supported by rising urbanization and shifting dietary preferences. At the same time, non-food retail including luxury, electronics, and fashion is surging faster, with a CAGR of 6.2 percent, expected to hit \$243.6

billion within the same period. From AI-enabled platforms to hyper-personalized e-commerce journeys, retailers are reinventing themselves at breakneck speed. The emergence of “quick commerce”; ultra-fast delivery in under 30 minutes, is reshaping how consumers access everyday essentials. Digital-first players like Noon and Amazon.ae are competing head-to-head with legacy giants such as Carrefour and Lulu, who are now embedding AI, live inventory, and omnichannel logistics into their operating models **L**

Saudia Arabia signs \$300b deals with US

Saudi Arabia has signed deals with the US worth more than \$300 billion, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said at the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh on May 13, 2025. During an address at the event, Prince Mohammed said the Kingdom was looking at \$600 billion of investment opportunities, adding that he hoped this would raise to \$1 trillion. He noted that the US was among the largest partners of the Saudi Vision 2030 reform agenda, adding that joint investments were one of the most important pillars of the economic relationship between the two countries.

“The US is a major destination for the

Public Investment Fund, accounting for approximately 40 percent of the fund’s global investments,” he said. He also said that cooperation with Washington was not limited to economic cooperation, but also extended to “establishing peace in the region and the world.” Also speaking at the event, US President Donald Trump praised the transformation underway in Saudi Arabia, as he attributed it to the leadership of King Salman and the crown prince. Trump described the crown prince as a “very great man like no other” and “the greatest representative of his people,” and highlighted the role of Saudis in driving development in their own country and the region as a whole.

Trump pointed to Riyadh’s rise as a global business hub and noted that the Kingdom’s non-oil sector revenues had now surpassed those of the oil sector. He said Saudi Arabia deserved praise for preserving its culture and tradition while also embracing its forward-looking, modern Vision 2030 reform agenda. During his speech, Trump criticized the Biden administration for removing the Houthis from the US terrorist list, calling it a serious mistake. He contrasted regional developments, stating: “Some (in the Gulf) have turned deserts into farms, while Iran has turned its farms into deserts,” and warned that if Iran rejected Washington’s outreach, the US

would be forced to impose maximum pressure. Condemning Hezbollah for destabilizing the region and looting Lebanon, Trump said: “The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran, which has caused unthinkable suffering in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen and beyond.”

He described Lebanon as a victim of Hezbollah and Iran and expressed a desire to help the country. Trump also praised Saudi Arabia’s role in Russia-Ukraine peace talks and affirmed US support for the Kingdom, saying it has “a great future.” Earlier, the two leaders signed a strategic economic partnership agreement in Riyadh, the first leg of Trump’s regional visit.

The partnership included the signing of Memorandums of Understanding in the energy, mining, and defense sectors. Defense cooperation between the two countries centered on the modernization of the capabilities of the Saudi armed forces, along with an agreement between the Saudi Space Agency and NASA. Other agreements included an MoU on mineral resources; an agreement with the Department of Justice; and cooperation on infectious diseases.

Trump arrived in Saudi Arabia what he called a “historic” tour of the Middle East that will mix urgent diplomacy on Gaza with huge business deals. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman warmly greeted Trump as he stepped off Air Force One at King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital and kicked off his Middle East tour.

The two leaders then retreated to a grand hall at the Riyadh airport, where Trump and his aides were served traditional Arabic coffee by waiting attendants wearing ceremonial gun-belts. Royal Saudi Air Force F-15s provided an honorary escort for Air Force One as it approached the

kingdom’s capital. Trump and Prince Mohammed took part in a lunch at the Royal Court, gathering with guests and aides **r**

Qatar sign \$1.2 trillion deal with US

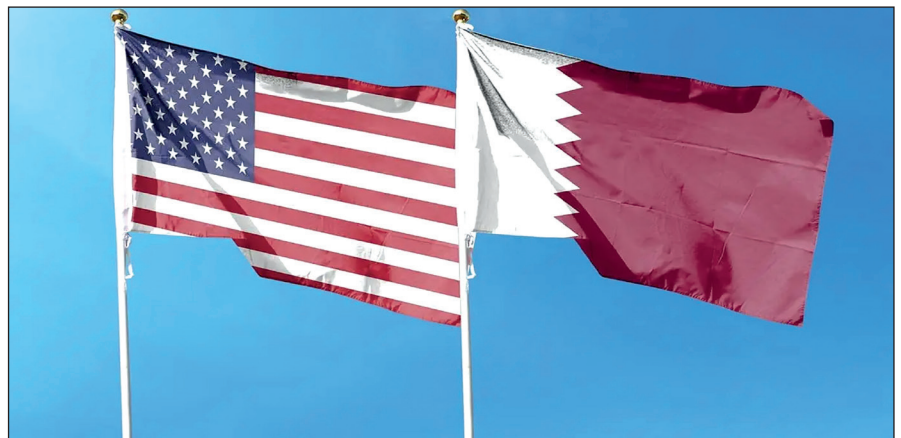
The United States and Qatar signed \$1.2 trillion in economic commitments, including \$96 billion for Doha to buy up to 210 Boeing planes in the company’s largest-ever widebody order and largest-ever 787 order, the White House said. “That’s fantastic. So that’s a record,” US President Donald Trump said, adding: “It’s the largest order of jets in the history of Boeing. That’s pretty good.” His comments followed a deal signing ceremony that included defense agreements including on defense cooperation and the purchase by Qatar of American MQ-9B drones, after about two hours of talks with Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Other deals included Quantinuum finalizing a Joint Venture Agreement with Qatar’s Al Rabban Capital to invest up to \$1 billion in state-of-the-art quantum technologies and workforce development in the US. The US agreed to sell \$1 billion worth of counter-drone capabilities to Qatar, making Doha the first international customer for Raytheon’s Fixed Site

Low, Slow, Small Unmanned Aerial System Integrated Defeat System, according to the White House. General Atomics also agreed to a nearly \$2 billion deal to allow Qatar to purchase MQ-9B remotely piloted aircraft systems.

Washington and Doha also signed a statement of intent to strengthen the bilateral relationship, outlining over \$38 billion in potential investments, including “support for burden-sharing at Al Udeid Air Base and future defense capabilities related to air defense and maritime security.” His Qatar visit is the second destination of his Gulf tour, after a first stop in Riyadh, where he made a surprise announcement lifting sanctions on Syria and met the country’s president. Relations between Washington and Doha have been in the spotlight over Qatar’s offer to Trump of a \$400 million luxury aircraft to serve as a new Air Force One and then pass into his personal use.

Trump’s presidential motorcade made its way from the airport to central Doha led by two Tesla cybertruck cars, customized in the distinctive red of Qatar’s internal security forces. Elon Musk, the Tesla chief executive officer and world’s richest man, was a key campaign contributor for Trump’s 2024 re-election for a second term and has played a prominent early role in this Trump administration **r**



US-China trade war strains global supply chain

The trade truce reached between the US and China arrived just as President Donald Trump's tariffs took a big bite out of North American & Asian manufacturing, with a steep retreat in April purchasing activity after the rush to hoard supply, according to the GEP Global Supply Chain Volatility Index. "The pause on tariffs is a major relief for manufacturers in both the US and China," said John Piatek, vice president of consulting for GEP. "Our Supply Chain Volatility Index shows manufacturing demand in China is dropping steeply, and US manufacturers are aggressively stockpiling key inputs to buffer against tariffs."

But according to Piatek, the trade deal won't quickly quiet US manufacturers' anxiety about how to reduce risks related to China for the long-term. "As they maneuver to de-risk and limit exposure to China, the rapidly changing landscape and uncertainty is clouding manufacturers' outlook and



dampening their capital investment and supply chain," he said.

The GEP Global Supply Chain Volatility Index tracks demand conditions, shortages, transportation costs, inventories, and backlogs based on a monthly survey of 27,000 businesses. "The first blows of the tariff war have landed on global manufacturers," Piatek said. The supply chain volatility data should serve as a warning about what would come next if the temporary pause

in tariffs by the US and China aren't extended permanently after the 90-day pause and the trade war re-escalates.

The data showed a "hockey stick"-like upturn in April, according to Piatek, with North American companies aggressively stockpiling inventory at what he described as a "concerning rate." At the same time, "the first signs of manufacturers anticipating slower demand and supply shortages have emerged," he said **r**

Trump agrees to extend EU trade talks after 50pc tariff threat

US President Donald Trump has agreed to extend a deadline to negotiate tariffs with the European Union by more than a month. Last month, he announced a 20 percent tariff or import tax on most EU goods, but later cut this to 10 percent to allow time for negotiations. Trump expressed frustration with the pace of talks and threatened to raise the tariff rate to an even higher level of 50 percent as soon as 1 June. He wrote on social media that he was pushing his deadline back to 9 July, after a "very nice" call with Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission chief. Von der Leyen echoed Trump's assessment of the call and said the bloc was "ready to advance talks swiftly and decisively".

But, in her own online post, von der Leyen wrote: "To reach a good deal, we would need the time until July 9."

Trump's acceptance of that date means the deadline is close to what it was previously. Before threatening the 50 percent rate, Trump had set a deadline of 8 July for both sides to talk. Trump has long criticized what he views as an unfair US trading relationship with the EU, despite the bloc being one of Washington's largest trading partners. Last year, the EU exported more than \$600 billion (€528b; £443b) in goods to the US while importing \$370 billion worth, according to US government data. More broadly, the US president has defended his wide-ranging program

of tariffs by arguing they will boost American manufacturing and protect jobs.

But his planned import taxes have thrown the world economy into chaos, and many economists say they will make products more expensive for US consumers. Tariffs are taxes charged on goods bought from other countries, paid by the companies that bring foreign goods into the US. In the case of the EU, the president has raised concerns on trade in cars and agricultural goods. Although some tariffs were paused earlier this year to allow for negotiations, a 25 percent levy on EU steel and aluminium remains in place. It was while speaking to reporters at the

White House on afternoon hours before talks with the bloc that Trump said he planned to raise tariffs on all goods sent to the US from the EU to 50 percent by 1 June. He expressed impatience with the ongoing negotiations.

Later the same day, the EU's trade chief Maros Sefcovic reaffirmed the bloc's commitment to securing a fair deal. Following a call with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Sefcovic said: "The EU's fully engaged, committed to securing a deal that works for both." He continued: "EU-US trade is unmatched and must be guided by mutual respect, not threats. We stand ready to defend our interests." The EU has threatened and paused its own measures against the US. It previously said it would introduce a 25 percent tariff on €18 billion worth of US goods coming into Europe but this was put on hold.

The bloc is also currently consulting on additional measures against US imports into the US valued at €95 billion. At the same time, European leaders continue to warn against escalation. France and Germany have called for a diplomatic solution, stressing that tariffs would harm both economies **r**

Euro could be viable alternative to dollar: ECB chief

The euro could become a viable alternative to the US dollar as the global standard currency for international trade, according to European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde. In a speech in Berlin, Germany, Lagarde said that the erratic economic policy of the United States has spooked global investors into limiting their exposure to the dollar in recent months. Many

have opted to invest in gold, without seeing a viable alternative. "The ongoing changes create the opening for a 'global euro moment'," she said.

Lagarde said investors seek "geopolitical assurance in another form: they invest in the assets of regions that are reliable security partners and can honor alliances with hard power". "The global economy thrived on a foundation of openness and multilateralism underpinned by US leadership ... but today it is fracturing." The dollar's role has been on the decline for years and now makes up 58 percent of international reserves, the lowest in decades, but still well above the euro's 20 percent share. Any enhanced role for the euro must coincide with greater military strength that can back up partnerships, Lagarde said. Europe should also make the euro the currency of choice for businesses invoicing international trade, she said. This could be supported by forging new trade agreements, enhanced cross-border payments and liquidity agreements with the ECB.

Looming challenges

The euro's global role has been stagnant for decades now since the European Union's financial institutions remain unfinished and governments have shown little appetite to embark on more integration. For this, Europe needs a deeper, more liquid capital market, must bolster its legal foundations, and needs to underpin its commitment to open trade with security capabilities, Lagarde argued. Reforming the domestic economy may be more pressing, however, she said. The euro area capital market is still fragmented, inefficient and lacks a truly liquid, widely available safe asset that investors could flock to.

"Economic logic tells us that public goods need to be jointly financed. And this joint financing could provide

the basis for Europe to gradually increase its supply of safe assets," Lagarde said. Joint borrowing has been taboo for some key eurozone members, particularly Germany, which fears that its taxpayers could end up having to pay for the fiscal irresponsibility of others. If Europe succeeded, the benefits would be large, Lagarde said. The investment inflow would allow domestic players to borrow at lower cost, insulate the bloc from exchange rate movements and protect it against international sanctions **r**

UK economy beats forecast to grow 0.7pc in Q1

Britain's economy grew more than expected in the first quarter, official data showed covering the period before business tax hikes and US President Donald Trump's tariffs blitz took effect. Gross domestic product rose 0.7 percent in the January-to-March period after only growing slightly in the final quarter of last year, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. The data comes as a boost for the Labour government, which struggled to kickstart stagnant growth since it came into power in July.

UK finance minister Rachel Reeves welcomed the news saying the figures "show the strength and potential of the UK economy." But analysts cautioned that the bumper growth may not be sustained. The data covers the period before April's introduction of a hike to a business tax laid out in the Labour government's maiden budget in October. It also precedes a baseline 10-percent tariff imposed on the UK and other countries by US President Donald Trump last month. The growth spurt is "set to be short lived as tariffs take effect" said Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK **r**

ব্যবসায়ীদের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পর উপদেষ্টা

বিদ্যুতে কিছু কমিয়ে, আমদানি বাড়িয়ে শিল্পে দেওয়া হবে বাড়তি গ্যাস

শিল্পে সংকট কাটিয়ে উঠতে এ খাতে বাড়তি ২৫ কোটি ঘনফুট গ্যাস দেওয়া হবে বলে জানিয়েছেন বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়ের উপদেষ্টা মুহাম্মদ ফাওজুল কবির খান। তিনি বলেছেন, শিল্পে বাড়তি এই গ্যাস সরবরাহ করা হবে বাড়তি আমদানি ও বিদ্যুৎ খাতে ব্যবহার কিছুটা কমিয়ে। আজ বুধবার সচিবালয়ে ব্যবসায়ীদের সঙ্গে এক বৈঠক শেষে সাংবাদিকদের এ কথা জানান জ্বালানি উপদেষ্টা। ব্রিফিংকালে ব্যবসায়ীদের শীর্ষ সংগঠন বাংলাদেশ শিল্প ও বণিক সমিতি ফেডারেশনের (এফবিসিসিআই) সাবেক সভাপতি এ কে আজাদ, প্রধান উপদেষ্টার প্রেস সচিব শফিকুল আলম, জ্বালানি সচিব মো. সাইফুল ইসলাম প্রমুখ এ সময় উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

বৈঠকে উপস্থিত ছিলেন মেঘনা গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের চেয়ারম্যান মোস্তফা কামাল, নিট পোশাক কারখানার মালিকদের সংগঠন বিকেএমইএর সভাপতি মোহাম্মদ হাতেম, বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের সভাপতি আনোয়ার উল আলম চৌধুরী, প্রাণ-আরএফএল গ্রুপের চেয়ারম্যান আহসান খান চৌধুরী প্রমুখ। শিল্প খাতে গ্যাস সংকট বাড়ায় বেশ কিছু দিন ধরে উদ্বেগ জানাচ্ছিলেন ব্যবসায়ীরা। তাঁরা গ্যাস সরবরাহ বৃদ্ধির দাবি নিয়ে উপদেষ্টার সঙ্গে বৈঠক করতে যান।

বৈঠক শেষে ফাওজুল কবির খান বলেন, শিল্পে গ্যাসের সরবরাহ বাড়তে দুটি সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া

হয়েছে। এক, পবিত্র রমজান মাসে বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে ১২০ কোটি ঘনফুট গ্যাস দেওয়া হয়েছে। সেখান থেকে ১৫ কোটি ঘনফুট গ্যাস এখন শিল্প খাতে দেওয়া হবে। দুই, মে থেকে আগস্ট-এই চার মাসে চার জাহাজ বাড়তি তরলীকৃত প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস (এলএনজি) আমদানি করা হবে। এতে আরও ১০ কোটি ঘনফুট গ্যাস পাওয়া যাবে। সব মিলিয়ে শিল্পের জন্য ২৫ কোটি ঘনফুট গ্যাস দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে।

উপদেষ্টা জানান, বাড়তি এই গ্যাস বরাদ্দ দেওয়া হবে শিল্পঘন এলাকায়। কোথায় কোথায় গ্যাস দিতে হবে, তা ব্যবসায়ীরা ঠিক করে দেবেন। সে অনুযায়ী সরবরাহ বাড়ানো হবে। একই সঙ্গে নজরদারি বাড়ানো হবে। ফাওজুল কবির খান বলেন, ‘এ বৈঠকে শিল্পোদ্যোক্তারা আরেকটি কথা জানিয়েছেন, অবৈধ সংযোগের কারণে অনেক ক্ষেত্রে গ্যাস পাওয়া যায় না। অবৈধ গ্যাস সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করতে একটি যৌথ টাস্কফোর্স গঠন করা হবে। দ্রুত অবৈধ সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করার প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হবে।’

বাড়তি গ্যাস আমদানি করলে ভর্তুকির চাপ বাড়বে কি না, বা গ্যাসের দামের ওপর কোনো প্রভাব পড়বে কি না, এ বিষয়ে উপদেষ্টা বলেন, চার জাহাজ এলএনজি আমদানির ফলে ১১ হাজার কোটি টাকা ঘাটতি হবে। তবে শিল্পের উৎপাদন ব্যাহত হলে সেটির ক্ষতি হবে আরও বেশি। এ জন্য সরকার একটি

ভারসাম্য আনার চেষ্টা করছে। তিনি বলেন, ‘সরকার বেশি দামে গ্যাস এনে কম দামে সরবরাহ করছে; তবু জনস্বার্থ ও শিল্পের স্বার্থে সরকার গ্যাস ও বিদ্যুতের মূল্য বৃদ্ধি করছে না।’

ভবিষ্যতে গ্যাসের সংকট হবে না, এমন কোনো নিশ্চয়তা সরকার দেবে কি না, এ বিষয়ে ফাওজুল কবির খান বলেন, ‘সরকার এমন গ্যারান্টি দিতে পারে না। এই সংকট বর্তমান সময়ে হয়নি। এটা আগে থেকে চলে আসছে। এটার সমাধান করতে হবে। আমরা স্বল্প মেয়াদে দায়িত্বে এসেছি। তবু চেষ্টা করছি।’ উপদেষ্টা বলেন, ‘তখন আমরা তেলভিত্তিক বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্র বেশি চালাব। এখনো চালানো হচ্ছে। তখন আরও বেশি পরিমাণে চালানো হবে।’ তিনি বলেন, বর্তমান সরকার রমজানে অগ্রাধিকার দিয়েছে বিদ্যুৎ ও সেচে। এখন অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হচ্ছে শিল্প খাতে।

দেশে গ্যাসের উৎপাদন বাড়তে সরকারের নেওয়া পদক্ষেপগুলো তুলে ধরেন উপদেষ্টা। তিনি বলেন, সরকার এই বছর ৫০টি কুপ অনুসন্ধান করার পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে। আগামী বছর ১০০টি কুপ অনুসন্ধান করা হবে। ভোলায় নতুন কুপ অনুসন্ধানের প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হচ্ছে। পুরোনো কুপ সংস্কার করে তিনটি গ্যাসক্ষেত্র থেকে ২ কোটি ৭০ লাখ ঘনফুট গ্যাসের উৎপাদন বাড়ানো সম্ভব হয়েছে, যা ইতোমধ্যে জাতীয় গ্রিডে যুক্ত হয়েছে।

নিউইয়র্ক টাইমসের প্রতিবেদন

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের শুষ্কনীতিতে হুমকির মুখে পোশাক খাত

বাংলাদেশের জন্য এ বছরটি সব দিক থেকেই বেশ কঠিন। গত গ্রীষ্মে অর্থনৈতিক ভঙ্গুর পরিস্থিতির মধ্যে বিক্ষোভকারীরা একজন শাসককে উৎখাত করে এবং দেশে অস্থিতিশীলতা দেখা দেয়। অন্তর্বর্তী সরকারের হাত ধরে দেশের অর্থনীতি পুনরুদ্ধারে অগ্রগতির মধ্যে এক ভয়াবহ খবর আসে। মাসখানেক আগে বাংলাদেশি পণ্য আমদানিতে ৩৭ শতাংশ শুষ্ক আরোপের ঘোষণা দেয় যুক্তরাষ্ট্র। এ নিয়ে বিশ্বজুড়ে প্রতিক্রিয়া শুরু হলে বাংলাদেশসহ অনেক দেশের শুষ্ক স্থগিত

করেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট ডোনাল্ড ট্রাম্প। তবে এই শুষ্ক পুনরায় কার্যকর হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা বাংলাদেশের লাখ লাখ পোশাক শ্রমিককে দুশ্চিন্তায় ফেলে দিয়েছে।

সম্প্রতি নিউইয়র্ক টাইমসের এক প্রতিবেদনে এসব তথ্য জানানো হয়। প্রতিবেদনে বলা হয়, পাঁচ বছর ধরে পোশাক কারখানায় সেলাইয়ের কাজ করে পরিবার চালাচ্ছেন মুর্শিদা আখতার (২৫)। তাঁর বাড়ি দেশের উত্তরাঞ্চলে। বর্তমানে তিনি ঢাকার উপকণ্ঠে সাভারে বসবাস করেন। সম্প্রতি তিনি এবং তাঁর

আরও ২০০ সহকর্মী (তাদের ৭০ শতাংশই নারী) সাভারের ৪৫ ইয়ার্ন ডাইং নামের একটি পোশাক কারখানায় কাজ শুরু করেছেন। মুর্শিদা জানান, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের শুষ্ক আরোপ নিয়ে উদ্বেগ-উৎকণ্ঠার মধ্যে সময় পার করছেন তিনি। বর্তমান চাকরি থেকে তিনি প্রতি মাসে ১৫৬ ডলার (প্রায় ১৯ হাজার টাকা) পাওয়ার আশা করছেন। তবে তাঁর আশঙ্কা, কারখানায় কাজের ক্রয়াদেশ কমে যেতে পারে। আর ক্রয়াদেশ কমে গেলে কাজের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কমে যাবে তাঁর আয়-রোজগারও।

ট্রাম্পের আগের আরোপিত শুল্ক এবং চীনা পণ্যের ওপর আরোপিত ১৪৫ শতাংশ শুল্কের পার্শ্বপ্রতিক্রিয়ায় বাংলাদেশের মতো দেশের অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি থমকে যেতে পারে। বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানিযোগ্য পণ্যের ৮৫ শতাংশই হচ্ছে তৈরি পোশাক। এই পণ্য সবচেয়ে বেশি রপ্তানি হয় যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে। স্থগিত আদেশ শেষ হওয়ার পর যদি ট্রাম্প ৩৭ শতাংশ শুল্ক নাও আরোপ করেন, তবুও বাংলাদেশকে অন্যান্য দেশের মতো ১০ শতাংশ শুল্কের মুখোমুখি হতে হবে। তবে পোশাকের মতো কম মার্জিন ব্যবসায় এই পরিমাণ শুল্কও অনেক কঠিন। তাছাড়া পোশাক খাতে রপ্তানিকারক দেশ হিসেবে চীনের পাশাপাশি ভারত, কম্বোডিয়া ও শ্রীলঙ্কার অবস্থান বেশ শক্ত। তাদের সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের তীব্র প্রতিযোগিতাও রয়েছে।

ডলারের দাম বাজারের হাতে, থাকবে নজরদারি; বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

আন্তর্জাতিক মুদ্রা তহবিলের (আইএমএফ) সঙ্গে দীর্ঘ দর-কষাকষির পর মার্কিন ডলারের দাম নির্ধারণের ক্ষেত্রে পরিবর্তন এনেছে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক। ডলার কেনা ও বেচার ক্ষেত্রে দাম কী হবে, তা ব্যাংক ও গ্রাহকের ওপর ছেড়ে দিয়েছে। অর্থাৎ ডলারের দাম আরও বাজারভিত্তিক হবে, সঙ্গে থাকবে জোরদার তদারকি। আইএমএফের ঋণের শর্তপূরণের অংশ হিসেবে এ পদক্ষেপ নেওয়া হয়েছে। যদিও এ পদ্ধতি পুরোপুরি বাজারভিত্তিক হবে কি না, তা নিয়ে এখনো প্রশ্ন রয়েছে। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক জানিয়েছে, ডলারের দাম যাতে অস্বাভাবিকভাবে বেড়ে না যায়, সে জন্য কঠোর নজরদারি করা হচ্ছে। পাশাপাশি অতি জরুরি প্রয়োজনে ডলারের চাহিদা মেটাতে রিজার্ভ থেকে ৫০ কোটি ডলার দিয়ে একটি তহবিল গঠন করা হয়েছে।

সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাতের দুবাই থেকে অনলাইনে এক সংবাদ সম্মেলনে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের গভর্নর আহসান এইচ মনসুর সম্প্রতি এ সিদ্ধান্তের কথা জানান। তিনি বলেন, 'সামগ্রিক অর্থনীতি স্থিতিশীল অবস্থায় ফিরে এসেছে এবং আমরা এ সময়ের জন্যই অপেক্ষা করছিলাম। আইএমএফের সঙ্গে সময়টা নিয়েই একরকম দর-কষাকষি হয়। গত কয়েক মাসে বিনিময় হারের কোনো পরিবর্তন হয়নি এবং কেন্দ্রীয় ব্যাংক কোনো হস্তক্ষেপও করেনি। এমনকি কোনো ডলার বিক্রি করিনি। বৈদেশিক সাহায্য ছাড়াই আমরা বাজার থেকে ডলার কিনে রিজার্ভ বাড়িয়েছি। সরকারের ব্যয়

সংকোচন এবং প্রবাসী আয় ৩০ শতাংশ বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায় এ স্বস্তিদায়ক পরিস্থিতি তৈরি হয়েছে।'

সংবাদ সম্মেলনে দাম নির্ধারণের বিষয়ে গভর্নর স্পষ্ট করে বলেন, 'বাজারভিত্তিক মানে এই নয় যে ডলার যেকোনো দামে কেনাবেচা হবে। আমাদের সরবরাহ পরিস্থিতি এবং পূর্বাভাস অনুযায়ী যৌক্তিক দাম নির্ধারণ করতে হবে। বড় ধরনের প্রয়োজন দেখা দিলে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক সহায়তা করবে। ডলারের বাজারে কোনো সিডিকেট বরদাশত করা হবে না। ডলারের দাম দুবাইয়ে নয়, দেশেই নির্ধারিত হবে।' গভর্নরের এ ঘোষণার পরপরই বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক এ বিষয়ে একটি প্রজ্ঞাপন জারি করে। এতে দিনে দুবার ডলারের দামের তথ্য দিতে বলা হয়েছে। এর মাধ্যমে কেনা ও বিক্রির মধ্যে এক টাকা পর্যন্ত ব্যবধানের বিষয়টি বাতিল করা হয়েছে। ফলে কেনা ও বিক্রির দামের ক্ষেত্রে আনুষ্ঠানিক কোনো নির্দেশনা থাকল না। পাশাপাশি গতকাল থেকেই ব্যাংকগুলোতে কর্মকর্তাদের পাঠিয়ে তদারকি শুরু হয়েছে। ব্যাংকগুলো গতকাল ১২২ টাকা ৭০ পয়সা দামে প্রবাসী আয় কিনেছে। বিক্রি করেছে ১২৩ টাকা ৫০ পয়সা পর্যন্ত দামে। খোলাবাজারে ডলার বিক্রি হচ্ছে ১২৪ টাকায়।

এদিকে গত রাতে আইএমএফের বাংলাদেশ মিশনের প্রধান ক্রিস পাপাজর্জিও এক বিবৃতিতে বিনিময় হারের নমনীয়তা বৃদ্ধি ও বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ শক্তিশালী করার সুপারিশ করেছেন। নতুন বিনিময় হার ব্যবস্থা বাস্তবায়নের ওপর জোর দেন তিনি। সংবাদ সম্মেলনে দাম নির্ধারণের বিষয়ে গভর্নর স্পষ্ট করে বলেন, 'বাজারভিত্তিক মানে এই নয় যে ডলার যেকোনো দামে কেনাবেচা হবে। আমাদের সরবরাহ পরিস্থিতি এবং পূর্বাভাস অনুযায়ী যৌক্তিক দাম নির্ধারণ করতে হবে। বড় ধরনের প্রয়োজন দেখা দিলে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক সহায়তা করবে। ডলারের বাজারে কোনো সিডিকেট বরদাশত করা হবে না। ডলারের দাম দুবাইয়ে নয়, দেশেই নির্ধারিত হবে'।

ধীরে ধীরে পুনরুদ্ধারের পথে এগোচ্ছে অর্থনীতি; এমসিসিআইর প্রতিবেদন

প্রবৃদ্ধির গতি মন্থর হলেও ধীরে ধীরে পুনরুদ্ধারের দিকে এগোচ্ছে অর্থনীতি। রপ্তানি আয়, রেমিট্যান্স বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ স্থিতিশীল ও গ্রামীণ অর্থনীতিকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করতে সহায়তা করছে। ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলছে

সামগ্রিক অর্থনীতির স্থিতিশীলতার ক্ষেত্রে। তবে ব্যাংক খাতে বিগত সময়ের নিয়ন্ত্রণগত দুর্বলতা ও বড় অঙ্কের ঋণ কলেঙ্কারির কারণে সামগ্রিক অর্থনৈতিক পুনরুদ্ধারে বিলম্ব ঘটছে। ব্যাংক খাতে সংস্কার এবং আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতি মানুষের আস্থা পুনঃস্থাপনের সাম্প্রতিক উদ্যোগগুলো অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি পুনরুজ্জীবিত করতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখবে।

গত জানুয়ারি-মার্চ সময়ে দেশের অর্থনৈতিক পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে মেট্রোপলিটন চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এমসিসিআই) ঢাকার প্রতিবেদনে এমন পর্যবেক্ষণ তুলে ধরা হয়েছে। গতকাল মঙ্গলবার এমসিসিআইর ত্রৈমাসিক প্রতিবেদনটি প্রকাশ করা হয়। এতে চলতি ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে তৃতীয় প্রান্তিকের নানা পরিস্থিতি বিশ্লেষণ করা হয়েছে।

প্রতিবেদনে বলা হয়, বাংলাদেশ পরিসংখ্যান ব্যুরোর (বিবিএস) তথ্যমতে, চলতি অর্থবছরের দ্বিতীয় প্রান্তিকে জিডিপি প্রবৃদ্ধি হয়েছে ৪ দশমিক ৪৮ শতাংশ। জানুয়ারি-জুন সময়ের মুদ্রানীতিতে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক চলতি অর্থবছরে জিডিপি প্রবৃদ্ধি ৪ থেকে ৫ শতাংশের মধ্যে হবে বলে পূর্বাভাস দিয়েছে। তবে উন্নয়ন সহযোগী প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলো আরও কম প্রবৃদ্ধির পূর্বাভাস দিয়েছে।

ত্রৈমাসিক এই প্রতিবেদনে বলা হয়, প্রবৃদ্ধির গতি মন্থর হলেও ধীরে ধীরে ঘুরে দাঁড়ানোর লক্ষণও দেখা গেছে গত জানুয়ারি-মার্চ সময় বা চলতি অর্থবছরের তৃতীয় প্রান্তিকে। এ প্রসঙ্গে রপ্তানি আয়, রেমিট্যান্সসহ বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে ইতিবাচক প্রবণতার কথা উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে এতে। এতে বলা হয়, বৈশ্বিক অনিশ্চয়তার উচ্চমাত্রার মাঝে বাংলাদেশ অর্থনীতির একাধিক চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হচ্ছে। রাজনৈতিক অনিশ্চয়তা এবং বৈশ্বিক সংঘাতপূর্ণ পরিস্থিতির কারণে অর্থনীতিতে যে কঠিন পরিস্থিতি তৈরি হয়েছে, সেটি অতিক্রমের চেষ্টা করছে বাংলাদেশ।

অর্থনীতির গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সূচকগুলোতে মিশ্র রূপ প্রবণতা রয়েছে। প্রতিবেদনে অর্থনীতির গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কয়েকটি সূচকে পরবর্তী কয়েক মাসের পূর্বাভাস দেওয়া হয়েছে। এতে বলা হয়, মে ও জুন মাসে আমদানি ও রপ্তানি সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে। বাড়তে পারে রেমিট্যান্স প্রবাহও। বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার রিজার্ভ মে মাসে খানিকটা কমলেও জুনে তা বাড়বে। তবে গত মাসে মূল্যস্ফীতি খানিকটা কমলেও মে ও জুন মাসে বাড়তে পারে।

TRADE INFORMATION

May 2025

The following **Trade Inquiries** have been received and collected from different sources abroad. Interested member-firms may like to contact them directly without any obligation on the part of DCCI.

FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS

China International Screen Printing and Digital Intelligent Printing Expo 2025

Date: 07 - 09 Aug 2025
 Venue: Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC), Shanghai, China
 Organizer: Guangzhou Teyin Exhibition Service Co. Ltd.
 Contact Person: Vivian
 Tel: 8620-89300178 89300188
 E-mail: SDPEGZ@hotmail.com
 Website: <http://en.zgwywz.net/>

Annual Immuno-Oncology Summit 2025

Date: 11 - 13 Aug 2025
 Venue: Hilton Philadelphia at Penns Landing, Philadelphia, USA
 Organizer: Cambridge Innovation Institute
 Tel: 781.972.5400
 E-mail: chi@healthtech.com
 Website: <https://www.immuno-oncologysummit.com/>

Healthcare Technology & AI Transformation Assembly 2025

Date: 12 - 13 Aug 2025
 Venue: The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, Atlanta, USA
 Organizer: The Millenium Alliance
 Tel: 212-256-9890
 E-mail: info@mill-all.com
 Website: <https://mill-all.com/assemblies/healthcare-technology-ai-transformation-assembly-august-2025/>

Shanghai International Automotive Innovation Technology Week 2025

Date: 13 - 15 Aug 2025
 Venue: Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC), Shanghai, China
 Organizer: Info Convention and Exhibition (Shanghai) Co. Ltd
 Tel: +86 183 1102 9887 (WeChat)
 Email: therese.tong@info-shanghai.com
 Website: <https://sh.iatwchina.com/en/?about/7.html>

The Bioprocessing Summit 2025

Date: 18 - 21 Aug 2025
 Venue: Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport, Boston, USA
 Organizer: Cambridge Innovation Institute
 Tel: 781.972.5400
 Email: chi@healthtech.com
 Website: <https://www.bioprocessingsummit.com/>

Indonesia Digital Technology Expo 2025 (IDTEX)

Date: 02 - 04 Sep 2025
 Venue: Jakarta International Expo, Jakarta, Indonesia
 Organizer: CNG Trade Events
 Tel: (+62)21-2933-5568
 Email: info@cngme.com
 Website: <https://digitaltechnology.id/>

Supply Chain Management Fair 2025

Date: 10 - 12 Sep 2025
 Venue: KINTEX (Korea International Exhibition Center), Goyang-si, South Korea
 Organizer: JNC MESSE
 Tel: +82-2-338-3454
 Email: scmfair@naver.com
 Website: <https://scmfair.kr/eng/exhibition/overview.asp>

China International (Guangzhou) Fisheries & Seafood Expo 2025

Date: 11 - 13 Sep 2025
 Venue: Guangzhou Pazhou · China Import and Export Fair Complex, Guangzhou, China
 Organizer: Guangzhou Boyi Global Exhibition Co.Ltd.
 Tel: +86 20 66339113
 Email: info@gzboyi.com.cn
 Website: <http://www.chinafishex.com/?lang=en>

Texworld Apparel Sourcing Paris 2025

Date: 15 - 17 Sep 2025
 Venue: Paris Le Bourget Exhibition Centre, Paris, France
 Organizer: Messe Frankfurt France S.A.S.
 Tel: +33 7 88 48 71 48
 Email: visitorservice@france.messefrankfurt.com
 Website: <https://www.texworld-paris.fr/messefrankfurt.com/paris/en.html>

Malaysia International Automotive & Parts Expo 2025

Date: 24 - 26 Oct 2025
 Venue: Malaysia International Exhibition & Convention Centre (MIECC), Seri Kembangan, Malaysia
 Organizer: Motonation
 Tel: +60183932118
 Email: jet@motonation.com.my
 Website: <https://malaysiaautopartsexpo.com/>

Guangzhou International Screen Printing & Industrial Ink-Jet Printing & Digital Intelligent Printing Expo 2025

Date: 10 - 12 Nov 2025
 Venue: China Import and Export Fair(Canton Fair Complex), Guangzhou, China
 Organizer: Guangzhou Teyin Exhibition Service Co. , Ltd.
 Tel: 020-89300178
 Website: <http://www.zgwywz.com/en/>

Note: Information about trade fairs and events may change. To get more information, please contact the organizers.

Share Market (As of May 29, 2025)

REGIONAL MARKETS, MARCH 25

Country	Index	PE	Yield	Interest Rate%
Bangladesh	DSE 30 Index	10.90	5.05	10.00
	DSEX	10.70	4.52	
India	SENSEX	21.54		6.25
	BSE 100			
Sri Lanka	CSE All Share Index	8.30		8.00
Thailand	SET	16.23		2.00
Hong Kong	Hang Seng	11.95		4.75
China	Composite	14.34		3.10

RECENT MARKET INFORMATION

Date	Total Trade	Total Volume	Total Value in Tk. (mn)	Total Mkt. Cap in Tk. (mn)
23/06/2025	101290	123463905	2765.353	6521485.543
22/06/2005	106701	119086289	2717.076	6490851.145
19/06/2025	114792	116703656	3050.069	6507434.556
18/06/2025	111400	125273450	3278.314	6514060.609
17/06/2025	118295	137591416	3136.216	6486473.183
16/06/2025	137693	163364536	4173.728	6499465.342
15/06/2025	94135	106744424	2630.271	6463647.823
04/06/2025	77709	82681054	2244.972	6505913.793
03/06/2025	87384	97508263	2290.614	6471527.690
02/06/2025	95228	106944782	2753.034	6526930.580
01/06/2025	86900	109459288	2351.892	6502062.435
29/05/2025	102204	129039123	2474.242	6469847.506
28/05/2025	114875	146906988	2649.869	6419916.932
27/05/2025	105988	155131602	2727.446	6463444.758
26/05/2025	107491	144757498	2826.162	6500672.318
25/05/2025	97640	120130751	2355.116	6505922.694

Top 10 Gainer Considering Close Price & YCP

Trading Code	CloseEP	High	Low	YCP	%Change
RAHIM FOOD	82.9	82.9	74.5	75.4	9.9469
DSHGARME	102.0	102.0	92.2	92.8	9.9138
IBP	10.0	10.0	9.1	9.1	9.8901
CENTRALINS	35.0	35.2	33.0	32.0	9.375
PHENIXINS	24.8	25.1	22.1	22.9	8.2969
RAHIMTEXT	111.7	113.7	103.1	103.4	8.0271
NLTUBES	78.2	78.9	73.2	73.3	6.6849
MIDLANDBNK	24.4	24.7	22.0	22.9	6.5502
SONARGAON	38.2	38.5	36.1	36.0	6.1111
STYLECRAFT	63.7	64.6	59.1	60.3	5.6385

Top 20 Shares by value on June 23, 2025

Trading Code	LTP	High	Low	YCP	CloseEP	Trade	Value (mn)	Volume
LOVELLO	104.8	105	100.9	100.2	104.8	3726	205	1991139
MIDLANDBNK	24.4	24.7	22	22.9	24.4	1506	120	5090088
SQURPHARMA	203.9	204.7	202	203.8	203.9	1359	88	432227
BRACBANK	50.1	50.4	49.8	50.1	50.1	1008	83	1656386
BEACHHATCH	45.1	45.4	43.8	44.1	45.1	2359	69	1554324
CENTRALINS	35	35.2	33	32	35	1272	56	1630689
KBPPWBIL	113.7	116.7	113.3	114.1	113.7	883	52	460339
BATBC	271.9	275.5	270	275.5	271.9	2103	50	185370
SEAPEARL	49.5	49.7	48	47.7	49.5	1459	47	971972
SONARGAON	38.2	38.5	36.1	36	38.2	2040	46	1247376

Source: Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE)



DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed (second from left) presenting DCCI's publication "Genesis of DCCI" to the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Vietnam H.E. Mohammad Lutfor Rahman (third from left) after a courtesy meeting held on May 15 at DCCI.

Founder Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas (left) had a courtesy meeting with the DCCI Vice President Md. Salem Sulaiman (center) on May 22.



DCCI Senior Vice President Razeef H Chowdhury (left) and Vice President Md. Salem Sulaiman (second from left) attended the Vietnam-Bangladesh Business Forum-2025 organized by FBCCI held on May 14 at a city hotel.



DCCI Acting President Razeev H Chowdhury (center) seen presiding over the 5th meeting of the DCCI board of directors held on May 31. DCCI Vice President Md. Salem Sulaiman (sixth from right) along with other members of the board are also seen in the picture.

DCCI Vice President Md. Salem Sulaiman (left), Director Ln. Md. Mostafa Kamal, Peng (second from left), Acting Secretary General of Dhaka Chamber Dr. AKM Asaduzzaman Patwary (fifth from left) along with the representatives from various construction firms attended the pre-bid meeting for the DCCI Building Facelifting Project held on May 12.



Chairman of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) and Editor of the DCCI Journal of Business and Economic Policy (DJBEP) Dr. Zaidi Sattar (right), Acting Secretary General of Dhaka Chamber Dr. AKM Asaduzzaman Patwary (left) among others were present at the meeting of the Editorial Board of the DCCI Journal held on May 27. DCCI is planning to published the second issue of the Journal soon.

Fire Drill 2025



Registration Open

Training Courses and Workshops of DBI for the month of July 2025

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Training on 'Branding & Marketing (Sales) for Business Success'. | July 11, 2025 |
| 2. Workshop on 'Demand Management and Its Forecast Techniques'. | July 11, 2025 |
| 3. Training on 'Maximizing Your Leadership Potentials for Navigating Success'. | July 18, 2025 |
| 4. Training on 'Professionalism in Business Communication & E-mail Writing'. | July 18, 2025 |
| 5. Training on 'Human Resource Management and Transformational Skills'. | July 25, 2025 |
| 6. Workshop on 'Essential Skills for Negotiation towards Win-Win Deal'. | July 25, 2025 |
| 7. Workshop on 'Understanding L/C Procedures and INCOTERMS for Export & Import'. | July 25, 2025 |

Duration of each Training/Workshop: 10:00 AM - 5:30 PM

Course fee (each course): Tk. 3,000/-

Certificate will be awarded

Admission Going On...

Session: July-September 2025



Benefits-

- ◆ Joint Certification
- ◆ Expert-Led Sessions
- ◆ Career advancement

Online Certificate Courses:

FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY (FIN-TECH)

jointly with Daffodil International University (DIU)

BUSINESS DATA ANALYSIS & FINANCIAL FORECASTING

jointly with Daffodil International University (DIU)

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

jointly with Daffodil International University (DIU)

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING (FA)

jointly with The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB)

Professional Marketing

jointly with American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB)

Business, Marketing Management, & Technology

jointly with American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB)

Course Fee: Tk. 12,000/- for each course, payable in favour of 'Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry' by EFT/ Pay Order/ Cheque/ Cash Deposit to Bank. It could also be paid through bKash merchant number 01766018659 (Payment) with a bKash charge. Fee includes cost of tuition, course materials, examinations, certificate and excludes VAT & Tax.

For further information

Cell & WhatsApp # 01777-364474/ 01746948230 & IP Phone: +88 09666888555; Ext. 1034; 88 09666319653

E-mail: amit@dhakachamber.com; Website: www.dcci-dbi.edu.bd