

Emphasizing on Mutual Collaboration for a Resilient Economy



From the Desk of the Administrator



Esteemed Members, Colleagues, and Valued Stakeholders,

We are delighted to share with you the August edition of our Monthly E-Bulletin. This issue offers a glimpse into the work we are doing together to strengthen trade and investment opportunities in Bangladesh. From strategic initiatives to inclusive collaborations and policy advocacy, each feature reflects our shared vision of sustainable growth and collective progress.

Over the past month, the FBCCI has actively engaged with development partners in pursuit of enhanced trade collaboration and economic cooperation. With the ambition of strengthening bilateral trade relations and fostering cooperation between Bangladesh and the United States, a courtesy meeting was held between FBCCI and the US trade envoy. Aspiring

to enable sustainable growth, reduce trade barriers, and create a conducive environment for trade, FBCCI organized a meeting with the visiting Commerce Minister of Pakistan.

In August, the Economic Minister, Commercial Counselors, and First Secretary (Commercial) designate of Bangladesh to several missions visited FBCCI. We have shared views and insights with the designated officers and wish their success in fostering Bangladesh's trade and investment at home and abroad. A meeting was also held between the FBCCI and JICA to explore avenues of collaboration with the private sector and work together on climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives & resilience, food safety, etc.

Moreover, FBCCI has been actively engaged with several strategic dialogues and consultative meetings

with key stakeholders, prominent business leaders, and esteemed representatives from various chambers, trade associations, and industry forums throughout August. Additionally, it continues to play a vital role in representing Bangladesh's private sector in high-level deliberations at both national and international platforms.

Two articles namely "Disaster Preparedness in Business: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Economy" and "From LDC to Regional Hub: The South Asian Advantage for Bangladesh's LDC Transition" have been incorporated in this edition respectively by FBCCI's Safety Council and Research & Planning Wing.

As we wrap up, I'd like to take a moment to thank our members, business leaders, and partners for their continued support. Your collaboration and dedication make all the difference. Together, we are not only driving progress but also building the foundations of a strong and resilient economy.

With sincere regards,

Md. Hafizur Rahman
 Administrator, FBCCI

US Trade Envoy meets FBCCI Administrator

Mr. Paul G. Frost, Commercial Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka met Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of the FBCCI, on 19 August, 2025 at the FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka. Strengthening bilateral trade relations and fostering cooperation between Bangladesh and the United States were the key priorities discussed during the meeting.

In his remarks, FBCCI Administrator Md. Hafizur Rahman underscored the long-standing trade partnership between the two countries and highlighted the United States as one of the significant markets for Bangladesh, particularly in the ready-made garment sector. He also stressed the importance of trade agreements between Bangladesh and US.

Mr. Paul G. Frost emphasized the significance of strengthening business-to-business networking and encouraged Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and business leaders to



actively participate in the U.S. Investment Summit. He reiterated the United States' commitment to fostering both trade relations and cooperation with Bangladesh.

In his comment, Mr. Md. Alamgir, Secretary General of the FBCCI, emphasized the importance of a strong bilateral trade relationship between the two countries, particularly in terms of sustainable development, poverty reduction, and women empowerment,

both locally and globally.

Head of International Affairs of the FBCCI, Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal, ndc, and Advisor of the Safety Council of FBCCI, Brig. Gen. (Retd.) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah also highlighted various aspects related to trade and investment between the two countries.

Mr. Abir Barua, Commercial Specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka attended the meeting, among others.

FBCCI organized a meeting with the Commerce Minister of Pakistan

A discussion meeting was held with the visiting Commerce Minister of Pakistan Mr. Jam Kamal Khan on August 24, 2025 at the FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka. Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and business leaders were attended the meeting.

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI

chaired the meeting. Issues related to trade, industry and investment cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan were discussed at the meeting.

In his remarks, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan said both countries are currently in a positive position to develop relations. There is

also an opportunity to increase trade in different sectors, he mentioned.

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman mentioned that there is more potential for cooperation in trade, investment and technology between two countries.



Trade and Investment Attaché of Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka Mr. Zain Aziz, President of Bangladesh CNG Machineries Importers Association Mr. Zakir Hossain (Noyon), Former Director of FBCCI Mr. Giasuddin Chowdhury (Khokon), Mr. Khandaker Ruhul Amin, Mr. Abul Hossain, Mr. Abu Hossain Bhuiyan (Ranu), Mr. Niaz Ali Chisty, Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of FBCCI International Affairs Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Advisor of the FBCCI Safety Council Brig. Gen. (retd.) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah, business leaders and dignitaries were present among others.

Economic Minister and Trade Officials call on FBCCI Administrator



Economic Minister, Commercial Counselors and First Secretary (Commercial) designate of Bangladesh to different missions met the FBCCI Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on August 17, 2025 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka. The visit was conducted as part of their training program.

The delegation includes Mr. Mohammad Zahirul Kayum, Economic Minister (Designate) of the Bangladesh permanent mission in Geneva (Switzerland); Ms. Elish Sharmin, Commercial Counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Brasilia (Brazil); Mr. Md. Akram Ali, Commercial

Counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Ankara (Turkey);

Mr. Md. Nazmul Haque, Commercial Counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Seoul (South Korea); Ms. Rabeya Sultana, Commercial Counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran (Iran); Mr. Niaz Morshed, Commercial Counselor of the Bangladesh Embassy in Brussels (Belgium); Mr. Sakhawat Hossain, First Secretary (Commercial) of the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa (Canada); Mr. Ridwanur Rahman, First Secretary (Commercial) of the Bangladesh Consulate General in Kunming (China).

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of the FBCCI, highlighted FBCCI's role in fostering trade and commerce of Bangladesh at home and abroad. He wished the success

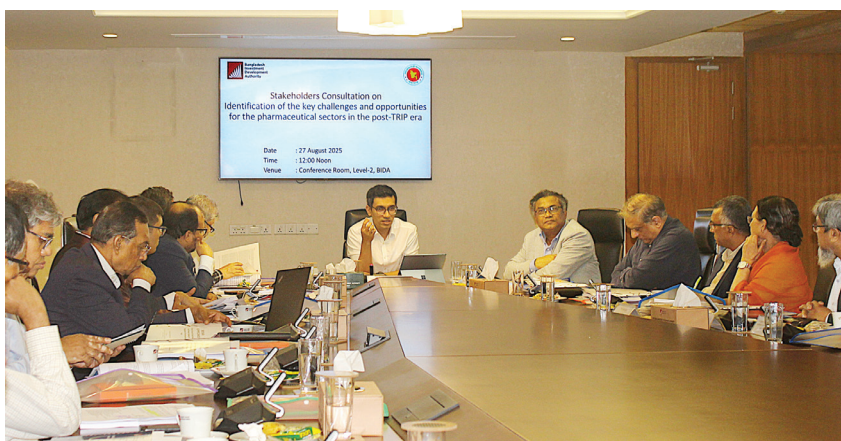
of the designated officers in strengthening the export of

Bangladesh and bolstering investment in Bangladesh. FBCCI will provide necessary support in this regard, he assured.

Highlighting FBCCI's activities, Mr. Md. Alamgir, Secretary General of the FBCCI mentioned the recent role of FBCCI in solving issues related to trade and tariff. He hoped their support and hard work will pave opportunities to flourishing Bangladesh's export baskets abroad.

FBCCI Head of International Affairs Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Senior Additional Secretary General Mr. Shah Md. Abdul Khaleque, and others were present in the meeting

FBCCI Administrator attended the Stakeholders' Consultation on Post-TRIPS Challenges for Pharmaceutical Sector



Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of the FBCCI, attended the stakeholders' consultation on the draft research report titled "Identification of the Key Challenges and Opportunities for the Pharmaceutical Sector in the Post-TRIPS Era."

On August 27, 2025, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) organized the program at BIDA's multipurpose hall.

Mr. Shah Mohammad Mahboob, Executive Member (Additional Secretary) of BIDA, chaired the program. Mr. Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, Executive Chairman (State Minister) of BIDA and BEZA, attended the event as the chief guest.

The discussion emphasized the importance of ensuring the competitiveness, innovation, and long-term sustainability of the country's pharmaceutical industry through strong collaboration among the government, industry, and academia.

Secretary General of SAARC Chamber met the FBCCI Administrator

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Secretary General of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) met Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI on August 17, 2025 at the FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Affairs Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal, ndc, were present during the meeting.



SBCCI President met FBCCI Administrator



Engr. Abdur Rashid, President of the Switzerland-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SBCCI) paid a courtesy

call on Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI on August 19, 2025 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

They came up with a fruitful discussion on expanding trade and exploring new market opportunities between Bangladesh and Switzerland.

Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, Adviser of the FBCCI Safety Council Brig. Gen. (retd) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah, Secretary General of SBCCI Mr. Saad Omar Tahim, Coordinator Mr. Mohammad Mohi Uddin Bhuiyan were present during the call.

FBCCI's Initiative to Explore Collaboration with JICA

A meeting was held at FBCCI with JICA, on 3 August 2025 at FBCCI, to explore avenues of collaboration with the private sector.

Mr. Kiyoshi Amada, Special Advisor of JICA, paid a courtesy call to Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI, and shown keen interest in collaborating with the FBCCI for a common goal.

On behalf of the FBCCI, Brig Gen (retd) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah, Advisor, highlighted the Council's ongoing activities, nationwide network, and areas of engagement. He emphasized the scopes of FBCCI



Mr. Md. Alamgir, Secretary General of FBCCI and Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal, Head of International Affairs actively participated in the discussion emphasizing the need to explore collaboration opportunities with JICA to achieve common interests.

Among others Mr. Md. Manjur Kader Khan, Program Coordinator, and members of the FBCCI Safety Council attended the meeting. It is noted that currently, the FBCCI Safety Council is preparing proposals for potential collaboration with JICA.

to work with JICA on climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives & resilience, food safety, ICT skills development, preparedness on digitalization, and diversification of business.

In response, Mr. Kiyoshi Amada outlined JICA's priority areas, funding scopes through a nice presentation, and reaffirmed JICA's commitment to work closely with the private sector in areas of mutual interest.

IUB Representatives met the FBCCI Administrator

Ms. Samina Kabir, Deputy Director and Senior Program Coordinator at the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) of the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), met Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of the FBCCI on August 07, 2025 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

Senior Lecturer of the Department of General Management at the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) Ms. Farzana Chowdhury and the Lecturer of the Department of Finance Mr. Mohammad Fahad Noor were present, among others.

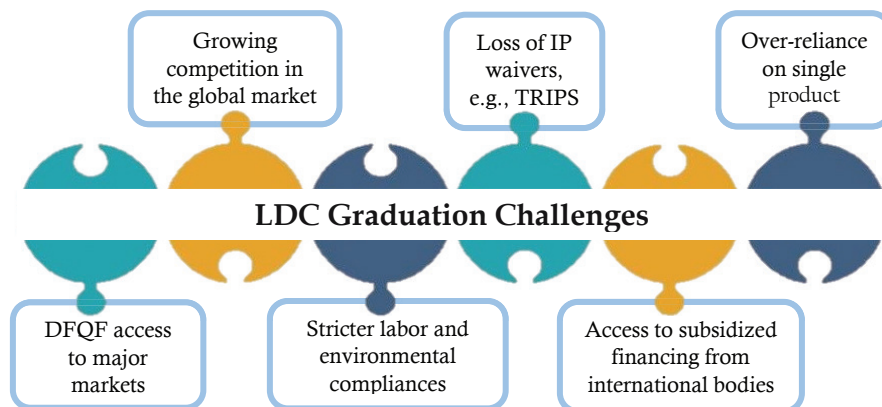


From LDC to Regional Hub:

The South Asian Advantage for Bangladesh's LDC Transition

Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026 is a significant milestone, reflecting its economic progress and decades of sustained growth, as well as significant advancements in human development indicators. However, this transition also brings challenges, primarily the loss of preferential market access and other LDC-specific benefits. In navigating this critical phase, Bangladesh's strategic positioning within South Asia and its active engagement in regional cooperation initiatives are poised to become increasingly vital. Bangladesh can leverage this unique "South Asian Advantage" to ensure a smooth and accelerated LDC transition, transforming potential challenges into opportunities for deeper integration and enhanced competitiveness. By fostering stronger economic ties with its neighbors and capitalizing on the burgeoning regional markets, Bangladesh stands to solidify its position not merely as a graduating LDC, but as a dynamic regional hub, driving growth and stability across South Asia.

While transition towards a developing country is a mark of success, it also entails the gradual phasing out of several international support measures for Bangladesh. For Bangladesh, this means the eventual loss of preferential market access. In addition to increased tariffs, LDC graduation will also expose Bangladesh to fiercer competition in the global market. Countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, which have already navigated similar transitions, offer a glimpse into the competitive landscape ahead. Furthermore, heavy reliance on a single sector, such as RMG, creates a precarious situation, as any downturn in that industry could have a disproportionate impact on the entire economy.



For Bangladesh to successfully transition from LDC status, a key strategy is to deepen regional integration within South Asia. By forging stronger economic ties with neighbors such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, the country can establish new markets and lessen its dependence on traditional Western markets, which may be affected by the loss of international trade benefits. While existing agreements like SAFTA, SAARC, BBIN and BIMSTEC provide a foundation, a more focused approach is needed to remove trade barriers and improve connectivity.

This region has growing markets, similar cultures, and improving transportation, which offer a unique opportunity. By collaborating with its neighbors on initiatives such as trade, investment, infrastructure development, and knowledge sharing, Bangladesh can become a more significant contributor to the global economy. By making smart use of these connections, Bangladesh can not only handle the challenges of leaving the LDC group but also become a major key player in the regional supply chain.



Trade Balance of Bangladesh with South Asian Countries (FY 2023-24)

Countries	Export (mn USD)	Import (mn USD)	Trade Balance
India	1569.24	9000.15	-7430.91
Pakistan	61.97	627.77	-565.8
Nepal	41.72	4.23	-37.49
Bhutan	9.36	38.99	-29.63
Sri Lanka	58.12	75.93	-17.81
Maldives	6.11	3.47	-2.64
Afghanistan	10.16	11.94	-1.78

Source: Bangladesh Bank, Export Promotion Bureau

Bangladesh's trade with other South Asian countries remains significantly lower than its potential. Intra-South Asian trade falls short of its potential due to several key barriers. Non-tariff barriers (NTBs), such as complex customs procedures and restrictive rules of origin, hinder the free flow of goods. Furthermore, infrastructure bottlenecks, including poor road and rail links, create significant delays. The absence of strong political will and trust among regional leaders, often stemming from historical tensions, impedes progress on economic integration. Addressing trade imbalances, particularly Bangladesh's deficit with countries like India, is also crucial. Lastly, a prevalent lack of awareness among Bangladeshi exporters about existing agreements and opportunities in South Asian markets prevents them from fully leveraging regional advantages.

Specific Opportunities and Strategies for Bangladesh

Leveraging Regional Agreements	Focusing on key sectors for diversification	Improving connectivity and infrastructure	Strengthening trade diplomacy and negotiation	Promoting cross-border investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuller utilization of existing agreements Pushing for deeper integration Addressing sensitive lists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leather and leather goods Agro-processing Pharmaceuticals Light engineering and electronics IT services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical infrastructure Port efficiency Digital connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive engagement via FTA/PTA Public-private dialogue Negotiation skill ফরাসিভাষীসবহঃ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging South Asian businessmen to invest in Bangladesh Local companies investing in South Asian countries to expand their market reach

For private sector, LDC graduation is a critical period of adjustment and preparation. Industries must focus on improving quality control and meeting international standards to compete in a tariff-based environment. This requires investing in new technologies, enhancing productivity, and diversifying into higher-value products. Proactive market research is essential to identify new opportunities and adapt to the specific demands of regional markets. By doing so, businesses can shift from a low-cost, preference-driven model to one that based on efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness.

Bangladesh's LDC graduation is not merely an administrative milestone but an opportunity to rebrand and establish a new identity as a dynamic, competitive developing country. The nation can position itself as a central hub of a thriving South Asian economic bloc, leveraging its strategic location and resilient economy. By fostering deeper integration and trade, Bangladesh can become a key player in regional value chains, attracting greater foreign direct investment and contributing to shared prosperity. This vision transcends traditional trade; it's about building a connected and integrated South Asia where Bangladesh is a vital engine of growth.

- Prepared by Research and Planning Wing, FBCCI

Disaster Preparedness in Business: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Economy

The Context of Bangladesh

Bangladesh's economy has achieved remarkable progress over the past few decades. From ready-made garments to agriculture and SMEs, the growth has been impressive. Yet, every cyclone, flood, fire incident, or pandemic reminds us of one harsh reality: without proper disaster preparedness, this progress remains fragile.

Why Preparedness Matters

- Disasters are not just humanitarian crises—they are economic shocks.
- Production comes to a halt
- Workers lose their jobs
- Export commitments are disrupted
- Supply chains break down

In an era of global competition, Bangladesh must demonstrate that its businesses are resilient enough to continue operations even in times of crisis.

Where Do We Lag Behind?

- In Bangladesh, most businesses are not even familiar with the concept of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), let alone having one in place.
- Investment in fire safety and occupational health remains inadequate, especially in small-scale industries.
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), though highly vulnerable to disruptions, are often excluded from structured preparedness initiatives.
- Awareness and regular training for workers and mid-level managers are still largely absent, leaving businesses unprepared during emergencies.

FBCCI's Role in Institutionalizing Preparedness

As the apex trade body, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has already taken a pioneering step by establishing Safety Cells at district chambers under the Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership (BPP) initiative.

These Safety Cells have introduced:

- Localized Private Sector Emergency Response Teams (PERTs) trained to respond during crises
- Capacity-building programs on disaster preparedness, fire safety, and multi-hazard management
- Advocacy for integrating business continuity planning within SMEs

Through these initiatives, FBCCI is not only institutionalizing disaster preparedness but also contributing to the implementation of the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) and aligning private sector action with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

What Needs to Be Done?

- Expand Safety Cells to more districts, covering SMEs nationwide
- Scale up training programs for workers and mid-level managers
- Ensure regular mock drills to bridge the gap between planning and real-life response
- Encourage businesses to adopt and update BCPs
- Incorporate food safety and occupational health as part of disaster risk reduction measures

The Way Forward

Disaster preparedness should not be seen as a cost, but as an investment. Every single money invested today can save millions in potential losses tomorrow.

The FBCCI, with its nationwide network of chambers, is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation. If the private sector embraces preparedness as part of its business culture, Bangladesh will not only reduce economic losses but also strengthen resilience and global competitiveness.

A sustainable economy cannot stand on fragile foundations. For Bangladesh, the time to act is now—and FBCCI has already shown the path forward.

- *Prepared by Safety Council, FBCCI*

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