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# TRADE FOR CHANGE

*A quarterly newsletter of BFTI*



**Government Exclusives**

**Metro rail: another feather to Bangladesh's crown**



Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with her sister Sheikh Rehana inaugurating the metro-rail (Photo: Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS))

The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has formally inaugurated the country's first-ever metro rail on 28 December 2022. She opened a section (11.73 km part of the total 21.26 km) of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-6 by unveiling a plaque at Diabari of Uttara. The section of MRT Line-6 connects the capital's Uttara North to Agargaon.

On the opening ceremony Prime Minister said that another feather has been added to the crown of Bangladesh's development with the opening of its first-ever metro rail, vowing to build a prosperous 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041, reports Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). This has set another milestone in the country's communication history between a span of six-months after inauguration of the Padma Bridge.

With the opening of the metro rail, the country has entered into the electric, remote controlled and fastest ever communication era, added the Prime Minister.

The premier said over 5 lakh passengers with 60,000 per hour can travel everyday by the metro rail after beginning of its complete operation. The metro rail would help reduce the nagging traffic congestion significantly, she aspired.

“Special measures have been taken for the differently abled people including the persons with walking disabilities so that they can easily travel by the metro rail”, she added. In addition, a separate compartment has been introduced for the women. The premier said the freedom fighters can take ride on the metro rail free of cost. She said her government is working to build six metro rails in Dhaka by 2030. The government has taken measures to develop efficient work force to operate the metro rail shunning the dependency on foreigners, she said.

The Prime Minister also said huge amount of money has been invested alongside using modern equipment and digital device in the metro rail, urging the passengers to preserve it properly and ensure its cleanliness.

After the inaugural ceremony of the metro rail, the Prime Minister and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana took the first official ride of the Metro Rail from Diabari (Uttara North) to Agargaon station. The PM also released a commemorative bank note of TK 50 to mark the opening of the metro rail.(Source: BSS).

## Bangladesh Commerce Minister Visited India



Hon'ble Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP and his Indian counterpart Shri Piyush Goyal, Commerce and Industry Minister, India in Delhi (photo: collected)

The Hon'ble Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP was on a two-day visit to India during 22-23 December 2022. The Minister's two-day trip hinged upon negotiations with his Indian counterpart over the proposed India-Bangladesh Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). It may be noted that the India-Bangladesh joint statement issued after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during September 2022 in India accentuated signing of this trade pact.

CEPA plans to harmonize the countries' trade rules, increase cooperation in developing cross-border transportation infrastructure and lay the groundwork for future bilateral trade agreements.

It may be mentioned that a joint feasibility study has been conducted by the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and the Centre for Regional Trade (CRT) under the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) for a CEPA. The trade deal is significant as it is first of its kind between Bangladesh and India. It is expected that CEPA would help increase trade volume of Bangladesh with India.

## Memorandum of Cooperation on Trade and Investment (MCTI) between Bangladesh and Singapore signed



Hon'ble Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Mr. Salman F Rahman, Private Industry and Investment Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh at the MCTI signing ceremony in Dhaka

Bangladesh and Singapore have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to set a stage for negotiation on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and explore potential for trade and investment opportunities between the two countries. On 16 November 2022, the Honourable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP and Singapore's Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations Mr. S. Iswaran signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on Trade and Investment (MCTI) on behalf of the respective governments. The signing ceremony was moderated by Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. Mr. Salman F Rahman, Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Advisor, members of the Singaporean delegation, including ones from the Singapore High Commission in Dhaka, and high officials of the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh were present at the ceremony.

Under this new collaboration strategy, a working group from both countries will be formed to explore the areas of cooperation. Ministry of Commerce will help to develop capacity of domestic industries to tap the potentials in the South-east Asian markets. The delegations of Bangladesh and Singapore have already identified preliminary sectors of cooperation and selected 16 sectors including jute and jute products, textiles and apparels, agriculture, renewable energy, ICT, light engineering, leather and leather products, skills development, transport, logistics, digital economy and education services.

### Finance Minister expected Bangladesh to get \$500 Million as budget support from WB



Hon'ble Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal

Finance Minister Mr. A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal expressed his optimism that Bangladesh would get \$500 million as budget support from the World Bank in the current fiscal year (FY2022-23).

He also informed that the country would receive another \$500 million from the lending agency in the next two years under the Green, Resilience, Inclusive, Development (GRID) initiative.

The assurance was given by Mr. Martin Raiser, the visiting World Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region while a World Bank team called on the Finance Minister on 13 November 2022. Finance Division Senior Secretary Ms. Fatima Yasmin was present on the occasion.

### ERD signed Technical Assistance Project Agreements with FAO



ERD Secretary Ms. Sharifa Khan and FAO Representative in Bangladesh Mr. Robert D Simpson at the agreement signing event

Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) signed four technical assistance project agreements on 11 December 2022. Ms. Sharifa Khan, Secretary, ERD and Mr. Robert D Simpson, FAO Representative in Bangladesh signed the project agreements.

It is expected that the projects will help agriculture and environmental sectors and thereby improve the livelihood of rural people and marginal farmers.

### Ministry of Industries Opened E-Library



Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Industries, Mr. Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, MP inaugurating the e-library at the Ministry of Industries building

Mr. Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Industries, inaugurated an e-library at the Ministry of Industries' office in Dhaka on 18 December 2022. Mr. Kamal Ahmed Mojumder, State Minister for Industries and Ms. Zakia Sultana, Industries Secretary were present on the occasion.

The library would help the officers and employees of the ministry to develop their capacity and access to the horizon of knowledge. While inaugurating the e-library, Secretary Ms. Zakia Sultana said that this type of initiative is the first among government institutions in Bangladesh. Articles/Journals/Publications published by the Ministry officials can be uploaded in the e-library.

The e-library will be a storage of knowledge where publications and magazines of the ministry can be viewed and read by anyone across the world. The library will also facilitate branding of the Ministry.

### BTTC organized Training Programme on 'Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral Trading System for Bangladesh'



Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Ms. Mahfuza Akhter, Chairman, BTTC at the opening session of the training program

A two-day-long training on 'Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral Trading System for Bangladesh' under the capacity building project of Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) was held on 23-24 November at the BTTC meeting room.

Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce inaugurated the training programme as the Chief Guest and Chairman, BTTC presided over the event. Representatives of the Ministry of Commerce, BFTI, trade and industry organisations and officials of the BTTC participated in the training.

### 'National Export Trophy' award ceremony for the toppers: award distribution held



Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP handing over trophy as the chief guest of the 'National Export Trophy' event on 22 November 2022

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and The Ministry of Commerce jointly organised the 'National Export Trophy 2018-19'. The award distribution ceremony was held at Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre on 22 November 2022. A total of seventy-one exporters received trophy in recognition of their contribution to the country's export for the fiscal year of 2018-19.

At the ceremony, Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon'ble Commerce Minister as the Chief Guest, handed over gold, bronze and silver trophies to the recipients. Senior Secretary of the Commerce Ministry Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh presided over the event while Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin, President, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) attended as the special guest. Mr. A.H.M. Ahsan, Vice-Chairman, EPB welcomed the guests and the participants.

## Business Exclusives

### Deputy Minister of South Africa met FBCCI President



FBCCI President Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin with the H.E. Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini, Hon'ble Deputy Minister of the Department of International Relations & Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa

H.E. Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini, Hon'ble Deputy Minister of the Department of International Relations & Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa paid a courtesy call on Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin, President of FBCCI on 22 November 2022 at FBCCI. The meeting highlighted various investment opportunities for private sector entrepreneurs of Bangladesh and South Africa. The areas of interest include agricultural production and food processing and others. Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin and Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini both expressed their interest in developing bilateral trade between Bangladesh and South Africa.

### DCCI organized a workshop on 'Customs, VAT and Income Tax management'

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) organized a workshop on 'Customs, VAT and Income Tax management' on 3 December 2022. Mr. Mohammad Jahid Hasan, Member, Tax Information Management & Services, National Board of Revenue (NBR) attended the workshop as chief guest. The workshop was organized to make the business community aware of different changes in the customs, VAT



and Tax related issues in the budget. Mr. Mohammad Jahid Hasan said that NBR is trying to ensure automation for Customs, Tax and VAT systems so that people can easily access the services hassle-free. He also urged ensuring compliance in the books of accounts to reduce litigation. President and Senior Vice President of DCCI were also present at the seminar.

### Country Road Group Delegation from Australia Visits MCCI



MCCI President Mr. Md. Saiful Islam on a meeting with Mr. Jeremy Bruer, High Commissioner, Australian High Commission

A visiting delegation from Country Road Group (CRG), one of Australia's largest fashion retailers, visited the Gulshan office of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) on 13 December 2022. The meeting was organized to exchange views on improving bilateral cooperation and increase trade between Australia and Bangladesh. H.E. Mr. Jeremy Bruer, High Commissioner, Australian High Commission in Bangladesh,

attended the interactive event as the Chief Guest. Mr. Rachid Maliki, GM, of Global Supply Chain and Sourcing, led the CRG delegation and was also the Special Guest. The event was moderated by the MCCI President, Mr. Md. Saiful Islam.

### Vietnamese trade delegation meets CCCI



CCCI President Mr. Mahbulul Alam on a meeting with H.E. Mr. Pham Viet Chien, Ambassador of Vietnam to Bangladesh

On 26 October 2022, a 32-member trade delegation from Vietnam and the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) met for a business networking event in the Bangabandhu Conference Hall of the World Trade Center. The Vietnamese delegation team was led by H.E. Mr. Pham Viet Chien, Ambassador of Vietnam to Bangladesh. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the CCCI and the International Investment Promotion Alliance of Vietnam in order to boost bilateral trade between Vietnam and Bangladesh in future.

### BGMEA, Oerlikon intend to collaborate on capacity building in MMF and recycling



BGMEA President Mr. Faruque Hassan on a meeting with Mr. Markus Reichwein, Technology Head of Product Management at Oerlikon Barmag, and Mr. Sudipto Mandol, Manager – Sales and Marketing at Oerlikon Textile, India

Mr. Markus Reichwein, Technology Head of Product Management at Oerlikon Barmag and Mr. Sudipto Mandol, Manager – Sales and Marketing at Oerlikon Textile India, called on BGMEA President Mr. Faruque Hassan at BGMEA Complex on 17 December 2022. Oerlikon is a leading high-tech industrial group specialized in textile and recycling machinery and technologies and supplier of manmade fiber filament across the world. BGMEA Directors Mr. Arshad Jamal (Dipu), Mr. Asif Ashraf, Mr. Tanvir Ahmed, Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan, Mr. Mijanur Rahman, and Ms. Neela Hosna Ara were also present at the meeting. They discussed possible collaboration between BGMEA and Oerlikon in supporting garment factories to build up their capacity in manufacturing high-end products made of manmade fiber (MMF) as well as collaboration to enhance the capacity of recycling textile waste in Bangladesh to make the country a global hub of recycling.

### BTMA briefs media regarding use of Export Development Fund of Bangladesh Bank



Mr. Mohammad Ali Khokon, President, BTMA at the press briefing

A press briefing by BTMA was held on 12 December 2022 in the Conference Room of

BTMA and refuted some misleading statements made by a section of people regarding the use of Export Development Fund (EDF) of Bangladesh Bank. Mr. Mohammad Ali Khokon, President, BTMA stated that there is no scope of misuse of EDF by any person or any organization as the system is leak-proof with strict guidelines and it goes through a tendered scrutiny system.

### **BCI organized a seminar on ‘Mitigation of the Impact of Energy Crisis on the Industrial Sector’**



BCI President Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez at the Seminar

Bangladesh Chamber of Industries organized a seminar on ‘Mitigation of the Impact of Energy Crisis on the Industrial Sector’ on 24 October 2022 in Dhaka. BCI President Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury Parvez said that, the energy crisis is causing a decline in exports across the world. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, the energy Advisor to the Prime Minister, urged everyone to prepare for not using electricity at daytime to protect industry and agriculture. Business leaders urged that continuous supply of gas and electricity is imperative for sustainable development of industrial sector, especially export-oriented industries. The Advisor assured that the government is aware of the situation and will take necessary measures to mitigate the problem.

### **Editorial**

*It is indeed a great pleasure for us to bring out the January 2023 issue of Trade for Change. The newsletter is designed to reflect the initiatives and achievements of the Government, trade bodies and BFTI. This newsletter shares a glimpse of the stories of our flagship activities, programmes and strategic plans. The Trade for Change covers the recent accomplishments of Bangladesh and showcases the activities of BFTI, including its research works, training programmes, national and international projects and workshops. It also covers the brief news of consultation meetings, participation in seminars, MoUs signed and policy advocacies of BFTI.*

*As a think-tank of the Ministry of Commerce, BFTI conducts research activities on national and international trade-related issues, provides policy advocacy to the public and private sector and conducts training programmes to exalt the capacity of trade-related stakeholders in Bangladesh.*

*For the last few months, BFTI has been pursuing hard to establish its image as a research think-tank of the Ministry of Commerce. It has made significant improvements in the areas of research engagements and BFTI is striving to become a quality organization with its highly motivated and experienced team in collaboration with eminent trade experts of the country.*

#### **Editorial Advisor**

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## Core Theme

### Conducting 04 Studies Suggested by Project Steering Committee (PSC) in FY 2021-22 for BRCP Project

BFTI has been conducting '04 Studies Suggested by Project Steering Committee (PSC) in FY 2021-22' under Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 (BRCP-1) Project. The draft reports of the 04 studies have already been submitted to the project office. The objectives and progress of the studies are as follows:

#### Study 1: WTO Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) and Graduation Challenges

Bangladesh is going to graduate as a developing country in 2026 and will subsequently lose its LDC specific preference from EU and other countries. Graduation from LDC will pose a new threat in the area of market access, preference erosion, condition of value addition, additional tariff, and likely reduction of overall export and employment opportunities. The objective of the study is to provide policy feedback to the government to formulate strategies for coping with the challenges of graduation.

#### Study 2: A compiled policy and regulatory guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management with respect to international trade and transport formalities, procedures, documentation and related matters

The study aims to conduct an elaborate analysis of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Cross Border Land Port Management. As a part



Mr. Md. Mostafa Kamal, Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Mr. Md. Alamgir, Chairman, Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Mr. Md. Mijanur Rahman, Project Director, BRCP-1, Mr. Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), President, BCI and Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the Public Consultation of study 2

of this study, BFTI arranged a Public Consultation on 4 October 2022 at the BFTI Conference Room. The consultation reveals that Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in land ports would pare the hurdles of logistic support while reducing regulatory expenses through simplifying commercial invoices, certificates inspection and quality control certificates both for exporters and importers.

#### Study 3: Simplification of Trade Procedures, Customs Modernization, ease of doing business for export promotion of Bangladesh to ensure policy coherence between national development priorities and international obligations on Trade Facilitation Agreements

Trade communities often face impediments, delays and additional costs due to the complex procedures of import and export, customs and banking provisions necessary for the clearance and shipment of consignments. The study aims to review way of simplification of trade procedures, customs modernization and improving ease of doing business for export promotion. Modernization of customs procedure and business-friendly taxation system can reduce the cost of doing business in Bangladesh and help expanding industries.



## Study 4: Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) and Technical Barrier to Trade (TBT) co-ordination and notification, certification process and infrastructure for promoting trade



Mr. Md. Sayedul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, DG, WTO Wing, Mr. Mijanur Rahman, Project Director, BRCP-1, Mr. Md. Munir Chowdhury, National Trade Expert, BRCP-1, and Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the Public Consultation of study 4.

The study intends to focus on the trade implications of SPS and TBT measures and attempts to find ways for capacity building measures for better compliance. As a part of this study, BFTI arranged a public consultation on 4 October 2022 at the BFTI Conference Room. In the study, it is observed that Bangladesh needs to improve its trade capacity through improvement of the certification process, developing infrastructure and creating enabling structure for compliance relating to SPS and TBT to face post-graduation challenges.

### Flagships

#### Signing of MoU between BFTI and Comjagat Technologies Limited



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the MoU signing ceremony

Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate in 2026. While graduating from LDCs, sustaining and enhancing global market access would become one of the key concerns for Bangladesh. In the new scenario, cross border e-commerce can play a significant role in enhancing the global market access and can be a potential avenue for economic and social development.

Significance of cross border e-commerce has been acknowledged in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference held in Geneva during 12 to 15 June 2022 (Geneva Package). Ministry of Commerce and BFTI may explore the opportunities of conducting research and training on cross border e-commerce. In view of the above, BFTI has signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Comjagat Technologies Limited for conducting Training & Research on Cross Border E-Commerce on 8 December 2022. Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI and Mr. Muhammad Abdul Wahed Tomal, Chairman Comjagat Technologies Limited, signed the MoU on behalf of the respective organizations. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI was present as the chief guest at the ceremony.

### Research Activities

#### BFTI holds stakeholders' consultation meetings to formulate trade roadmap

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) held three stakeholders' consultation meetings in order to formulate trade roadmap for 12 sectors to identify and face trade-related challenges for ensuring smooth graduation of Bangladesh from the LDC status.

These 12 sectors include RMG, Ship Building, Agriculture and Processed Food, Fisheries and Livestock, Light Engineering, Plastic Products, Leather and Leather Products, Non-Leather Footwear, Pharmaceuticals and API, Tourism, Software and IT, Nursing and Midwifery.

The BFTI has conducted the research titled ‘Identification of Trade-related Graduation Challenges and Preparation of Sector-Specific Trade Roadmaps for Overcoming the Challenges’ under the guidance of Ministry of Commerce and the World Trade Organization (WTO).



Chief Guest, Special Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce with CEO, BFTI at the 1<sup>st</sup> stakeholder Consultation

1<sup>st</sup> of the three stakeholders' consultation meetings was held at the BFTI office on 03 November 2022. Discussions included RMG, Shipbuilding, Agro Products and Processed Food, Fisheries and Livestock sectors. Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce attended the consultation as the chief guest while Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin presided over the session. Chief guest Mr. Ghosh stressed that both public and private sector are required to work side by side to encounter the challenges of LDC Graduation.



Special Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce with CEO, BFTI and Director, BFTI at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stakeholder Consultation

BFTI held 2<sup>nd</sup> stakeholders' consultation at the BFTI office on 08 November 2022. Discussions on four sectors including Light Engineering, Plastic Products, Leather and Leather Products,

Non-Leather Footwear were held in the consultation. Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce attended the consultation as the chief guest while Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin presided over the session. Chief guest Mr. Ghosh said that LDC graduation will not only bring about challenges but also some opportunities. While preparing for the challenges, we have to make good use of all the opportunities, he added.



Chief Guest Ms. Mahfuza Akhter, Chairman, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, Special Guests with CEO, BFTI and Director, BFTI at the 3<sup>rd</sup> stakeholder Consultation

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stakeholders' consultation was held at the BFTI office on 10 November 2022 for identifying sector-specific challenges of graduation. The consultation included Pharmaceuticals and API sectors and 3 services sectors such as Tourism, Software and IT and Nursing and Midwifery sectors. Presided over by the Chief Executive Officer of BFTI, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission Chairman Ms. Mahfuza Akhter attended the meeting as the chief guest. Noting that the services sector should be given special priority to encounter the challenges of LDC graduation, Ms. Mahfuza Akhter said that the services sector possess much potential in the context of Bangladesh while the contribution of the services sector in the country's economy is growing day by day.

Director General of the WTO Wing under the Ministry of Commerce Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman and representatives from both the public and private sectors attended the meetings.

## BFTI is identifying policy support and incentives provided by competing countries in the RMG sector



Director, BFTI and other guests at the FGD

BFTI is identifying government policy support and incentives provided by the competing countries of Bangladesh like Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia in the Readymade Garments sector. BFTI is conducting a study for the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) titled ‘Determining policy support and incentives (including subsidies) to be offered now and during post-LDC graduation for sustainable development of RMG export sector analyzing the mechanism and strategy of its closest competitor countries’. BFTI conducted a Focus Group Discussion with stakeholders on 27 October 2022 at the BFTI Conference Room. The study is designed to make a comparative analysis of the policy supports, direct and indirect incentive packages extended by the countries with that of Bangladesh and after reviewing the scenario it will provide policy recommendations for the RMG sector. It will help the policymakers to formulate pragmatic policies for sustainable development of the RMG export sector in post-LDC graduation.

## Training Activities

### Training programme on ‘General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994’



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer, BFTI, Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Director General, WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce with participants at the opening session of the training

BFTI organized a 3-day long training program on ‘General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994’. The programme is initiated by WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce under the ‘Export Diversification and Competitiveness Development Project (EIF Tier-II)’ during 10-12 October 2022.

## Events

### 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors & 11<sup>th</sup> AGM of BFTI



Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC, Vice Chairman, (BoD), BFTI, CEO, BFTI, with the other distinguished Vice-Chair and Members of the BoD at the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of directors of BFTI

The 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Directors and 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) for the FY 2021-2022 were held on 22 December 2022 at the BFTI Conference Room. The Hon’ble

Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and Chairman, Board of Directors, BFTI could not remain present in the meetings due to unavoidable circumstances. In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Vice-Chairman, Board of Directors, BFTI and Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh presided over the meetings in accordance with Article 53.C and Article 26 of the Articles of Association of the BFTI respectively. The other Vice-Chair of the Board and all other distinguished Members of the Board of Directors were present in the meetings. In the AGM, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Member-Secretary, Board of Directors and CEO, BFTI presented the Audited Accounts and Annual Report of the Board of Directors for the FY 2021-22. The meeting approved the Audited Accounts and Annual Report of the Board of Directors for the FY 2021-22 and also approved re-appointment of the retiring auditor for the next financial year for 2022-23.

### 54<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI



Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon’ble Commerce Minister, Chairman, Board of Directors (BoD), BFTI; Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC, Vice Chairman, (BoD), BFTI; CEO, BFTI and other Vice-Chair and Members at the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI

54<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI was held on 20 October 2022 via Zoom Platform. Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon’ble Commerce Minister, Chairman, Board of Directors (BoD), BFTI and Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC, Vice Chairman, BoD, BFTI and President, ICCB, Vice Chairman, BoD were present at the meeting. Among the other members of the Board of Directors, Secretary of ERD, Chairman of BTTC, Vice-Chairman of EPB, Rector of Foreign Service Academy, President of DCCI, President of MCCI, President of CCCI, President of BTMA and President of BCI were present at the meeting. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI was present as the Member-Secretary of the BoD.

### A Workshop on Strategic Plan for BFTI



CEO, BFTI with all the officials of BFTI at the strategic plan workshop

Workshop on Strategic Plan of BFTI was held on 30-31 December 2022 at the BRAC Learning Centre, Chattogram. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the Workshop as the Chief Guest. The strategic plan for BFTI for the next 03 years was proposed in the workshop. The workshop concludes with specific actions with implementation strategies for attainment of strategic targets of BFTI.

## Celebration of 25<sup>th</sup> Weekly Meeting on Research Activities of BFTI



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer, BFTI, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, with other officials of BFTI at the celebration of 25<sup>th</sup> Weekly Meeting on Research Activities of BFTI

BFTI Celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> weekly meeting on its Research Activities on 13 December 2022 at the BFTI conference room. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer, BFTI and all the officials of BFTI participated at the meeting.

## Representation of BFTI at National and International Events

### Meetings/Seminars/Workshops Attended by Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI

1



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the '35<sup>th</sup> CEO Meeting of the Asian Trade Promotion Forum (ATPF)'. The meeting was organised by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) on 19 October 2022.

2



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, as the Keynote Speaker, attended the seminar on 'Identification of Probable FTA/PTA Partners of Bangladesh'. The seminar was organized by Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation on 18 October 2022.

3

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, as a guest speaker, attended the 'Policy Formulation; e-governance & ICT Training Course (batch-4)'. The event was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation on 22 November 2022.

4

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the 'National Export Trophy 2018-19 Award Ceremony' organised by the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh (EPB) on 22 November 2022.

5

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the 'National Seminar on LDC Graduation' organised by the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance on 17 November 2022.

6

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the ‘Celebrating National Youth Day 2022’ event organised by the Ministry of Youth and Culture on 1 November 2022.

7

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the 54<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of BFTI on 20 October 2022.

8



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, attended the public hearing on the provision of services under the Consumer Protection Act 2009. The event was organised by the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection on 16 October 2022.

9



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, as the Chief Guest, attended the opening ceremony of ‘Inter-College and University Women's Volleyball Competition 2022’ on 14 October 2022.

10



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, as the Chief Guest, attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pallima Bidyapith. The event was organised by Pallima Sangsad on 26 December 2022.

**Meetings/Seminars/Workshops Attended by the officials of BFTI**

11

Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, attended the Monthly Coordination Meeting of the Ministry of Commerce organised by the Ministry of Commerce on 18 December 2022.

12

Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, attended the meeting on the finalization of the revised Allocation of Business of the Ministry of Commerce and the departments/organizations under its jurisdiction. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Commerce on 21 November 2022.

13

Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, attended an urgent zoom meeting on ‘LDC graduation’ presided by the Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The Meeting was organised by WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce on 03 October 2022.

14

Mr. Md. Julfikar Islam, Research Manager, BFTI, attended a meeting on Component-5 under 'Integrated Digital Service Delivery Platform for Ministry of Commerce'. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Commerce on 30 November 2022.

15

Mr. Rashedul Kabir, Research Manager (Additional Charge), BFTI, attended the Monthly Coordination Meeting of FTA Wing organised by the FTA Wing, Ministry of Commerce on 20 December 2022.

16

Mr. Rashedul Kabir, Research Manager (Additional Charge), BFTI, attended a stakeholder consultation on 'Final Findings of Sunset Review Investigation of Anti-Dumping Duty on Jute Products Exported from Bangladesh by DGTR' on 12 October 2022 organised by WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce.

17

Mr. Harunur Rashid, Research Associate, BFTI, participated in the launch event and discussion session on 'Realizing Development Aspirations with Domestic Resource Mobilization amidst Macroeconomic Challenges'. The event was organised by Policy Research Institute (PRI) at Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka on 30 October 2022.

18

Mr. Harunur Rashid, Research Associate, BFTI, participated in a workshop titled 'TFA Implementation, Support to NTFC and Sustainability of BTP' organised by the Ministry of Commerce on 20 October 2022.

18

Ms. Asia Binta Amanat Sumi, Research Associate, BFTI, participated in a seminar titled 'WTO-MC12 Outcomes Next Steps for Bangladesh as a Graduating LDC' organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on 20 November 2022.

19

Ms. Asia Binta Amanat Sumi, Research Associate, BFTI, participated in a seminar titled 'Journey of the CMSMEs from Startup to Scale up: Challenges and Prospects' on 20 October 2022 organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI).

20

Mr. Farhan Mashuk, Research Associate, BFTI, attended a meeting on progress of the responsible officials for correction of errors and scrutinize the memorial book titled 'আমি তোমাদেরই লোক' before the publication of second print on 6 October 2022 organised by Ministry of Commerce.

## WTO News

**DG Okonjo-Iweala: During these difficult times, the WTO "cannot afford to stand aside"**



DG Okonjo-Iweala at the WTO's General Council on 19 December 2022

Speaking at the final 2022 meeting of the WTO’s General Council on 19-20 December 2022 Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala urged Geneva-based delegates to use the upcoming year-end break to reach out to their respective capitals for guidance and instructions and get the organization “back on track” in the new year.

In her capacity as chair of the Trade Negotiations Committee, the Director- General expressed disappointment with the lack of progress made since the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC12) in

June, where members achieved breakthroughs on issues such as fisheries subsidies, WTO response to emergencies—including a waiver of certain requirements concerning compulsory licensing for COVID-19 vaccines, food security and WTO reform.

While MC12 remains a highlight of the year, “we’ve not done much serious negotiating in the past six months,” she told members. “We have a lot of ground to cover and will have to intensify our efforts when we return from the winter break”.

### WTO Reference Centre: The Hub of Trade-related Information



The WTO has more than 100 Reference Centres all over the world. The Reference Centre (RC) is the physical presence of the WTO in the country. It works as a platform between the WTO, Geneva, and the citizens of the member countries. The only WTO Reference Centre of Bangladesh is hosted by the BFTI, which provides-

- Trade-related data and information on WTO issues made available to the public and private sectors;
- Library services (Reading and borrowing WTO and trade-related books, reports, journals);
- State-of-the-art IT equipment (PCs, printers, a photocopier, scanners) for access to WTO resources.

The WTO Reference Centre is thankful to the WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce for their kind support. For further information regarding WTO Reference Centre, please email at [wtorc@bfti.org.bd](mailto:wtorc@bfti.org.bd).



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