

This Issue Covers

- Government Exclusives
- Business Exclusives
- Editorial
- Core Activities
- Events
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signed
- Representation of BFTI at National and International Events
- WTO Related News

TRADE FOR CHANGE

A quarterly newsletter of BFTI



Government Exclusives

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opens first ever underwater tunnel in Bangladesh



Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the inauguration ceremony of Bangabandhu tunnel



A scenic view of Bangabandhu tunnel under the river Karnaphuli

The port city Chattogram witnessed country's historic entry into a new era of connectivity as Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the much-awaited underwater expressway tunnel, first of its kind in South Asia, under the river Karnaphuli on 28 October 2023.

The Premier unveiled the plaque of the "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel" at Patenga on the north bank of Karnaphuli connecting city's Patenga with Anwara upazila.

Earlier in a message, the Hon'ble Prime Minister termed the inauguration of the tunnel as a glorious and memorable day for Bangladesh.

"This tunnel will play a groundbreaking role in the development of the communication system of the south-eastern part of the country through developing a major link to the Asian highway

network. It will also help in reduction of traffic congestion in Chattogram city, development of the industry sector and tourism industry in the Anwara area. It will help transportation of goods to the Chattogram port and the proposed Matarbari deep sea port," she said. The tunnel has taken the country one step further in the journey towards building Smart Bangladesh by introducing a new level of advanced technology in the road communication system of the region, she added.

The tunnel including approach road was opened to vehicles from 30 October 2023. In terms of connecting two regions of the country, the tunnel is the second "dream scheme" in road transport sector after the Padma Bridge. The tunnel has been built following the "One

City Two Towns” model like Shanghai in China. It would connect the proposed Asian Highway with Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway by reducing distance by 40km.

According to the officials, over 17,000 vehicles would be able to use the tunnel on a daily basis equating to some 7.6 million vehicles a year. The tunnel would help increase the country's annual GDP growth by 0.166 percent.

Key infrastructures inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in recent times:

In fulfilling her promise to transform Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041, Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the following key infrastructures in recent times:

- Inaugurated the Matarbari deep seaport's 14.3-kilometre-long artificial navigation channel on 11 November 2023, expected to be the economic life line of the country.
- Inaugurated the 12.24 km Akhaura-Agartala cross-border rail link on 01 November 2023, jointly with her Indian counterpart Mr. Narendra Modi hoping to foster possibilities in trade, business, tourism and people to people contact. At the same programme, they also jointly inaugurated two more development projects, Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line; and Unit - II of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant.
- Inaugurated record 150 bridges in 39 districts of eight divisions in a single day on 19 October 2023, giving a further boost to the country's road connectivity.
- Inaugurated the 82km Dhaka to Bhanga section rail link that connects Dhaka and Jashore through the Padma Bridge on 10 October 2023.
- Inaugurated the iconic third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in the capital on 07 October 2023, bringing a epoch-making change to the country's aviation sector aiming at providing world class passenger services and security.
- Inaugurated the 11.5 km Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport-Farmgate section of the much-awaited Dhaka Elevated Expressway on 02 September 2023 by unveiling the inaugural plaque at the Old Trade Fair Ground at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.
- Inaugurated the country's first-ever metro rail on 28 December 2022 and the extended link of it from Agargaon to Motijheel on 04 November 2023. 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.

Important international engagements of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in recent times:

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had the following important international engagements in recent times to foster partnership and cooperation with both the developed and developing countries:

- Visited Belgium to attend the 'Global Gateway Forum' held on 25-26 October 2023 in Brussels, capital of Belgium at the invitation of the European Commission (EC) President Ursula von der Leyen.
- Visited New Delhi to attend the G20 Summit held during 08-10 September 2023 at the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi.

- Attended the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held in New York during 17-22 September 2023. In her address delivered to the UNGA session, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the global leaders to work in unison for peace, welfare of mankind and prosperity by shunning the path of war and confrontation.
- Paid an official visit to Japan from 25 to 28 April 2023 on the first leg of her tri-nation visit to Japan, the USA and the UK. She and her Japanese counterpart witnessed the exchange of eight instruments, mostly Memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) signed between Dhaka and Tokyo to boost cooperation in the areas of customs matters, agriculture, information and communication technology (ICT) including cyber-security, industry upgradation, defense, intellectual property, ship recycling and metro rail.

Awarding Ceremony of “National Export Trophy 2020-2021” held



Heroic Freedom Fighter Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Commerce at the National Export Trophy 2020-2021 Giving Ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on 8 November 2023

The National Export Trophy 2020-2021 Awarding Ceremony was held on 8 November 2023 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium. A number of 73 exporters have been awarded the National Export Trophy at the ceremony. Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Commerce handed over the trophies to the awardees. The ceremony was jointly organized by the Ministry of Commerce

and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

The Minister called upon all businessmen to work together to achieve the target of export income of one hundred billion dollars by 2030. Instead of relying only on the garment industry, products should be diversified for export. The key purpose of awarding this trophy is to create enthusiasm and fair competition among the exporters, leading industrialists and businessmen who have achieved success in export business and trade. This trophy will further motivate the awardees and spur others to work on new ventures.

Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce presided over the programme and Mr. Mahbubul Alam, President, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) were present as the Special Guest. Mr. A.H.M. Ahsan, Vice Chairman, EPB delivered the welcome remarks.

Engagements of Honorable Commerce Minister in recent times:

- The Honorable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP and Mexico's Secretary of the Economy, Ms. Raquel Buenrostro have expressed their commitment to take the economic relations of the two countries to a new height. A bilateral meeting was held in Mexico on 25 September 2023. This was the first such top-level meeting between the two countries in nearly five decades.
- Attended the Group of Twenty (G-20) Trade and Investment Minister's Meeting from 24 to 25 August 2023 in Jaipur, India. Addressing the meeting, he called upon the G-20 members to support countries including Bangladesh, in continuing the Duty-Free Quota Free (DFQF) market facility after her graduation in 2026.

- Sought support from the Commonwealth Ministers for continuation of existing Duty-Free and Quota-Free (DFQF) market access for Bangladesh after her graduation from the status of a Least Developed Country (LDC). The Minister made the request at the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' meeting held from 05-06 June 2023 at Marlborough House in London.
- Bangladesh and Bhutan inked an "Agreement on movement of traffic-in-transit and protocol" on 23 March 2023 in Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan, to strengthen bilateral trade relation and simplify transaction procedure between the two countries. Hon'ble Commerce Minister of Bangladesh Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP and Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment of Bhutan Mr. Lyonpo Karma Dorji signed the agreement on behalf of the respective sides.
- Paid a two-day visit to India during 22-23 December 2022. The Minister's two-day trip hinged upon negotiations with his Indian counterpart Shri Piyush Goyal, Commerce and Industry Minister in Delhi over the proposed India-Bangladesh Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Senior Secretary visited Japan for promoting bilateral economic relations



Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce with Mr. Hosaka Shin, Vice Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan

The key objective of the Ministry of Commerce (MoC):
Contribute to the nation's economic development through creation of a business friendly environment, simplification of export and import trading, rationalize tariff rate, promoting the equitable interests of domestic industries, stabilizing the prices of daily necessities and enhancing external trade.

Japan is one of the most important trading partners of Bangladesh. For bolstering the bilateral economic relations between Bangladesh and Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan invited Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to visit Japan from 21 to 28 September 2023. During the visit, Mr. Ghosh had a series of meeting with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). He also met the representatives of various Academia and Think Tanks. The discussions centered on improving bilateral relations especially in trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. During discussions, he had the opportunity to gather information regarding Japan's conclusion of 21 Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with 24 countries and other related issues. It may be mentioned that initiatives have been undertaken for assessing the prospect of signing an EPA with Japan for increasing trade, investment and economic cooperation. A Joint Study Group (JSG) has already been formed between the two countries to conduct a joint feasibility study for the finalization of the EPA. The JSG has already completed their third round of meetings on September 2023.

In recent times Senior Secretary of the MoC attended the following key events:

- The government of Bangladesh has set an export target of \$72 billion for the fiscal year 2023-24. Out of this export target, the target for goods and services export have been set at \$62 billion and \$10 billion respectively. The Honorable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP has announced the target at the conference room of the Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Dhaka on 12 July 2023. Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC moderated the meeting.
- Bangladesh Tea Board organized a colourful programme on the occasion of ‘3rd National Tea Day’ at Sreemangal in Moulvibazar on 04 June 2023. The Honorable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP was present on the occasion as the Chief Guest. The programme was presided over by Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce.
- The second Bangladesh-UK Trade and Investment Dialogue was held in Dhaka on 19 February 2023. The Government of Bangladesh was represented by Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC while His Majesty’s Trade Commissioner for South Asia, Mr. Alan Gemmell OBE, led the UK delegation. The British High Commissioner, Mr. Robert Chatterton Dickson was also present.
- Bangladesh and Singapore have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to set a stage for negotiation on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and explored potential for trade and investment opportunities between the two

countries on 16 November 2022. The Honorable 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.

The Government of Bangladesh working to control inflation: Hon’ble Finance Minister



Hon’ble Finance Minister Mr. AHM Mustafa Kamal speaking at the press briefing at the Finance Ministry conference room in Dhaka on 22 October 2023

The key objective of the Finance Division: Ensure macro-economic stability and fiscal discipline through prudent and efficient fiscal management to achieve higher growth and reduce poverty.

Hon’ble Finance Minister Mr. AHM Mustafa Kamal said that the government of Bangladesh is working to bring down the prices of essentials and control inflation.

“The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that the the economy of Bangladesh is on the right track. Currently, our foreign exchange reserves is US\$20 to US\$22 billion,” he added. Hon’ble Finance Minister expressed hope that inflation would decrease in the coming days.

Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder takes the helm as Finance Secretary



Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder, the newly appointed Secretary of the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance

Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder became the new Secretary to the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance on 28 August 2023. He is an accomplished professional with a 30-year career in various fields of combining finance, macroeconomics, international economics, customs, international development, WTO issues, and international trade. Before joining the Finance Division, he acted as Secretary in the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources. He is also an honorable member of the board of directors of BFTI as the Secretary of the Finance Division. BFTI felicitates Dr. Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder for becoming the new Secretary of the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

World Bank to give \$1.1b for 5 projects

The key objective of the Economic Relations Division (ERD): Acceleration of national development through mobilization of external resources to support development plans/programs of the Government by strengthening bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations.

The World Bank (WB) is going to finance a total of \$1,112 million against five projects for the sustainable development of Bangladesh. Five financing agreements were signed between

Bangladesh and the World Bank at the ERD office at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital on 23 November 2023. The WB said the five financing projects would help the country to achieve resilient and inclusive growth by improving early childhood development, secondary education, riverbank protection and navigability, urban primary health, and gas distribution efficiency. The credit will be provided from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA).

Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky made new secretary of Economic Relations Division (ERD)



Mr. Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky, the newly appointed Secretary of the Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky became the new Secretary of ERD, Ministry of Finance on 23 November 2023. He has undertaken extensive training in public sector management and participated in numerous international workshops in different countries and UN bodies. Recently he has received the prestigious order of Diplomatic Service Merit (Heungin Medal) from the Republic of Korea for his outstanding and meritorious service rendered to promoting friendly relations between the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. He is also an honorable member of the board of directors of BFTI as the Secretary of the ERD. BFTI felicitates Mr. Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky for becoming the new Secretary of the ERD, Ministry of Finance.

Awarding Ceremony of “Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Industrial Award-2022” held



Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin, Hon'ble President, People's Republic of Bangladesh with Hon'ble Industries Minister Mr. Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, M.P., Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, M.P., Hon'ble State Minister for Industries, Mr. Kamal Ahmed Mojumder, M.P., Ms. Zakia Sultana, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Industries and President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mr. Mahbubul Alam at the award giving ceremony

The key objective of Ministry of Industries (MoI): Employment through rapid industrialisation, reduce dependency on import products and earn foreign currency by producing exportable goods to ensure overall economic development of the country.

“Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Industrial Award-2022” Awarding Ceremony was held on 03 October 2023 at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka. 12 industrial units in six categories have been awarded for their outstanding contribution to the industrial sector at the ceremony. Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin, Hon'ble President, People's Republic of Bangladesh handed over golden crests, money and certificates to the representatives of the organizations.

Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, M.P., Hon'ble State Minister for Industries Mr. Kamal Ahmed Mojumder, M.P. and President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of

Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mr. Mahbubul Alam attended the ceremony as Special Guests.

Mr. Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Industries, presided over the award-giving ceremony while Ms. Zakia Sultana, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Industries delivered the welcome speech.

BTTC organized training on fill-up of anti-dumping questionnaire



Mr. Md. Faizul Islam, Chairman (Secretary), Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission inaugurated Training on Fill-up of Anti-Dumping Questionnaire dated 25 October 2023

The key objective of BTTC: Develop recommendations on measures relating to protection of domestic industries, creation of a sound competitive environment for industrial production, ensuring optimal use of industrial resources, promotion of export of domestic goods, taking measures to prevent dumping or unfair practices in the importation and sale of foreign products, and increasing market access of domestic industries through bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements.

Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) organized a specialized training on filling up of anti-dumping questionnaire. Mr. Md. Faizul Islam, Chairman (Secretary), BTTC inaugurated the event as the Chief Guest. It was expected that the training will contribute to raise awareness among participants and relevant stakeholders regarding anti-dumping and help them apply for anti-dumping case easily.

Honorable Commerce Minister urges to remove red tapism



Heroic Freedom Fighter and Honorable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP was the Chief Guest at the laying of foundation stone of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Bhaban at Agargaon dated 9 October 2023

The key objective of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB): Develop product, modernization and diversification and market strengthening and expansion activities through modern information technology based progressive institutional capacity as well as ensuring speedy facilitation of service provision to export related individuals/institutions.

Honorable Commerce Minister Mr. Tipu Munshi urged to remove red tapism to expand trade and business and increase export earnings. He was speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of EPB building at Agargaon on 09 October 2023 reminding the responsibilities of the EPB officials, he said, “Now, Bangladesh’s rank is in the first position for denim and second for readymade garments in the world. To ensure better service, red tape must be removed. Harassment in service delivery is not acceptable in any way.”

He laid emphasis on finding new markets to achieve the export targets set for 2030 and 2041. “There are many potential sectors to increase exports. The country has a wide variety of exportable products. Exploring the potentials of the products requires making the right decision at the right time,” he added.

Senior Secretary of the Commerce Ministry Mr. Tapan Kanti Gosh and President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Mr. Mahbubul Alam spoke on the occasion as

Special Guests while EPB Vice Chairman Mr. AHM Ahsan presided over it.

Young Leadership Training Programme held for Diplomats of D-8 Member States at Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh



Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, Ambassador Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary) and Ms. Mashfee Binte Shams, Rector, Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh with the participants of the training

The key objective of the Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh: Create an enabling environment for learning and practicing diplomatic knowledge and skills through indigenously innovative and internationally standard methodologies of trainings and simulations.

Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh organized a Young Leadership Training Programme for the Diplomats of D-8 Member States. The training was held in between 15 October 2023 to 21 October 2023. A total of eight foreign diplomats of D-8 Member States participated in the course.

Business Exclusives

FBCCI and EU keen to strengthen bilateral trade ties



FBCCI President, Mr. Mahbubul Alam and EU Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Charles Whiteley

The key objective of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI): Contribute in policy advocacy and all matters relevant to trade and investment facilitation from Cottage, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (CMSMEs) to the largest sector of Bangladesh.

FBCCI, the apex trade organization of the country, and the European Union (EU) have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen trade relations between the two regions. The EU Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Charles Whiteley and FBCCI President Mr. Mahbubul Alam expressed their commitment during a courtesy meeting held on Monday, 16 October 2023 at the FBCCI Office in Gulshan, Dhaka. FBCCI President Mr. Mahbubul Alam conveyed his sincere appreciation to the EU for providing Bangladesh an additional three-year transition period to enjoy EBA facilities till 2029. EU Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Charles Whiteley reiterated the EU's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the European Union. FBCCI Vice President Khairul Huda Chopol, Mohammad Anwar Sadat Sarker, Shomi Kaiser, Md. Munir Hossain, Directors and other dignitaries were present at the meeting.

Mahbubul Alam takes over the charge of FBCCI



Former FBCCI President, Mr. Md Jashim Uddin handed over the responsibilities to the new FBCCI President, Mr. Mahbubul Alam

Mr. Mahbubul Alam took charge as the President of FBCCI, the apex trade organization of the country. The transition took place on 14 August 2023 as the outgoing Board of Directors (2021-23), led by Mr. Md Jashim Uddin, handed over the responsibilities to the

new board at the FBCCI Icon, Dhaka. New FBCCI President Mr. Mahbubul Alam expressed his commitment to bolster the trade and business of the country in the upcoming days. He further added, "Our collective efforts will drive the growth of the private sector. I request everyone's cooperation in my journey. As of today, we stand united. We will work together to foster economic growth and safeguard the private sector".

Mr. Mahbubul Alam's remarkable business journey since 1983 spans diverse sectors including commodity trading, banks & financial services, tourism, and investment groups, and establishing 17 successful enterprises across nine sectors. Beyond his business acumen, Mr. Mahbubul Alam has received recognition in the form of CIP (Trade) and CIP (Industry) Awards from the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh. His global recognition further includes receiving the "Certificate of Merit" from the World Customs Organization.

Remarkable meeting and programmes of FBCCI in recent times:

- FBCCI and the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) have outlined their plans to enhance Halal product availability and market penetration in a discussion meeting held at the FBCCI Icon in Dhaka on 21 August 2023.
- Organized 'Bangladesh Business Summit 2023' at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) in Dhaka on 11 March 2023 in association with The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA).
- 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 President of FBCCI on 22 November 2022 at FBCCI.

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Global Chair met with Executive Board Members of ICC Bangladesh



ICC President Mr. Mahbubur Rahman with ICC Global Chair Ms. Maria Fernanda Garza at the meeting

The key objective of International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh (ICCB): Promote foreign trade and investment, trade policy reviews, business dialogues, seminars & workshops both at home and abroad on related policy issues, harmonization of trade law & rules, legal reforms, updating businesses with the ICC rules & standards for cross border business transactions.

A meeting between ICCB and ICC Global Chair Ms. Maria Fernanda Garza was held on 16 October 2023 at ICCB Secretariat during her recent visit to Dhaka. ICCB President Mr. Mahbubur Rahman & the Members of the Board of Directors, ICCB were present at the meeting. ICCB President welcomed Ms. Maria and introduced ICCB Executive Board Members with their short profiles. Ms. Maria expressed her willingness to promote Bangladesh on the global stage and also discussed promotion of bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and Mexico.

In recent times ICC Bangladesh arranged the following events:

- Organized a roundtable discussion on 'Climate Adaptation: Opportunities for Bangladesh in Development of Agro-based Industries' on 2 August 2023. Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Hon'ble Agriculture

Minister graced the roundtable as the Chief Guest.

- A roundtable discussion on 'Investment for Infrastructure Development' was organized by ICCB on 27 May 2023. Mr. M. A. Mannan, MP, Hon'ble Planning Minister graced the roundtable as the Chief Guest.

Business meetings between Dhaka Chamber and Riyadh Chamber held



DCCI President, Barrister Md. Sameer Sattar and Mr. Naif Abdullah Al Rajhi, Vice Chairman, Riyadh Chamber of Commerce

The key objective of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI): Promote private sector enterprises and businesses with advocacy, awareness and policy inputs to government.

A business meeting between the DCCI and Riyadh Chamber of Commerce followed by an effective B2B match-making session was held on 30 October 2023 at the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce premises in Saudi Arabia. President of DCCI Barrister Md. Sameer Sattar led the largest private sector business delegation comprised of 61 Bangladeshi companies to Saudi Arabia. DCCI President in his speech said, "We felt proud to see our products in Saudi Arabia, which were made in Bangladesh". Later business meetings more than 120 B2B match-making between Bangladeshi and Saudi businessmen were held. Meanwhile, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and DCCI with a view to further cementing the bilateral business cooperation in the days to come.

The following remarkable meetings and programmes were organized by DCCI in recent times:

- Organized a Seminar on ‘Import Substitute Industry in Bangladesh: Perspective of Light Engineering Sector’ at DCCI on 24 August 2023.
- Organized a Stakeholder’s Dialogue titled ‘Energy Strategy: Towards a Predictable Future’ on 20 May 2023 at DCCI Auditorium.
- Organized a ‘Live Pre-budget (FY2023-24) Discussion’ meeting in association with Daily Samakal and Channel 24 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) on 22 March 2023.

MCCI launched the Bangladesh Business Climate Index (BBX) 2022-2023



Heroic Freedom Fighter Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman (Senior Secretary), BIDA and Mr. Md. Saiful Islam, President, MCCI at the launching event

The key objective of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI): Provide research and analysis support related to business, enhance capabilities through collaboration with local and international institutions.

MCCI and Policy Exchange Bangladesh formally launched the Bangladesh Business Climate Index (BBX) 2022-2023 in an event at its Motijheel office on 26 January 2023. Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Commerce graced the event as the Chief Guest. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman (Senior Secretary), BIDA attended the event as Special

Guests. Mr. Md. Saiful Islam, President, MCCI made welcome and concluding remarks. BBX 2022-2023 is the second iteration of Bangladesh's first home-grown index that gauges the country's business climate. Members of the business community, think-tanks, associations and media attended the event.

Activities of MCCI in recent times:

- Organized a discussion meeting titled ‘Compliance with Tax Payment, Return Filing and Deduction of Tax at Source: Through Income Tax Act, 2023 and Finance Act, 2023’ jointly with Tax Zone-15, National Board of Revenue on 16 October 2023 at MCCI's Motijheel office.
- Organized a meeting on the ‘Universal Pension Scheme 2023’ on 29 August 2023 at the Chamber’s Motijheel office.
- Organized a post-budget 2023-2024 discussion titled ‘Bangladesh from Vulnerability to Resilience and Rapid Inclusive Development’ jointly with Policy Research Institute (PRI) on 3 June 2023 at MCCI Office, Dhaka.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) organized roundtable dialogue on ‘Bangabandhu Tunnel: A Leap towards Vision 2041’



CCCI President Mr. Omar Hazzaz with the Chief Guest Mr. Md. Mahbubul Alam, President, FBCCI at the roundtable dialogue

The key objective of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI): Accelerate research driven efforts to play facilitator role in creating an enabling environment for businesses to foster & economy to prosper.

CCCI organized a roundtable dialogue titled ‘Bangabandhu Tunnel: A Leap towards Vision 2041’ on 21 October 2023 at World Trade Centre (WTC), Chattogram. Mr. Md. Mahbubul Alam, President, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) graced the roundtable dialogue as the Chief Guest. Mr. Md. Mahbubul Alam said, “The tunnel will open the door for investment and trade in Chattogram and gear up the economic activities of the country”. While chairing the roundtable dialogue Mr. Omar Hazzaz, President, CCCI mentioned Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel is another epoch-making installation in the country after Padma Bridge and it will accelerate Bangladesh’s mission to be a trillion dollar economy.

Omar Hazzaz elected as President of CCCI for the term 2023-2025



Newly elected CCCI President Mr. Omar Hazzaz at the charge handover-takeover ceremony

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) organized a charge handover-takeover ceremony of the Board of Directors, CCCI for the term 2023-2025 was held on 07 September 2023 at WTC, Chattogram. Mr. Omar Hazzaz elected as the President of CCCI for the new tenure. Mr. Tarafder Md. Ruhul Amin and Ms. Raisa Mahbub were elected as Senior Vice-President and Vice-President for this tenure respectively.

In recent times CCCI arranged the following key events:

- A meeting between CCCI and the delegation from Western Australia was held on 30 May 2023 at WTC, Chattogram. The meeting was chaired by the then CCCI President Mr. Md. Mahbubul Alam.
- A seminar on “Canada-Bangladesh Bilateral Economic Cooperation: Need Explore Diversification of Products” was jointly arranged by then CCCI and Canada-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 05 February 2023 at WTC, Chattogram.

BGMEA President engages in trade and investment discussions with Brunei



BGMEA President Mr. Faruque Hassan with H. E. Mr. Haji Haris Bin Haji Othman, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam

The key objective of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA): Develop the RMG industry of Bangladesh and the economy of the country.

H. E. Mr. Haji Haris Bin Haji Othman, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam called on the President of BGMEA, Mr. Faruque Hassan to discuss areas of mutual interests including trade and investment at BGMEA Complex in Dhaka on 10 October 2023. The discussion highlighted the potential for strengthening bilateral relations and focused on opportunities for readymade garment exports to Brunei Darussalam. BGMEA President Mr. Faruque Hassan emphasized the industry's commitment

to manufacturing high-value garments and sought cooperation to explore avenues for increased exports, recognizing the mutual benefits of enhancing trade and investment ties.

BGMEA arranged some other important events as follows:

- BGMEA and HSBC Bangladesh have formalized a strategic partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at connecting BGMEA with international retailers and key stakeholders in emerging markets on 15 October 2023.
- Organized the Bangladesh Apparel Summit in Melbourne, Australia on 18 July 2023, in partnership with HSBC and with the support of the High Commission of Bangladesh to Australia.

Vietnamese delegation met the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA)



BTMA President Mr. Mohammad Ali Khokon on a meeting with Mr. Vu Duc Giang, Chairman of Vietnam Textile & Apparel Association (VITAS)

The key objective of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA): Promote and protect the trade and commerce, export and import business of the manufacturers of Bangladesh in general and of the textile related trade in particular.

A meeting between BTMA and a 22-Member Vietnamese delegation headed by Mr. Vu Duc Giang, Chairman of Vietnam Textile & Apparel Association (VITAS) was held on 8 October 2023 at BTMA Office. BTMA President Mr. Mohammad Ali Khokon & the Members of the Board of Directors, BTMA were present at the meeting.

BTMA President requested the delegation to come forward with Vietnamese investment in the field of Man-Made Fibres (MMF) at Bangladesh's Economic Zones. Mr. Vu Duc Giang informed that the exchange of delegation may work as a stepping stone for both the country which will ramp up the export of Bangladesh and Vietnam.

In recent times BTMA arranged the following key events:

- Mr. Mohammad Ali Khokon, President, BTMA attended as a panelist at the roundtable discussion on 'Monetary Policy for July-December, 2023'- framed by Bangladesh Bank (BB) on 9 July 2023 at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB).
- A press conference was held on 30 May 2023 at BTMA office to brief the media regarding prevailing situation in the primary textile sectors due to gas crisis, unauthorized marketing of yarn, fabrics and dress materials imported through bond.
- Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) and Yorkers Trade and Marketing Services Co. Ltd., Hong Kong jointly organized the 17th Dhaka International Textile & Garments (DTG) Machinery Exhibition, 2023. The exhibition was held during 15-18 February 2023 at International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB), Dhaka.

BCI signs MoU with Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC) to boost Bangladesh-India trade

The key objective of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI): Bring together industries in various parts of Bangladesh on a common platform for discussion of the problems affecting industries and make out solutions thereto.



BCI President Mr. Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez and BCC President at the MoU signing ceremony

BCI and the Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC), India, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 19 March 2023. President of BCI Mr. Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez and President of BCC Mr. NG Khaitan signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations at the BCI board room. The signing of the MoU is expected to be a step forward towards fostering extended commercial ties between the two countries. In order to enable participation in various trade fairs, expositions and seminars in Dhaka and Kolkata, the two organizations have agreed to establish a 'Dhaka Desk' at the BCC's office and a 'Kolkata Desk' at the BCI's office respectively.

Collaborative Agreement: Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute and Bangladesh Chamber of Industries formalize MoU signing



Hon'ble Commerce Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Heroic Freedom Fighter Mr. Tipu Munshi MP, BCI President and Member of the Board of BFTI, Mr. Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), The Chief Executive Officer of BFTI, Dr. Md Jafar Uddin at the MoU Signing Ceremony

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) on 10 August 2023. Hon'ble Minister of Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Heroic Freedom Fighter Mr. Tipu Munshi MP was present as the Chief Guest on the occasion. The Chief Executive Officer of BFTI, Dr. Md Jafar Uddin presided over the session. BCI President and Member of the Board of BFTI Mr. Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), officials from the Ministry of Commerce, BCI and BFTI were present on the occasion. With the signing of the MoU, BFTI and BCI will undertake a multifaceted programme of cooperation that will create new prospects for Bangladeshi business and industrial firms. The initiatives planned as a result of the agreement between BFTI and BCI will facilitate domestic and foreign investment and play an active role in building a sustainable economy through diversification of products, services and markets in a competitive global market.

Along with this in FY 2022-23, BCI has arranged the following events:

- Mr. Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez, President of BCI was honored with the prestigious Commercially Important Persons (CIP) award 2021 on 22 May 2023 for his contribution to industrial sector and creating employment opportunities.
- Organized a seminar on "Mitigation of the Impact of Energy Crisis on the Industrial Sector" on 24 October 2022 in Dhaka.

Editorial

It is our privilege and honor to bring out the special issue of the Trade for Change on December 2023. This special issue covers gamut of activities of the current year ending in November 2023. It may be mentioned that the newsletter is designed to reflect the initiatives and achievements of the Government, Trade bodies and BFTI. It 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 as guided by the BFTI Board of Directors. 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 the face of challenges stemming from graduation of LDC and other factors that make impact on international trade.

Editorial Advisor

Mr. Hedayetullah Al Mamoon, Former Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Finance Division, Ministry of Finance.

Chief Editor

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer, BFTI.

Editor

Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director (Research and Academic Affairs), BFTI.

Senior Associate Editor

Mr. Md. Zahidul Hoque Sardar, Senior Research Fellow, BFTI.

Associate Editors

Mr. Md. Julfikar Islam, Research Manager (Research/Study), BFTI.

Mr. Rashedul Kabir, Research Manager (Academic Affairs), BFTI.

Coordinator

Ms. Asia Binta Amanat Sumi, Research Associate (WTO, Reference Centre & Partnership), BFTI.

Contributors

Mr. Harunur Rashid, Research Manager (Contemporary Research); Ms. Mohsena Hossain (Elora), Assistant Director (CS); Mr. H M Simon, Research Associate (Africa and Leather Goods & Footwear); Mr. Farhan Mashuk, Research Associate (Planning, Development and Tourism); Ms. Mahin Afrose, Research Associate (Europe, E-commerce, Fisheries & Livestock); Mr. S. Jobayear Ahmed, Research Associate (Asia and Shipbuilding, Light Engineering and Innovative Business Service); Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Research Associate (Knowledge Sharing, Course Design & Plastic, IT, Jute); Mst. Ayesha Siddika, Research Officer; Sayed Arafat, Research Officer; Ms. Mahfuza Khanam (Shapla), Administrative Officer; Ms. Mursana Afrose Mithi, Executive Officer; Ms. July Akter, Executive Officer.

Logistic Support Services

Mr. Shafiqul Islam, Administrative Officer (Rules & Logistic); Mr. Md. Shahjahan Badsha, Administrative Officer (Accounts and Finance).

Publisher

Mr. Ahsanul Islam, Deputy Director, BFTI.

Core Activities

Research

Ongoing Activities:

BFTI is conducting a study to gauge the impacts of Padma multipurpose bridge on the foreign trade of Bangladesh



A scenic view of Padma Multipurpose Bridge

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) is conducting a study titled 'Impact of Padma Multipurpose Bridge on the Foreign Trade of Bangladesh' to explore, investigate and understand the underlying impacts of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge on the foreign trade of Bangladesh for the first time in the country. The objective of this study is to unveil the impacts of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge on export-import, trade logistics, regional connectivity and other trade-related aspects. The study also attempts to advocate some policy recommendations for enhancing investment and utilizing the bridge's connectivity for trade and economic growth.

BFTI is conducting a study titled “Bangladesh Trade and Investment Study: Market Opportunities and Trade Barriers”

Tetra Tech International Development Pty Ltd. (Tetra Tech) in conjunction with the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and Institute for International Trade (IIT), the University of Adelaide, Australia is conducting research titled



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the Enumerators' Training Programme of the study

“Bangladesh Trade and Investment Study: Market Opportunities and Trade Barriers.” The study is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Australian Government. It is worth mentioning that the diplomatic engagements and cooperation between Australia and Bangladesh have been strengthened over the years. The signing of a Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) in 2021 between the two countries further enhanced trade and investment prospects.

The objective of this study encompasses a meticulous examination of market opportunities and limitations pertinent to Australian enterprises and exporters. Furthermore, the study endeavors to formulate recommendations relevant to strategies for increased trade and investment activities between Bangladesh and Australia.

It also aims to identify existing trade constraints and propose potential recommendations for resolving constraints. The sectors under the study include (i) Agriculture, (ii) Fisheries and Livestock, (iii) Energy and Minerals, (iv) Air Connectivity and (v) Vocational Education. Additionally, several other major sectors, including (i) Ready-Made Garments, (ii) Information Technology, (iii) Light Engineering, (iv) Leather Goods, and (v) Footwear, are also being scrutinized in this study.

BFTI is conducting a study to comprehend the role of Bangladesh's RMG Sector in the global fashion industry



A glimpse of a RMG factory in Bangladesh

BFTI has undertaken a study titled 'Role of Bangladesh's RMG Sector in The Global Fashion Industry' to determine the country's contribution to global fashion industry. The objectives of this study are to identify the trends of the global fashion industry in terms of international trade and fashion consumption pattern/consumer preference, analyze the RMG export trend of Bangladesh, understand the gap between global fashion trends and Bangladesh's existing export trends, gain insights on the challenges and prospects of Bangladesh's RMG sector in the context of the global fashion industry and generate recommendations for increasing the contribution of Bangladesh's RMG sector to the global fashion industry and sustaining the country's RMG export growth trajectory.

A Framework Document on the WTO Ministerial Conferences (MCs) Outcomes and Agreements and Key Doable Actions for Bangladesh

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) has initiated to develop a Framework Document focused on the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conferences (MCs) Outcomes and Agreements and Key Doable Actions for Bangladesh.

As an LDC and soon to be a developing country and an active member of WTO, all international trade aspects of Bangladesh revolve around



WTO MCs Outcomes and Agreements. Since the provisions of WTO are crucial for the country's trade development and Bangladesh is graduating into a developing country, WTO rules, agreements and decisions should be thoroughly examined to explore more trade opportunities.

The rationale behind this framework document is to delineate the potential scope and critical aspects of the major WTO MCs Outcomes, Agreements and Key Doable Actions for Bangladesh which are instrumental in international trade and determine the areas of intervention. The document's primary objective is to provide an understanding of how these 12 WTO MCs Outcomes, Agreements affect economy, trade policies and overall development and find key doable actions for Bangladesh.

By meticulously analyzing the specific provisions and arrangements within the WTO MCs Outcomes and Agreements, the document aims to evaluate their potential benefits, challenges and relevance to Bangladesh's national interests. Furthermore, it seeks to identify implementation gaps or areas of concern while exploring potential strategies to maximize benefits and minimize adverse consequences for Bangladesh.

The findings of this document will significantly contribute to augmenting knowledge related to the WTO MCs Outcomes and Agreements. It will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers and stakeholders in Bangladesh offering insights and recommendations to develop the country's engagement with the WTO and optimize the benefits derived from these WTO MCs Outcomes, Agreements and find key doable actions for Bangladesh.

Completed Research Activities

(During July 2022 to November 2023)

SL	Name of Study	Initiated By	Date of Completion
1	Identification of Trade-Related Graduation Challenges and Preparation of Sector-Specific Trade Roadmaps for Overcoming the Challenges	WTO Wing, MoC and funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).	May 2023
2	Conducting Study to determine 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	Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)	May 2023
3	WTO Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) and Graduation Challenges of Bangladesh	Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 (BRCP-1), WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce (MoC)	March 2023
4	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	BRCP-1, WTO Wing, MoC	March 2023
5	Simplification of Trade Procedures, Custom 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	BRCP-1, WTO Wing, MoC	March 2023
6	Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) and Technical Barrier for Trade (TBT) Co-Ordination and Notification, Certification Process and Infrastructure for Promoting Trade	BRCP-1, WTO Wing, MoC	March 2023
7	Joint Feasibility Study on Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Bangladesh and India	Ministry of Commerce	August 2022

Training

Ongoing Activities:

BFTI is implementing a project on “Developing Export Competitiveness of Potential Halal Products of Bangladesh”



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, Dr. Saif Uddin Ahammad, Joint Secretary, MoC, Ms. Mahbuba Khatoon Minu, Deputy Secretary, MoC and other participants with the officials of Turkish Standards Institution (TSE).

BFTI is implementing a project of Ministry of Commerce on “Developing Export Competitiveness of Potential Halal Products of Bangladesh”. The project is funded by the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The project has been selected and awarded by the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) in response to the 10th call for project proposal under the COMCEC Project Funding. The contract of the said project has been signed by the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh and Development and Investment Bank of Türkiye. The objective of the project is to improve the capacity of the officials from both public and private sector related to halal certification.

Under this project, a delegation of 5 officials led by Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, Dr. Saif Uddin Ahammad, Joint Secretary, MoC, Ms. Mahbuba Khatoon Minu, Deputy Secretary, MoC, Mr. Md. Julfikar Islam, Research Manager, BFTI and Mr. SM Abu Sayed, Assistant Director, Bangladesh Standards & Testing Institution visited to Istanbul, Türkiye held from 23 October 2023 to 27 October 2023. The objective of the study visit was to gather the first-hand experience of the successful implementation of SMIIC/OIC Standards prepared and published by Standards and

Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the halal accreditation and certification services provided by the national bodies of Türkiye, Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) and Turkish Standards Institution (TSE).

On the first day (24 October 2023), The team participated in an International Conference on Global Recognition of Halal Certificates organized by HAK at Gonen Hotel, Istanbul, Türkiye. On the same day, the study team also had a meeting with a team of HAK led by Zafer SOYLU, Chairman of the Board of Directors, HAK. The team also visited SMIIC office to learn about its areas of work and activities on Halal Standards. Afterwards, the team visited the Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) quality campus to witness the quality testing procedures and laboratory facilities.



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) & Project Responsible Authority, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, Ms. Mahbuba Khatoon Minu, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Project Director, Resource Person Mr. Yasin Zülfikaroğlu, Specialist on Standardization, Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) & Mr. Mete Çevik, Halal Accreditation Expert, Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) with participants of the training ‘International Halal Standards and Certification Requirements’ held during 19-21 November 2023 under the project of Ministry of Commerce ‘Developing Export Competitiveness of Potential Halal Products of Bangladesh’ funded by COMCEC Project Funding & organized by BFTI.

Mr. Noor Md. Mahbubul Haq, Additional Secretary (FTA Wing), Ministry of Commerce, graced the occasion as the Special Guest. Ms. Mahbuba Khatoon Minu, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Project Director delivered the welcome speech. The resource persons -Mr. Yasin Zülfikaroğlu from Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), an affiliated institution of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Mr. Mete Çevik from The Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK), Republic of Turkey, were also present. 32 officials from public and private sector were participating in the training programme.

Training Programme titled ‘Trade Diplomacy and International Trade Negotiation’ held



Heroic Freedom Fighter Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, addressed the participants of the 4-day long Trade Diplomacy and International Trade Negotiation Training held in Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute on 30 August 2023

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) organized a 4-day long training programme titled ‘Trade Diplomacy and International Trade Negotiation’. The closing session and certificate awarding ceremony of the training programme was held on 30 August 2023.

Hon'ble Commerce Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BFTI, Mr. Tipu Munshi MP, was present as the Chief Guest in the closing ceremony. The ceremony was presided over by the Chief Executive Officer of BFTI Dr. Md Jafar Uddin. Barrister Md. Sameer Sattar, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Member of the Board of Directors of BFTI was also present as the Special Guest.

Hon'ble Minister of Commerce Mr. Tipu Munshi MP said, "There is no alternative to improvement of the skills in trade diplomacy and negotiations. The concerned stakeholders need to acquire required knowledge and strategies to make the negotiation fruitful. It is

also essential for the negotiations to have a sound knowledge of WTO-related agreements”.

The formation of an expert pool comprising of experienced government and private sector actors is under consideration. Additionally, he said “In line with the Regional Trade Agreement (RTA) Policy 2022 guidelines, Ministry of Commerce has planned to form a ‘Trade Negotiation Structure’ with members of various ministries, private institutions, think tanks and academia. He also said that after the LDC graduation in 2026, Bangladesh will not get duty-free benefits in trade. Under the new situation, Bangladesh needs to enter into free trade agreements with other countries and trade alliances. He hoped that this training would be helpful to improve negotiation skills and proper understanding of FTAs.” He thanked the Chief Executive Officer of BFTI for organizing such an exceptional and timely training programme.

CEO of BFTI and a Former Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Dr. Md Jafar Uddin presided over the programme. Expressing his gratitude to the Chief Guest and other guests, the CEO said, "The presence of the Hon'ble Commerce Minister and Barrister Md. Sameer Sattar, President of DCCI will motivate the trainees." He further said, “BFTI, by imparting training, is striving to enhance business-related knowledge and skills of public and private sector officials. This training programme has been undertaken considering the potential challenges of Bangladesh’s LDC Graduation and the development of necessary capacity in this regard.” Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director of BFTI delivered the welcome speech.

Training Programme on “Rules and Procedures for Import and Export for BEPZA Officials” organized



Chief Guest Mr. Mahbulul Alam, President, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director at the opening session of 5-day-long training held from 15 October 2023

Training Programme on ‘Understanding Tax, VAT & Customs Duty for Trade’ organized



Chief Guest Dr. Shamsul Alam, Honorable Minister of State, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the Closing & Certificate Awarding Ceremony of 5-day-long training held from 20 September 2023

“Skill Development Training Programme on Bangla Typing through Unicode” organized



Chief Guest Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, Resource Person Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin, Former Instructor & Asst. Director (Training), Regional Public Administration Training Centre (RPATC) at the Opening session of 5-day-long training held from 11 September 2023

Training Programme on “Gravity Model in International Trade” organized



Chief Guest Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI, Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, Dr. Gour Gobinda Goswami, Professor, Department of Economics, North South University(NSU) with BFTI Officials at the 5- day-long training held from 20 August 2023

Training Programme on ‘Rules and Procedures for Import and Export’ organized



Chief Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI at the Opening session of 5-day-long training held from 06 August 2023

Upcoming Training Activities of FY 2023-24 (July-June)

SL. No.	Title of the Training
1.	Training on Cross Border E-Commerce
2.	Trade Finance for International Business
3.	Starting Business and International Trade for new entrepreneurs
4.	WTO Essential Agreements – TRIPS, SPS and TBT
5.	Supply Chain Management
6.	Environment, Social, and Quality Compliance (ESQ) for Export Industries
7.	Orientation Course for Economic Managers
8.	Legal Instruments of WTO for Trade
9.	Training On CGE Modeling
10.	Hands-on Training on D-Nothi
11.	Training on “Nothi and Record Management”

Policy Advocacy (July 2022- November 2023)

1. BFTI provided comments on 'LDC Ministerial Declaration for the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference 2024' to WTO wing, MoC on 15 October 2023.
2. BFTI provided comments on 'Draft National Logistics Development Policy/ Framework' on 25 September 2023.
3. BFTI provided opinions regarding the 'Impact of COVID-19 in Trade in Services (Transport and Logistics Services)' to WTO Wing, MoC on 22 May 2023.
4. BFTI provided comments regarding 'Trade Policy Review (TPR) of the European Union (EU)' to the WTO Wing, MoC on 2 May 2023.
5. BFTI provided comments on the report regarding 'Legal and Technical Readiness Assessment of Cross Border Paperless Trade (Bangladesh)' to FTA Wing, MoC on 27 April 2023.
6. BFTI provided comments on 'Expectations and Risks in Bangladesh-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA): Regarding trade in goods, trade in services and investment' to FTA Wing, MoC on 11 April 2023.
7. Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) provided comments for Bangladesh-'India Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade Meeting' to FTA Wing, MoC on 5 March 2023.

Events

56th Meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI held



The 56th Meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI was held on 29 October 2023 at the BFTI Conference Room

The 56th Meeting of the Board of Directors of BFTI was held on 29 October 2023 at the BFTI Conference Room. Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Chairman, Board of Directors, BFTI and Senior Secretary, MoC, first Vice-Chairman, Board of Directors, BFTI could not remain present in the meeting for unavoidable circumstances. In the absence of the Chairman and first Vice-Chairman, Mr. Mahabubul Alam, Second Vice-Chairman,

Board of Directors, BFTI, and President of FBCCI presided over the meeting in accordance with Article 53.C of the Articles of Association of the BFTI. The other Vice-Chairman and President of ICCB and among the other members of the Board of Directors, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Vice-Chairman, EPB, Chairman of BTTC, Rector, Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh, President of MCCI, Dhaka, President of CCCI were present at the meeting. The Board approved the Annual Budget of BFTI for the FY 2023-24. According to the workplan approved by Board, BFTI will be accomplishing 10 more researches and 18 trainings for the FY 2023-24. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI and Member-Secretary of the BoD presented the Working Paper. The Board also approved the date for holding 12th AGM of BFTI on 6 December 2023.

Roundtable Discussion on “Capacity Building on Cross-Border E-Commerce: Next Generation Business” held



Chief Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, MoC, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Chairperson Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, Chief Executive Officer, BFTI, Special Guest Mr. A. H. M. Ahsan, Vice Chairman, EPB, Moderator Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director, BFTI, Keynote Speaker Mr. Muhammad Abdul Wahed Tomal, Chairperson, Comjagat Technologies Limited and other guests at the Roundtable Discussion on “Capacity Building on Cross-Border E-Commerce: Next Generation Business” jointly organised by BFTI and Comjagat Technologies Limited on 14 September 2023 at BFTI Conference Room

Weekly Research Meetings of BFTI



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI with other officials of BFTI at weekly meeting on research activities

Weekly research meetings are held on every Monday chaired by CEO, BFTI. The progress including responsibilities of the officials entrusted with the regular research, training and academic activities of BFTI are discussed in the weekly research meeting.

From September 2023 to November 2023 total 9 (nine) weekly research meetings were held.

Monthly Coordination Meeting of BFTI



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI with other officials of BFTI at the monthly coordination meeting

Monthly coordination meeting is held on every month chaired by CEO, BFTI. The overall administrative and research updates of the activities and events of the BFTI are discussed in the meeting.

Weekly Innovative Idea Sharing Session:



Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI with other officials of BFTI at Weekly Innovative Idea Sharing Session

As a support of the core activity, BFTI officials participate in “Weekly Innovative Idea Sharing Session” on every Thursday afternoon presided over by CEO, BFTI. In the sessions, BFTI officials share their innovative thoughts and challenges of work. The session includes presentation on:

- Trade related news published in “The Economist”
- Important news posted at WTO website
- New Words picked up from reputed articles
- Report on Weekly Monitoring (Logistic).

Presentation from the Economist Magazine

The following key issues (during July 2022-November 2023) were presented at the weekly Innovative Idea Sharing Session:

1. How Asia is reinventing its economic model
2. Reorientation
3. Future of Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)
4. Why China’s economy won’t be fixed
5. Saudi Arabia is Spending a Fortune on Sport

Important News and Insights of the WTO presented

Throughout July 2022-November 2023 , the following key issues were presented which were drawn from the cutting-edge news and insights of WTO:

1. Advanced course on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement begins in Geneva (10 October 2023)
2. Introductory course on WTO trade policy concludes in Geneva (6 October 2023)
3. DG Okonjo-Iweala: International cooperation on trade policy is key to global health equity (3 October 2023)
4. New WTO publication: “International export regulations and controls” provides insights into the world of export regulations and controls (15 September 2023)
5. WHO, WIPO, WTO renew commitment to support integrated solutions to global health challenges (12 September 2023)

Sheikh Russell Day 2023:



Tribute to Sheikh Russell from BFTI on Sheikh Russell Day 2023

Sheikh Russell Day 2023 was celebrated on 18 October 2023 organized by the Ministry of Commerce. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI attended as a speaker. All officials of the BFTI attended the event.

Piloting Programme with ‘Syntech Solution’- Research and Policy Management System:

A piloting programme was held on 16 October 2023 to identify GAP in ‘BFTI Research and Policy Management System’ developed by Syntech Solution under the Integrated Digital Service Delivery Platform of the Ministry of Commerce. Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI and all officials of BFTI and representatives from the Syntech Solution also attended the programme.

Meeting with North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFI):

A two-member delegation team of North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFI) under the ‘Study on Connectivity Projects to explore ways to enhance connectivity of India’s North Eastern region with neighboring countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal’ visited the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) on 17 October 2023.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signed

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and University of Bern’s World Trade Institute (WTI) signed MoU for global trade advancement

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was virtually signed on 19 September 2023, between the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and the University of Bern’s World Trade Institute (WTI). This MoU signified a profound commitment to collaboration and innovation in the field of international trade and economics. Dr. MD Jafar Uddin, CEO of BFTI, and Prof. Dr. Joseph Francois, Managing Director of the WTI, signed the MoU from their respective institutions.

This MoU included areas of specific collaboration like: sharing of knowledge and experiences within areas of mutual interest; development of academic programmes for students and staff; exchange of administrative and management staff; development and implementation of joint educational and research programmes and their components; development of joint research project and joint publications; organisation and execution of joint capacity building events (trainings, conferences, seminars etc.).

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and Department of International Business, University of Dhaka signed MoU



Faculties of the International Business Department and BFTI officials at the MoU signing ceremony between Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and the International Business Department, University of Dhaka

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) and Department of International Business, University of Dhaka on 17 September 2023 at BFTI Conference Room. The CEO of BFTI Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Chairman of the International Business Department Professor Dr. Md. Kamal Uddin along with the faculties of the International Business Department and BFTI officials were also present. The signing of the MoU will enhance the capacity of both organizations in terms of training and research in addressing the emerging challenges and academic programmes in business and economics.

Representation of BFTI at National and International Events

Key Meetings/Seminars/Workshops attended by Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI (During July 2022-November 2023)

1

On 23 August 2023, the representative of Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Mr. Labio Bala and Mr. Tandin Wangchuk visited BFTI and met Chief Executive Officer of BFTI, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin.

2

Attended the programme organized by the Ministry of Commerce on the occasion of the 48th Martyrdom Anniversary and National Mourning Day of Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August 2023 at TCB Auditorium.

3

Presided over the opening ceremony of the five-day training programme titled “Rules and Procedures for Import and Export” on 6 August 2023.

4

Participated in the discussion and commemoration programme organized by the Ministry of Commerce on 5 August 2023, on the 74th birth anniversary celebration of Captain Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the TCB auditorium.

5

Attended the Summit on “Bangladesh Japan Economic Relations for the Next 50 Years: For The Industry Upgradation of Bangladesh” on 23 July 2023 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel organized by JETRO.

6

Attended the 7th Meeting on National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) on 20 July 2023 at EPB Auditorium.

7

Attended the 3rd National Tea Day-2023 at the BTRI School, Sreemangal, Moulovibazar organized by Bangladesh Tea Board, Ministry of Commerce on 4 June 2023.

8

Attended at the MOU Signing ceremony between the BFTI and Idea-Tree on 21 May 2023 at the BFTI Conference Room.

9

Attended at the MOU signing ceremony between BFTI and Spellbound Communications Limited on 9 May 2023 at the BFTI Conference Room.

10

Presided over the opening ceremony of the Validation workshop of ‘Conducting Study on Policy Support and Incentives before and after LDC Graduation for RMG Sector’ on 7 May 2023 at BFTI Conference Room.

11

Attended a meeting on “Cross-Border E Commerce: The paradigm shift in international trade and economic growth” on 30 April 2023 at BFTI Conference room.

12

Attended as a Keynote Presenter at a Committee of the Experts meeting, organized by the Ministry of Commerce on “Identification of Trade-related Graduation Challenges and Preparation of Sector-Specific Trade Roadmaps for Overcoming the Challenges: Diagnostic Trade Integration Study Update (DTISU) of Bangladesh: Trade Roadmap for Sustainable Graduation (TRSG)” on 17 April 2023 at the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Secretariat.

13

Attended as the Chief Guest at the Validation Workshop titled “Designing and Establishing a web based women traders networking system” on 16 April 2023 at BFTI Conference room organized by the BRCP-1 Project, Ministry of Commerce.

14

Attended as a Speaker at a workshop titled “সুশাসন প্রতিষ্ঠা ও দুর্নীতি প্রতিরোধকল্পে করণীয়” organized by Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation on 22 March 2023 at Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation Training Institute.

15

Attended as a Speaker “জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ঐর ১০৩তম জন্মবার্ষিকী ও জাতীয় শিশু দিবস উদযাপন” organized by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh on 17 March 2023 at the TCB Auditorium.

16

Attended “World Consumers’ Rights Day 2023” organized by the Directorate of National Consumers’ Right Protection, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh on 15 March 2023.

17

Attended as a part of Bangladesh delegation with a meeting with the delegates from JETRO on 25 January 2023 at the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Secretariat.

Key Meetings/Seminars/Workshops Attended by the Officials of BFTI (During July 2022-November 2023)

SL	Attended by	Workshop/Seminar/Meeting Title, Organized by, Date & Venue
01.	Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam, Director (Research and Academic Affairs), BFTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly ADP Review Meeting on 31 October 2023 organized by Ministry of Commerce (MoC). Special Meeting of Inter-Ministerial Programmemeing Committee on 24 August 2023 at Planning Commission, organized by Planning Commission. Monthly coordination meeting of Ministry of Commerce for the month of July on 20 July 2023 at Conference Room, Ministry of Commerce. Discussion meeting for finalizing the programme to observe the National Mourning Day with due dignity and solemnity organized by MoC on 17 July 2023 at Conference Room, MoC. Discussion meeting with members of EIF, WTO Mission to review implementation and progress of Trade Roadmap for Sustainable Graduation project and Export Diversification and Competitiveness Development (TIER-II) Project and Diagnostic Trade Integration Study Update funded by EIF, WTO on 15 May 2023 at Conference Room, MoC.

SL	Attended by	Workshop/Seminar/Meeting Title, Organized by, Date & Venue
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workshop on Production Transformation Policy Review (PTPR) of Bangladesh Investing in the Future of a Trading Nation on 11 May 2023 at Conference Room, MoC, organized by MoC. ■ Committee of experts meeting on the study titled 'Identification of trade-related graduation challenges and preparation of sector-specific trade roadmaps for overcoming the challenges' on 17 April 2023 at the Conference Room of MoC organized by MoC. ■ Meeting on 'LDC graduation' presided by the Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The Meeting was organized by WTO Wing, MoC on 03 October 2022.
02.	Mr. Md. Zahidul Hoque Sardar, Senior Research Fellow, BFTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Committee meeting to celebrate Sheikh Russel Day with due dignity organized by Ministry of Commerce on 08 October 2023. ■ Seminar on "Improving Export Capabilities of SMEs: Succeeding Globally Upon LDC Graduation on 07 October 2023 at The Westin Dhaka organized by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI). ■ Stakeholder consultation on 'Specification and enrichment of the chapters related to service sector to formulate the 'Export Policy 2023-26" on 19 September 2023 at the conference room of BTTC organized by (BTTC). ■ 1st International Case Conference on Business and Management (ICCBM) 2023 on 27 July 2023 at BRAC University, organized by BRAC Business School, BRAC University. ■ Specialized Workshop on Trade Remedies on 20 March 2023 at BTTC Conference Room organized by BTTC.
03.	Mr. Md. Julfikar Islam, Research Manager (Research/Study), BFTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public Lecture on State Effectiveness and the Challenge of Development organized by Policy Research Institute (PRI) on 12 September 2023 at Ballroom, Hotel Amari, Gulshan. ■ Review committee meeting on Production Transformation Policy Review (PTPR) conducted by OECD at WTO wing Ministry of Commerce on 27 August 2023. ■ Online Training Programme for COMCEC Project Funding (CPF) on 05 April 2023 via zoom application organized by COMCEC. ■ Discussion meeting on the preliminary Concept Paper prepared with the aim of reforming the Trade Negotiating Structure of the Ministry of Commerce in the light of international best practices on 02 May 2023 at the Conference Room of MoC. ■ EIF project review meeting (virtual) for Tier-2 and DTISU on 23 February 2023 organized by MoC.
04.	Mr. Rashedul Kabir, Research Manager (Academic Affairs), BFTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting on the "Draft LDC Ministerial Declaration for the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference WTO (MC13) 2024" on 09 October 2023 initiated by the WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce. ■ Logistics Sector of Bangladesh: Challenges and Way Forward, Jointly Organized by the Prime Minister's Office and Economic Relations Division (ERD) on 14 September 2023 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. ■ Meeting with members of Working Group on Trade in Services of WTO on 18 May 2023 at Conference Room, Ministry of Commerce.

SL	Attended by	Workshop/Seminar/Meeting Title, Organized by, Date & Venue
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting on Trade Policy Review of European Union on 27 April 2023 at Ministry of Commerce. ■ WTO Council for Trade in Service Meeting on 22 January 2023 organized by Ministry of Commerce. ■ 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 organized by WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce.
05.	Mr. Harunur Rashid, Research Manager (Contemporary Research), BFTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workshop on Tariff Reform Impact Simulation Tool (TRIST) held from 30 October 2023 to 01 November 2023 at Intercontinental hotel, organized by BTTC. ■ Meeting regarding review of 'Integrated Digital Service Delivery platform' on 12 October 2023 organized by Ministry of Commerce. ■ Seminar on "Bi-annual Economic State & Future outlook of Bangladesh Economy- Private Sector Perspective" on 23 February 2023 at DCCI Conference Room organized by DCCI. ■ Seminar on "Preparedness of Pharmaceutical Sector for LDC Graduation" organized by Bangladesh Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance on 03 August 2022. ■ Workshop titled 'TFA Implementation, Support to NTFC and Sustainability of BTP' organized by the Ministry of Commerce on 20 October 2022.

WTO Related News

DDG Zhang calls on LDCs to explore ways for boosting agriculture and services trade



Mr. Xiangchen Zhang, Deputy Director-General, WTO speaking at the workshop on least-developed countries (LDCs)

A workshop on least-developed countries (LDCs) and the multilateral trading system was held on 03 November 2023 at the WTO. Speaking at the workshop, Deputy Director- General Xiangchen Zhang said: "We need to keep building on the progress made to support the greater integration of LDCs into global trade." The event provided an

opportunity for WTO members and trade experts to discuss the findings of a new study outlining the participation of LDCs in agriculture and services trade. Entitled "LDCs and the multilateral trading system", the publication stresses that certain governmental trade and non-trade measures could undermine the prospects of LDCs' exports.

The discussion brought to the fore that trade support remains essential in strengthening the capacity of LDC service supplying firms. Among the priorities requiring LDC policy makers' particular attention were the need to i) address data gaps, ii) strengthen domestic regulatory frameworks, iii) diversify LDC services export baskets, and iv) boost firms' competitiveness through trade finance and skills upgrading. Speakers also cited regional integration as important for boosting LDCs' services exports.