

Outcome Report

On

Seminar titled

‘Reducing Bangladesh’s Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions’

Date: 28th March, 2024

Venue: Academic Block, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute(BFTI)

Organized by:



Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)

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Preface

This is my utmost pleasure to convey that Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) has successfully published the Outcome Report on the seminar titled 'Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions'. The seminar was held on 28th March, 2024 at the Academic block, BFTI. Since its inception, BFTI has progressively evolved into a well-regarded institution for research, training, and advocating policies in the realm of trade and business. As the Institute is maturing over time, our aspirations transform towards establishing BFTI as a center of excellence in the fields of trade and business.

The outcome report includes the program of the seminar, its objective and rationale, welcome remarks, keynote presentation, key discussion points of the Panel Discussants and comments of the participants from both public and private sector in open discussions, and the speech of the Special Guest. The outcome report annexed the running note of the program, the set of invitation letters and the list of the participants. I strongly believe that this outcome report will serve as a source of knowledge for the stakeholders regarding the strategies for reducing trade deficit.

We extend our gratitude to Mr. Ahasanul Islam Titu, MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BFTI for his kind direction. We also would like to express our gratitude to the Special Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Keynote presenter, Panel Discussants and the participants from Public and Private Sectors for their enlightened presence.

My sincere appreciation goes to the dedicated BFTI team members who have made valuable contributions in organizing the seminar and also to this publication.

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin,
Chief Executive Officer

1. Program of the Seminar

1:45 PM	Registration
2:00 PM	Welcome Remarks by Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
2:05 PM	Keynote Presentation by Mr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
2:25 PM	Panel Discussion by <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Professor Dr. Selim Raihan, Executive Director, SANEM2. Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)3. Dr. Zaidi Sattar, Chairman and Chief Executive, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)
2:45 PM	Open Discussion: Moderated by Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam , Director, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
3:00 PM	Remarks by the Special Guest Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
3:10 PM	Remarks by the Chairperson Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)

2. Objective and Rationale of the Seminar

Bangladesh is transcending from a least developed country to a developing country in 2026. Bangladesh may lose duty-free quota-free market access along with benefits of International Support Measures (ISM). On the contrary, Bangladesh's export basket is intensely concentrated in ready-made garments with inadequate value addition and export is mostly destined to Europe and North America. As a result, Bangladesh is experiencing trade deficit despite a substantial increase in exports.

In this context, BFTI organized the seminar titled '**Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions**' on 28 March 2024, at BFTI Academic Block, TCB Bhaban (5th Floor), 1 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

The seminar aimed to identify the challenges in reducing the trade deficit and propelling export diversification of Bangladesh and discuss the role of public institutions to mitigate those challenges.

3. Welcome Remarks



**Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin ,
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute**

Brief Profile of the Speaker *(May be shortened with the consent of CEO Sir)*

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin is the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute. With a dynamic career spanning over few decades in various government capacity in service and an extensive academic background, Dr. Uddin brings a wealth of experience to his present position.

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin obtained a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons.) in Finance and a Master of Commerce in Finance from University of Dhaka. His academic journey also included a Master of Arts in Government Financial Management from the University of Ulster, UK. Dr. Uddin reached the pinnacle of his academic excellence with a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) majoring in Finance from the University of East Manila, Philippines. He also participated in the Executive Course on “A Cutting Edge of Economic Development” at Harvard Kennedy School, Boston, United States of America.

Being a member of Bangladesh Civil Service Batch-1985, Dr. Md Jafar Uddin held significant positions in various government ministries, notably serving as the Senior Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, from September 2019 to June 2021. Earlier he served as Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. With an extensive period in the Finance Division of the Ministry of Finance he did overseeing the budget and macro-economic wing. As a former member of various Boards of Directors, Dr. Jafar served, Petrobangla, Janata Bank Ltd, Bangladesh Commerce Bank Ltd. Bangladesh Krira Siksha Prothisthan (BKSP), Consumers’ Rights Council, Bangladesh Institute of Management, Bangladesh Accreditation Board Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University (Finance Committee). Dr. Uddin demonstrated commitment in key positions for multiple entities including Wing Chief (Budget & Macro-economy) and Brach Head (Macro-economy) at Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh, Associate Director at BRAC, Counsellor and Head of Chancery at the Embassy of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Manila, the Philippines, Director (Finance) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, and Director at Directorate of Commercial Audit under the office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of Bangladesh. He served in

Bangladesh Bank, Janata Bank of Bangladesh and Krishi Bank before joining the civil service.

Possessing diverse professional skills, Dr. Uddin contributed to academia as a part-time faculty member at University of Dhaka, BRAC University and South-East University, specializing in business subjects such as International Business, Human Resource Management, Corporate Finance, Strategic Management, and Organizational Behaviour. His technical expertise spans specialized, commercial, and central banking, showcasing exceptional analytical skills in macro-economic variables and comprehensive proficiency in public sector financial management. While his involvement in international trade negotiations and agreements is notable, one of the highlights of his career is leading the historic Bangladesh-Bhutan Preferential Trade Agreement signing for the first time since the independence of Bangladesh. He participated in myriad Trade Negotiations and International meetings including 6th EU-Bangladesh Business Climate Dialogue as the Team Leader, at 2nd Meeting of the Joint Trade Committee (JTC) between Bangladesh and Vietnam as the Head of Bangladeshi delegation, Bangladesh-India Commerce Secretary Level Meeting as the Team Leader and Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (TICFA) meeting with USA as the Chief Guest. He attended numerous International Conferences and Seminars and visited more than 37 countries including USA, UK, Spain, Italy, France, Malaysia, Singapore, India, China, Thailand etc.

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin's illustrious career reflects his deep commitment to public service, international trade, and academic excellence, has effectively positioned himself in BFTI dealing with research, training and policy advocacy.

Key Points

Presenting the historical significance of month of March, at the very outset, the Chairperson of the Seminar Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI expressed deepest homage to the Father of the Nation, Architect of the Independence of Bangladesh, the greatest Bangali of all times Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He also welcomed the Hon'ble Special Guest, Panel Discussants and Keynote Presenter and distinguished participants from both public and private sector to attend the seminar. After the introduction the Chairperson welcomed Keynote Presenter, Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) for presenting the paper. He also informed the Guests and participants that due to unavoidable circumstances the Chief Guest of the Seminar, Mr. Ahasanul Islam (Titu), MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Commerce could not join the seminar.

4. Keynote Presentation



Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem
Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Brief Profile of the Keynote Presenter

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, a prominent industrial economist for over 30 years, is the Research Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). He has published more than 80 papers, reports, and book chapters on diverse topics, including workers' rights, working conditions, social safety nets, income tax, power and energy, environment, and Bangladesh's readymade garment sector, gender equality, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

He is also a reputed policymaker who collaborates extensively with various government committees and trade bodies and participates in various policy discussions. These collaborations include active participation in the formulation of the Industrial Policy of Bangladesh (2010 and 2016) and membership in the Committee on Trade Facilitation established by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC). He is also a member of the Eminent Group established by the External Resource Division (ERD) and has previously served as a member of the Advisory Board of the Accord, Bangladesh. Additionally, he is a member of the panel of advisors for Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI), the apex trade body of Bangladesh, and works as an advisor to the Bangladesh Technical Education Board.

Key Points

1. This presentation mainly focused on reducing trade deficit with some major trading partners of Bangladesh including Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudia Arabia, Singapore and Vietnam.
2. This presentation portrayed the current scenario of Bangladesh's Balance of Trade (BoT).
3. The analysis in the presentation suggested to adopt measures for reducing import

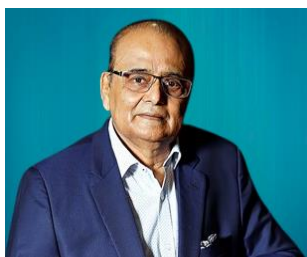
dependency for some products like: Coal, Petroleum, Waste and Scrap of Iron or Steel, Fertilizer, Sugar, Cotton, Vehicle etc.

4. Bangladesh needs to avail of the trade opportunity after graduating from LDC by strengthening her negotiation capacity.
5. Bangladesh should take strategic measures for reducing its import dependency. One of the key strategic measures is to increase domestic production.
6. The presentation identified 15 products from each of the selected markets in which Bangladesh has comparative advantage. The Government should strongly negotiate with the government, and private associations of these partner countries to conclude trade agreements (Such as FTA,EPA, CEPA etc.).
7. Stringent value addition requirement (35% local value addition) limits the scope of enhancing export to China. On the other hand, addressing the issues of market restriction, antidumping duty, and export restriction strategically may facilitate the export in India.
8. For promoting export to Indonesia, the bank procedures, halal certification, should be taken into consideration.
9. Bangladesh must adopt market specific strategic plans in order to reduce trade deficits with those markets.
10. The Public Institutions involved in promoting trade in Bangladesh including WTO wing, FTA wing of ministry of Commerce, BSTI, BSCIR etc. need to be strengthened.
11. Henceforth, these institutions should work collaboratively with trade bodies to reduce the trade deficit.

Note: The keynote presentation is attached as annexure-1

5. Panel Discussion

Remarks by Panelist:



**Dr. Zaidi Sattar,
Chairman, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)**

Brief Profile of the Panelist

Dr. Sattar is the Chairman and Chief Executive of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) since its founding in 2009. Dr. Sattar began his career in 1969 as member of the elite Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), and later worked in the Districts and Secretariat for Bangladesh Government. He holds a Ph.D in Economics from Boston University and has taught Economics at Dhaka University, Catholic University of America, Boston University, and University of Massachusetts. He also served as Advisor to the World Bank on tariffs, customs and trade reform of the Bangladesh National Board of Revenue. During 1997-2007, as a Senior Economist of the World Bank he led the dialogue on trade and tariff policy reforms. He was the team leader of the seminal World Bank report, South Asia Trade Policy Review (1999-2002). He was a leading member of the core team of experts that drafted Bangladesh Government's 6th Five Year Plan (2011-15), 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20), 8th Five Year Plan (2021-25), and the two Perspective Plans, 2010-21, and 2021-41. He also led PRI team in their contribution in the Perspective Plan 2041 (PP2041), the Eighth Five Year Plan (8FYP), and the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. The PP2041 and the 8FYP have been critical in integrating green growth agenda at the national strategy level. Dr. Sattar, as Team Leader, recently completed two World Bank reports, Diagnostics for Country Climate Development Report (CCDR) and the Climate Change Institutional Assessment (CCIA).

Dr. Sattar is a leading expert on trade policy issues in Bangladesh and frequently offers policy advice to the Government of Bangladesh on trade, industry, macroeconomic and development policy issues. He also lectures on campuses, makes keynote presentations in seminars and workshops, and regularly contributes insightful pieces in local journals and newspapers.

Key Points

1. Trade deficit should not be a priority issue rather a sustainable current account balance is more important. A low current account balance indicates trade deficit. Commonly the developing countries are likely to have trade deficits. Most developing countries run on deficits.

2. Bangladesh should focus on FDI. Import reliance is not a bad thing rather it is essential for exporting manufactured goods.
3. Trade deficit with two countries, namely: China and India cannot be reduced due to the trade dynamics between the partners. Trade deficit can be reduced through the export of diversified goods.
4. We should emphasize on the services trade particularly the export of the factor services, namely: Shipping, Insurance, Banking and IT.
5. There have been measures rather than policy parts. Policy issues were missing. Bangladesh's import structure is development and consumption oriented. It is also important to observe whether the policy is favoring exports or harming exports.
6. Selling in the domestic market is more incentivized than export. Government should rationalize tariff on the import of raw materials and capital machineries for export diversification.

Remarks by Panelist:



**Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur,
Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)**

Brief Profile of the Panelist

Dr. Mansur started his career as a Lecturer, Department of Economics, Dhaka University in 1976. He completed his thereafter completed his PhD in Economics from the University of Western Ontario in 1982. He joined the International Monetary Fund under its Economist Program in 1981 during his PhD in Economics.

Dr. Mansur has worked on Middle Eastern, Asian, African and Central American countries. He worked in important functional departments (Fiscal Affairs and Policy Review and Development departments) and area departments (Middle East and Central Asia and Asian departments) of the IMF. He also served as the IMF Senior Resident Representative to Pakistan during 1998-01 and as the Fiscal Advisor to the Minister of Finance, Government of Bangladesh (1989-91). During his assignment in Bangladesh, Mr. Mansur was primarily involved with the successful introduction of Value Added Tax in Bangladesh in 1991. Most recently, he served as the Division Chief of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Division and was the IMF Mission Chief for Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman. After taking early retirement from the IMF, Dr. Mansur joined the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh as its founder Director and Executive Director.

Dr. Mansur has published extensively in various prestigious journals (including *Econometrica*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, and *IMF Staff Papers*), edited books on special economic topics and in the *IMF Occasional Paper* and *Working Paper* series. His most recently edited book (with Fernando Delgado) is *Stock Market Developments in the Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in its *Finance and Capital Markets Series*, November 2008.

Key Points

1. A country's trade deficit with its neighbouring countries is natural.
2. The presentation should also address the service export of Bangladesh. We do not focus on the services sectors particularly the transport services like: airlines, aviation sector. Therefore, we need to focus on the airlines and the shipping policy, to check where we can ship our products ourselves. To give the due credit actually

our entrepreneurs are very smart. Hence, we need to develop a separate strategy for the Services sectors.

3. Bangladesh should increase its negotiation power with trade partners for smooth graduation.
4. Bangladesh should go for enhancing the FDI, which can propel the trade surplus. FDI also promotes management and technology. If there were more FDI in Bangladesh the dynamics would change. MEXICO is a great example of remittance, FDI and near shoring and that resulted into less trade deficit.
5. Current account deficit is the biggest problem for Bangladesh. Current account balance depends on remittance also. Bangladesh also has a huge deficit in the current accounts.
6. We are also losing a few million dollars in terms of international staff employment by the RMG sector which is unrecorded.

Remarks by the Panelist:



Professor Dr. Selim Raihan,
Executive Director, SANEM

Brief Profile of the Panelist

Dr Selim Raihan is Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and the Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He holds a PhD from the University of Manchester, UK.

Dr Raihan possesses vast expertise in empirical research on international trade, economic growth, poverty, labour market, macroeconomic policies, political economy, and climate change. He has a long experience in teaching, training and working on international trade, economic modelling, quantitative economics, econometrics, development economics, and poverty dynamics in various countries, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Mongolia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Dr Raihan has published several journal articles, books, book chapters and working papers.

Dr Raihan is the editor of “Thinking Aloud” – a monthly digest from SANEM. He regularly writes columns in leading English and Bengali dailies in Bangladesh. Dr Raihan contributed extensively to the preparation of the Sixth and Seventh Five-year National Plans of Bangladesh. He led a research team to prepare the “SDG Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective” -a flagship publication of the Planning Commission of Bangladesh. Dr Raihan has worked for several national and international organizations including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, IFPRI, the Commonwealth Secretariat, FAO, European Commission, ILO, IDRC, DFID, etc. Also, he has been working on the political economy analysis of economic issues. The most recent ones are the studies on “Institutional Diagnostics of development in Bangladesh “, which are prepared under his leadership and supervision, for the DFID, UK.

Key Points

1. The presentation incorporated all the necessary things magnificently.
2. The overall trade deficit should be an area of concern instead of bilateral trade deficit.
3. The presentation should have addressed the issues of the Balance of Payment (BoP) and FDI more intensively.
4. Import restriction is a trap for a country, since it makes attracting investment and

generating employment more challenging.

5. On the other hand, export diversification in the new market should be an area of concern.
6. The support mechanism availed by the RMG sector should be extended to other prospective sectors.
7. Currently Bangladesh has less than 1% new products in the export basket. Therefore, he urged for exporting new products in the existing markets. For example, the number of products added to Vietnam's product basket is higher than that of Bangladesh in between 2006 and 2021. Therefore, product diversification within the existing markets demands attention.
8. The Negotiation with European Union should be continued for uninterrupted preferential trade facilities after 3 years of graduation.
9. Bangladesh faces more challenges in exporting goods due to legal or administrative impediments. Considering relative advantages, FTA/ CEPA emanates more outcome than PTA. Therefore, our focus should center around signing FTA with ASEAN and Latin American countries.

6. Open Discussion



Mr. Syed Nasim Manzur

President, Leathersgoods and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) and Managing Director, Apex Footwear Ltd

Key Points

1. Since Bangladesh's position is changing from unilateral preferential treatment to bilateral preference, where making win-win trade relation is essential, we have to improve the quality of the research institutions like BFTI.
2. Bangladesh should adopt a tailored approach for different countries for enhancing the export competitiveness
3. Bangladesh should negotiate China's 35% local value addition requirement. Since iPhone does not have 35% local value addition but it is being exported globally. Therefore, Bangladesh has a right to push back regarding value addition
4. Identifying potential products for non-traditional markets: a big opportunity is there like RMG. In leather sector since 2017 India is the second biggest market for footwear. Its value is 26 billion USD now but will grow to 90 billion by 2030. Bangladesh, in the Leather Sector, should focus more on the countries of the east like: India, China, Indonesia and Thailand etc rather than its traditional focus on the western countries
5. India has Non-Tariff Barriers. There is an institution called Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in India. Harmonization of the standards should be done between the BIS and BSTI. If new barriers are not added Bangladesh can grow in the Indian Market.
6. Another big opportunity is Saudi Arabia, which is opening their economy and we have excellent relationship with Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we should focus on continuing duty-free access in Saudi Arabia on a bilateral basis.
7. One of the major market expansion challenges in EU is the capacity building for compliance. One year ago, EU enacted a new due diligence law where traceability of the leather is essential. But Bangladesh is not prepared yet for the standards, therefore, technical assistance is needed for this.
8. Currently Bangladesh has 32 agreements 60% of which are LDC specific. Therefore,

we may consider a few big countries: namely, Japan, India, Korea, China, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, EU and ASEAN for FTA/EPA.

9. Adoption of global best practices of India, Vietnam and Indonesia can be helpful, because they are more relevant in the context of Bangladesh. We can learn from production linked incentive scheme of India where they have found WTO rule compliant incentives scheme for boosting local manufacturers.
10. Strengthening Public institutions involved in promoting trade in Bangladesh is very important. Initiatives may be taken to strengthen BSTI so that its certificates can be accepted to the EU and India. In order to do so the Government/ Public Institutions of Bangladesh may partner with some prominent global private organization for capacity development. In this case BSTI may partner with a global testing company for 3 to 5 years that will build, operate, transfer and move up operations by developing local capacity, SOP and Labs. This initiative may follow the example of Indonesian Customs that partnered with SGS for capacity development.
11. We need to make the NBR communication understandable to the businesses. Businesses need to know the laws that affect them and the effect of changing laws. Businesses need a portal from where we may learn this changes.
12. Another recommendation in the presentation was that Bangladesh may promote paperless trade like: China. Referred to China and Japan's standards regarding the speed to market and the cost of logistics, export expansion is not possible if the scenario in Bangladesh does not change. USA will pay a premium for the speed to market but Bangladesh is not ready yet for that.
13. Bangladesh must bring FDI by branding it positively in the press, media, government and everywhere else.
14. Bangladesh is developing its own air freight capability which is a very good sign to protect the USD stock from expenditure in the form of freight charge. The shipping cost has also tripled; therefore, it is imperative for Bangladesh shipping corporation to buy new ships for supporting the transport services.
15. It is high time to let 100% FDI in Healthcare sector, doctors, nurses and technicians. Because in the absence of the local qualities billions of dollars are going out of the country. If the FDI is allowed in the sector local quality will improve due to competition and the industry will develop.



**Ms. Shomi Kaiser,
President, E-CAB and Vice President, FBCCI**

Key Points

1. Bangladesh should give 100% focus on FDI.
2. It is also important to know whether a separate strategy can be developed for the service industry or not. There has been a growth in E-Commerce. A project titled, 'Laalshobuj.com' has been piloted in collaboration between E-CAB and BFTI to take the products of rural entrepreneurs to global market through cross-border e commerce.
3. A pilot bilateral E Commerce project can be taken with India, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia.
4. There is hardly any primary data available on E Commerce. Therefore, all have to rely on the secondary data sourced from NBR, Bangladesh Bank etc. for forecasting and planning. Hence, the country specific piloting can facilitate generating some primary data.
5. In case of strengthening institutions, BFTI can play a significant role in research and capacity building if supported with adequate fund.
6. NBR's special facility for the woman entrepreneurs is appreciable but so long the overall automation is not complete the challenges will persist and the entrepreneurs will not be able to harvest the benefits.
7. In case of trade related research we sometimes seek fund from the MNCs. But the MNCs hesitate to fund researches because the research has additional VAT and Tax charged on it. In India, research fund is not subject to VAT/ Tax. Hence, if research is exempted from VAT and Tax research financing from private sector will be easy for us.



**Ms. Priti Chakraborty,
Senior Vice President, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries(BCI)**

Key Points

1. There is a strong possibility of FTA with Indonesia. In 2019, a delegation visited Indonesia led by the then Foreign Minister to discuss the potentials of signing FTA. But that did not happen. Although it was supposed to be an FTA but now the discussion of PTA is going on. We need to know the reasons behind this change.
2. Every year a lot of people want to travel to Bangladesh but normally we either provide them short term visa or impose visa restrictions on them.
3. Regarding the Service Sector, every year US\$ 5-6 billion is spent in the healthcare abroad. Particularly the scenario of last six months show that the situation will exacerbate further since commonly the health service sector in Bangladesh is blamed rather than solving their problems.



**Mr. S. Ahmed Mazumder,
Chairman, Bangladesh Jute Goods Exporters Associations**

Key Points

1. Bangladesh needs to move forward brand our own products, Jute, Tea and Leather in the international market.
2. The jute sector needs strong capacity building initiatives for export promotion.
3. LDC graduation will require preparing sufficiently for sustainability through branding and necessary infrastructure development.
4. Every year 'product of the year' is declared for promotion of certain product. We have to make the policy decision more effective with extending enough policy support for those products.

5. Although, Bangladeshi Jute is being processed in India, Pakistan and China for export it is not happening in Bangladesh. A reason could be limited skilled human resources, premium quality raw materials and machinery. Hence, to address the situation, Bangladesh needs to elevate from this situation.



Md Sadequl Arefeen,
Managing Director & CEO, Spellbound Communications

Key Points

1. The 'Made in Bangladesh' campaign or 'Branding Bangladesh' has started with the initiative of Ministry of Commerce and CNNIC coordinated by BFTI. Later FBCCI continued the effort. Efforts are still continued with the support of Bangladesh Government.
2. Presently the world is very much data centric but unfortunately the Business Community lacks sufficient amount of data. There is no single source for market data in Bangladesh. It is important to have access to the data through a central portal.
3. The road shows and branding initiatives across the world revealed that people who participate have a lot of questions. Commonly in websites it is found that, there is an option called Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which answers many common questions. MoC may take such initiatives to disseminate the answers of the trade related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).



**Mr. Md. Munir Chowdhury,
National Trade Expert, Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1**

Key Points

1. There has been a positive progress in the import export ratio between India and Bangladesh in 2022-23 in comparison to 2005-06 and wondered on the voluminous growth in the export of Vietnam in last 20 years where it was USD18 Billion in 2000 but now USD336 billion. He also expressed his curiosity to learn the factors that made it possible for the country to grow its trade to such level.
2. It is important to focus on value addition through manufacturing.
3. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation(SAARC) is the abode of 1.8 billion people who constitute about 22% of the global population, which indeed is a big market of USD 3.8 trillion.
4. While preparing for signing Preferential trade arrangements (PTA) with Sri Lanka it was found that Bangladesh was gainer in terms of the goods while Sri Lanka was the gainer in terms of the services. Therefore, it is important to explore the potentiality of the region while negotiating for any form of agreement.
5. Referred to the NBR time release study that found varied time requirement in export through land port and sea ports due to absence of coordination. He also highlighted the diagnostic study that aimed to bring all agencies under a single umbrella for Trade Facilitation.
6. Trade facilitation is aimed to harmonize the regulations and strengthen the agencies to accelerate trade. Besides, in order to promote trade, it is important to create product specific trade diplomats and negotiators for Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) negotiations.



Mr. S M Jakaria Huq, Joint Secretary,

Branch: ADB-1, Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Key Points

1. The Role of the Public Institutions is very important for developing the future trade environment so that they can prove their efficiency in strategic dialogues and bilateral negotiations.
2. I would like to invite MoC to discuss that how Economic Relations Division (ERD) can better use Technical Assistance (TA) fund for the preparing the institutions for the future. Therefore, I would request for TA proposals from MoC identifying lags in comparison to the public institutions of other countries. If MoC can send such proposals ERD may take TA projects in those areas.
3. The Principal Secretary to HPM is working on the development of the logistics sector and in the latest industrial policy the Logistics sector is termed as the thrust sector.



Mr. Muhammed Abdul Wahed Tomal,

Founder Chairman and CEO, Comjagat Technologies Limited:

Key Points

- 1 Technological advancement in trade and the upgradation of the Technological platforms and effective monitoring of such initiatives are crucial for expansion for trade.
- 2 Automation is essential to facilitate the cross border paperless trade
- 3 It is important to continue the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions.



**Dr. Ananya Raihan,
CEO, iSocial & Member, e-CAB**

Key Points

- 1 Product level disaggregated export data is not available and it requires to rely on multiple sources including NBR
- 2 Hence good governance in the economic management is essential.



**Mr. S M Adnan Rahman,
Deputy Managing Director, Rahman Group**

Key Points

1. Bangladesh is a land opportunity for tourism as a lot of services for tourism is possible to provide from Tourism sector.
2. Malaysia earns 14% of its GDP from tourism while UAE earns 9% of its GDP from the same which means the potential is truly high.
3. Therefore, Bangladesh should really focus and invest in and promote the tourism sector.



**Mohammad Ilias Mia,
Deputy Secretary (WTO-1), WTO Wing, Ministry of Commerce(MoC)**

Key Points

He wanted to learn about the competitiveness of the Bangladeshi products exported to the MERCOSUR countries, given the geographic constraints.



**Mr. Javed Ahmed,
Former CEO (Addl. Sec.), Bangladesh Tourism Board and Chief Consultant , CEMS Global**

Key Points

1. It is urgent to focus on the remittance issue, which is not coming sufficiently in comparison to the number of immigrants. This may be attributed to the unrecorded financial transactions through the informal banking channels. Besides the skill level of the people living there is also not so high. As a result, our people are doing low paid jobs there. Therefore, I recommend on focusing on skill migration and the financial transaction through the formal banking channels.
2. India is promoting tourism to the world in the form of Genealogy tourism, sometimes it is called roots tourism. Bangladesh may adopt such initiatives and make tourism a profitable venture for Bangladesh as well.



**Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Hasan,
Head of Business Administration, City University**

Key Points

1. The industry has more updated data than the academia and expressed deep interest for focusing on the Industry and Academia linkage for better collaboration in terms of data and information sharing.
2. Therefore, it is important to focus on changing the buyer habit and trusting the quality of the local products.

7. Remarks by the Special Guest



Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh,
Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

Brief Profile of the Special Guest

Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh joined as Secretary, Ministry of Commerce on 3 June 2021. He was promoted as Senior Secretary on 30th December 2021. Before joining this ministry, he was working as Secretary in the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs from 7 July 2020 to 2 June 2021. He also served as the Chairman of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission. Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh was born on 18 May 1964 at Horidhali Village of Paikgachha Upazila under Khulna District. Graduated from Dhaka University from the Department of Economics, he entered civil service in 1989. He served in various districts in the positions of Assistant Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner (Land), First Class Magistrate, Upazila Executive Officer and Additional Deputy Commissioner. He also served as the Project Director of the "Integrated Community Development Project" under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board for more than three years. From 2011 to 2016, he served as the Commercial Counselor and Minister (Commerce) at the Bangladesh Embassy in Brussels, Belgium. In addition to working for improving bilateral trade and economic relations with Belgium and Luxemburg, he also looked after the issues pertaining to the economic interest of Bangladesh with the European Commission and the European Parliament. In the aftermath of Rana Plaza tragedy, he worked closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) to ensure Bangladesh's preferential market access in the EU. He played an important role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the "Sustainability Compact" which was launched in collaboration with European Union, Bangladesh, the United States and the ILO. He served as Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Export Wing of the Ministry of Commerce from 2016 to 2019.

Key Points

1. We are working pragmatically for ensuring trade benefit as we are transitioning from unilateral preferential market access to bilateral market access. Bangladesh leaves no stones unturned and raises voice in negotiation. Even in the last February in the WTO MC13, Bangladesh has actively participated in all the discussions under the leadership of Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Commerce. And the today's Seminar itself is an outcome of Honourable state minister's initiative who instructed BFTI to arrange the Seminar."

2. In context of WTO, a lot of debate exists in the issues of the moratorium in cross border E-commerce. Most of the developing countries (including Bangladesh), led by India, South Africa and Indonesia were against the moratorium and wanted to discontinue it. On the other hand, the developed countries are trying to retain it for their benefit.
3. Developing countries can exploit the market access opportunities due to the moratorium while having no power to impose duty, developing countries loses a huge portion of duty from Cross-border e-commerce. I think the power of imposing duty should be entitled to developing countries like Bangladesh, so that Bangladesh can impose duty for protecting any sector or waive duty for expanding any sector. Then the policy space will transfer from the developed countries to the developing countries. There may be many issues for which the developing countries can compromise to get any benefit in exchange of the moratorium.
4. Bangladesh is emphasizing more to the bilateral market than the multilateral market, and the Ministry of Commerce is working vigorously in this regard. Trade benefits will continue for Bangladesh until 2030 not only in the European Union, but also in many countries. The government is thinking of separate bilateral agreements with those countries which may not continue this facility.
5. Many of the unilateral benefits as mentioned in the Seminar will continue till 2029 in EU, UK and Australia but will not continue in other countries, where we are trying to sign FTA, CEPA, PTA. For example, recently we have exchanged the joint feasibility study of FTA with China and the study for EPA with Japan is launched. Meanwhile, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister jointly declared to work on Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with India in recent PM visit to India.
6. We are considering to sign FTA with Korea. Bangladesh has been trying to sign PTA with Sri Lanka and Indonesia and the effort was begun before 7 to 8 years. At present, Bangladesh prefers to sign FTA than PTA.
7. We have signed only one PTA with Bhutan and the negotiation was led by Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin, former Senior Secretary of Ministry of Commerce. The PTA signed after a number of negotiations which has enriched our negotiation capacity. The PTA signed due to grounds of neighborhood and special considerations.
8. The signing FTA depends on a number of issues and not only depends on public institution and ministry of commerce. Signing Trade Agreement is a bilateral decision where every party wants to exploit its trade benefit. Blaming the Public Sector on the ground of efficiency is not right for evaluating the performance. Signing FTA is like a marriage between two family based on the mutual understanding. And hence, the success of FTA/PTA/EPA will not only depend on economics and competitive advantage but also politics, bilateral relationship and willingness of the counterpart. At first, the partner countries need to have demand to sign FTA with Bangladesh. If a country can ensure that she could provide essential products at competitive price, having a large domestic market another country would become interested to sign FTA with first one. Therefore, signing FTA depends on deeper relationship between the two countries.

9. We need skilled negotiators from all the ministries like: Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock etc. If we discuss about IPR issues, then the help from the ministry of Industry is required. If we go through the issues of SPS, then the negotiation support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Fisheries are necessary. The involvement of Ministry of Agriculture in SPS in negotiation needs to be increased.
10. Bangladesh also requires to focus on the service sectors. If Bangladesh wants to improve the quality of medical service and education, we have to jointly invest in the sector with foreign country otherwise we have to invite FDI to expedite the sector. Bangladesh also needs to consider on the quality of the education and skill development.
11. Many corporate and RMG industries employ foreign national in their company at upper level management and they employ most of the time Sri-Lankan and Indian National. Many accusations about these employees is discussed but if the company do not employ Sri-Lanka and Indian National instead of European, the cost of doing business will increase further. The quality of education in Bangladesh is not up to the mark and most of the case employer does not trust graduates of the country. This is a psychological problem and could be solved in a long term if quality of education is ensured.
12. Addressing the success of Vietnam in export trade, he said that the country's export success is dependent on FDI, and 75 percent of export comes from FDI. But, Bangladesh export success is a manifestation of our strengths and a real achievement.
13. Many people believe that Bangladesh will face acute challenge after graduation but no crisis will emanate due to preference erosion after LDC graduation. We need to ensure quality education, policy reform for business-friendly environment, export diversification, automation, attract FDI with signing FTA to face the challenges of graduation.
14. Earlier, India has confirmed harmonization of standards in 27 products. Bangladesh Government has received an offer for harmonization of standard from Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS). Ministry of Industries(MoI) has taken long time for assessing the offer. has evaluated it long term and recently Ministry of Commerce has formulated a committee to address the issue, we expect a better result in the issue and hope that our certification will be accepted by Indian Authority.
15. The national trade portal of Bangladesh is a good source of information to learn the rules, act and procedure of business as well the changes in trade related policy. Along with public sector, private sector needs to be engaged more in research and innovation.
16. Many ministries and divisions have budget allocation for research but most of the time the proposed budget remain unused for not having skilled and quality person for doing research and study. Orientation to research is a cultural issue, it requires a mindset.
17. To strengthen the service sector, VAT and Tax on research can be exempted.

18. There is also discussion on anti-export bias in the seminar. If we drastically reduce customs duty and tariff on import, then it may have negative impact on the domestic industries, which are employing a large number of populations in Bangladesh. There is no assurance that local entrepreneurs will expand their export if the government reduces import tariff. Whether it is justified to throw small and potential entrepreneurs in water by reducing the tariff protection in domestic market or not is a big question. It is difficult to export in foreign markets as all other countries are trying to export in the markets and compete with Bangladeshi products.
19. As part of the readiness for signing FTA, we have to rationalize our tariff structure gradually but cannot fully remove protection measure for rising and potential industrial sector

8. Remarks by the Chairperson



**Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin ,
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute**

Key Points

- 1 We have had an exciting and informative seminar which would surely enrich our understanding with regard to international trade: export and import which has 32% share of GDP. Therefore, we cannot deny the importance of international trade, in the context of Bangladesh.
- 2 Government is working under the visionary leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to transform Bangladesh into a Smart Bangladesh.
- 3 Ministry of Commerce under the leadership Honorable State Minister, Mr. Ahasanul Islam Titu, has been working with private sectors to overcome all the trade related challenges.
- 4 Particularly, BFTI as a think-tank is always ready to contribute in this arena through Research, Training and Policy Advocacy.

The chairperson thanked respected Special Guest for his kind presence. He also extended thanks to the keynote presenter, panel discussants, journalists and all the participants. He thanked BFTI officials for their relentless efforts to organize this event successfully.

9. Annexure:

Annex 1: Keynote Presentation:

Annex 2: Running Note:

Annex 3: List of Participants

Annex 4: Invitation Letters

**Script for Moderator
Seminar
'Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected
Countries: Role of Public Institutions'**

1. Introduction

Distinguished Guests, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

ASSALAMU ALAIKUM

A very good afternoon.

It is a great honor and privilege to welcome you all to this seminar on '**Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions**' organized by Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI).

This is a historical month of March. At the very outset, I would like to express my deepest homage to the Father of the Nation, Architect of the Independence of Bangladesh, the greatest Bangali of all times Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

2. Addressing:

Distinguished Guests,

The Hon'ble Chief Guest, Special Guest, Panel Discussants and Keynote Presenter have graced today's seminar with their kind presence.

This is Dr. Md Jafar Uddin, CEO, BFTI. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our esteemed Chief Guest, **Mr. Ahasanul Islam Titu, MP**, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Commerce, for gracing this occasion with his kind presence.

Respected Guests,

Today's Program has also been enlightened with the presence of:

- The Respected Special Guest: **Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh**, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Respected Keynote Presenter: **Mr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem**, Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
- We are also happy to have with us Distinguished Panel Discussants :

(1) Dr. Zaidi Sattar

Chairman and Chief Executive, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

(2) Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur

Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh

(3) Professor Dr. Selim Raihan

Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM)

- Respected Head of the Organizations under the Ministry of Commerce
- Respected wing Chiefs of the Ministry of Commerce and Additional Secretaries.

Finally, we are delighted with the presence of Participants from:

- Public Sector
- Private Sector
- Trade Association
- Ministry of Commerce
- Other ministries/departments
- BFTI officials and
- Representatives from Media

3. About BFTI

Distinguished Guests,

It is a unique opportunity for me to share with you that BFTI is a think tank on international trade established under the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) with a view to working for both the public and the private sector in the field of trade and business. As a think tank, BFTI aims at facilitating and promoting the country's trade through research, policy advocacy, training and education. As part of its activities, BFTI has organized this Seminar today.

4. Acknowledging Present:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have time constraint. Therefore, instead of self-introduction, I would like to acknowledge briefly the kind presence of the participants from different organizations.

(Read from the List)

5. Main Program

(a) Welcome Speech

Respected Guests,

At this stage, I would like to request **Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam**, Director, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) to deliver the welcome speech.

(Speech concluded)

Thank you **Mr. Md. Obaidul Azam**, for the welcome speech.

(b) Keynote Presentation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to apprise you that Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has an extensive knowledge and experience on trade and other issues related to macro economy as an economist for long 30 years. He has published more than 80 papers and reports.

May I now request Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem to deliver today's Keynote presentation.

(Speech concluded)

Thank you, Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem for your comprehensive and lucid presentation.

(c) Panel Discussion

Distinguished Guests,

It is time for Panel Discussion.

(1) Professor Dr. Selim Raihan

It is my pleasure to inform you that Professor Dr. Selim Raihan, Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) is currently Professor of Economics in the University of Dhaka. He is an expert in applied economics. His contributions to the preparation of SDG strategy is commendable. Also, we worked together in preparing Joint Feasibility Study of CEPA with India.

Now I would like to request Professor Dr. Selim Raihan for making his comments on the subject.

(Speech done)

Thanks to Dr. Selim for his thought provoking comments.

(2) Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur

It is my privilege to highlight that **Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur**, Executive Director, Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh has an illustrious career. He was lecturer of Economics in University of Dhaka. Subsequently, he acted as Senior Resident Representative and Mission Chief of IMF. He contributed significantly to introducing of VAT in Bangladesh.

Now, I would request **Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur** to speak on the subject.

(Speech done)

I thank Dr. Ahsan for his fascinating comments.

(3) Dr. Zaidi Sattar

I am honoured to mention that **Dr. Zaidi Sattar**, Chairman and Chief Executive, Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh was a former Civil Servant and worked as Senior Economist in World Bank. He has significant contributions to our trade reforms and preparation of 6th, 7th and 8th 5 year plans.

Now I request **Dr. Zaidi Sattar** to speak on the issue.

(Speech done)

Thanks to Dr. Zaidi for his informative deliberation.

6. Open Discussion:

At this stage, it is time for open discussion. I request the interested participants to raise hand and speak introducing yourself.

(Open Discussion Done)

I thank you who have participated and provided valuable suggestions. We will try to accommodate your suggestions and recommendations in our report to be sent to Ministry of Commerce.

7. Special Guest

Respected Guests,

It is my privilege to highlight that **Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh**, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce did his Honours and Masters from Economics, University of Dhaka. He has brilliant career in civil service including assignment in Bangladesh Embassy in Brussels and Ministry of Commerce dealing with trade matters for long. He Worked with European Union and European Parliament for trade promotion of Bangladesh.

Now, May I request our Special Guest, Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh to deliver his speech.

(Speech done)

Thank you, for your insightful and valuable speech.

8. Chief Guest:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are truly honoured to have with us our beloved Chief Guest Mr. Ahasanul Islam Titu, MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BFTI. It is my privilege to share with you his profile briefly:

He has a brilliant international academic track record with an-
MBA with First Class Honours from Pittsburg State University, USA;
BBA from Assumption University, Thailand;
HSC, First Division with Star Marks from Dhaka College, Bangladesh;
SSC, First Division from Dhaka Residential Model School, Bangladesh.

- Most importantly, prior to his political career, he achieved the recognition as a successful entrepreneur and renowned philanthropist with over 30 years of

professional experience in the financial and industrial sectors including banking, insurance, and financial markets.

- Supporting the development of the economic and social standards in the country, he previously held the position of President of the Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd. (DSE), President of the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh (DBA) and Vice-President of Bangladesh Insurance Association (BIA). He is also a life member of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries.
- As a philanthropist, he is motivated to contribute to the development of the health and educational sectors of Bangladesh.
- It is our pride and we are fortunate that he is our state minister for Commerce, having a unique combination of professional as well as academic knowledge and experience.

It is my great honour to request the Hon'ble Chief Guest of today's event, Mr. Ahasanul Islam Titu, MP to deliver his speech.

(Speech done)

We are extremely grateful and delighted for the important words and guidance from our Hon'ble Chief Guest.

9. Unveiling BFTI Publication:

At this stage, it is my privilege to request our Hon'ble Chief Guest to unveil the BFTI Publication titled **"A Framework Document on WTO Key Agreements Doable Actions for Bangladesh"**.

I request other dignitaries on the stage to join the event. It may be mentioned that the book includes key WTO Agreements related to both tariff and non-tariff with doable action for Bangladesh.

(Unveiling done)

10. As a Chairperson

Respected Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- As the Chair of the event, I believe, we have had an exciting and informative seminar which will surely enrich your understanding with regard to international trade: export and import which has 32% share on GDP. Therefore, we cannot diminish the importance of international trade, in the context of Bangladesh.
- Government is working under the visionary leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to transform Bangladesh into a Smart Bangladesh.
- Ministry of Commerce has been working with private sectors to overcome all the trade related challenges.

- Particularly, BFTI as a think-tank is always ready to help in this arena through Research, Training and Policy Advocacy.

Finally,

- I would like to thank our honourable Chief Guest and respected Special Guest for their kind presence.
- Also, thanks to keynote presenter, panel discussants and all the participants.
- Thanks to media representatives for their presence.
- Moreover, I am inspired to thank all of my colleagues of BFTI for their relentless efforts to organize this event successfully.

I believe you have enjoyed this seminar and you will try to leverage the most of the opportunity to learn, network and exchange ideas, in order to reduce trade-gap.

Thank you all for being with us.

Stay safe,

Eid Mubarak in advance.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu

Annex 3: Invitation Letters:

All the invitation letters are attached in annexure-3

No. BFTI/Seminar/2024/

20 March 2024

Subject: Invitation to attend the seminar titled 'Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions'.

Dear Sir,

Greetings from Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI).

You may be aware that BFTI is a think tank on international trade established under the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) with a view to working for both the public and the private sector in the field of trade and business. As a think tank, BFTI aims at facilitating and promoting the country's trade through research, policy advocacy, training and education. The Institute is governed by a high-level Board of Directors consisting of 16 members, equally represented by the government and the private sectors. The Board is chaired by the Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is transcending from a least developed country to a developing country in 2026. Bangladesh may lose duty-free quota-free market access along with benefits of

International Support Measures (ISM). On the contrary, Bangladesh's export basket is intensely concentrated in ready-made garments with inadequate value addition and export is mostly destined to Europe and North America. As a result, Bangladesh is experiencing trade deficit despite a substantial increase in exports.

In this context, it is our great pleasure to inform you that BFTI is going to organize a seminar titled '**Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions**' on 28 March 2024, at 2.00 pm at BFTI Academic Block, TCB Bhaban (5th Floor), 1 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. This seminar aims to identify the challenges in reducing the trade deficit and propelling export diversification of Bangladesh and discuss the role of public institutions to mitigate those challenges.

Mr. Ahasanul Islam (Titu), MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has kindly consented to grace the seminar as the Chief Guest. Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce will join as the Special Guest. The keynote paper will be presented by Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

In view of the above, you are cordially invited to attend/nominate an appropriate representative of your esteemed organization to attend the seminar. For further information, Ms. Mahfuza Khanam Shapla, Administrative Officer, BFTI may be contacted (Cell: 01911505292).

Enclosure: Program Outline

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin
Chief Executive Officer
(Former Senior Secretary,
Ministry of Commerce)
Mobile no.: 01729-070922
Email Address: ceo@bfti.org.bd

Annex: 4 List of Participants: -

List of participants of the seminar is attached in annexure-4

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
1.	Mr. Tanvir Ahmed Assistant Secretary, International Trade	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	01841043232	trade.invest.tech@mofa.gov.bd
2.	Mr. Shahriar Shah General Manager (Commercial)	Square Fashions Limited	01713037767	shahriarsha@squaregroup.com
3.	Mr. Ashik Mahmud Sajib Program Officer	MCCI	01632492050	ashikmahmud114@gmail.com
4.	Mr. Evance Rozario SEO	Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA)	01712038823	bapabd1998@gmail.com
5.	Mr. Tamim Ahmed Senior Research Associate	Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	01834267067	tamim@cpd.org.bd
6.	Mr. Mohiuddun Ahmed Deputy Secretary General	BTMA	01671446803	btmasg@gmail.com
7.	Mr. Rafid Anjum Business Analyst	Policy Exchange Bangladesh	01627299767	rafid.pe@gmail.com rafid@policyexchangebd.com
8.	Mr. Borhan Uddin Shohag Asst. Secretary (R&D)	BKMEA	01719443111	shohageco36@gmail.com

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
9.	Mr. Waliar Rahman Mamun Deputy Secretary General	FBCCI	01988196180	waliar2015@gmail.com
10	Mr. Abu Mukhles Alamgir Hossain Director (Policy and Planning) – C.C.	Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)	01712345990	dir-policy@epb.gov.bd amahepb75@gmail.com
11	Mr. Md. Rakib Uddin Khan Deputy General Manager	SME Foundation	01713066712	rakib.khan@mef.gov.bd
12	Mr. Md. Mostafizur Rahman Sarder Vice President	Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA)	01730744841	mostafizbb@yahoo.com
13	Mr. Javed Hossain Assistant Professor, Economics	North South University	01777755788	javed.hossain01@northsouth.edu
14	Md. Abdur Rahim Gazi Manager Training	Delta Pharma Limited	0175559760	gazi@deltapharmabd.com
15	Eng. Main Uddin Zahangir Student, Department of International Business	University of Dhaka	01864201007	info.mainuz@gmail.com
16	Mr. Kazi Mohammad Anisur Rahman Khan Deputy Director	Business Promotion Council	01712618906	apbpc11@gmail.com
17	Mr. Md. Fazlul Haque Mazumder Additional Executive Director	BEPZA	01717299056	mazumder.bepza@gmail.com
18	Mr. Abdul Zabbar Sakil Research Associate	SANEM	01567985804	abdulzabbaru@gmail.com
19	Mr. Rafiul Ahmed Research Assistant	SANEM	01719877980	rafiulahmed40@gmail.com
20	Mr. Md. Moshiul Alam Joint Chief	Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC)	01711242823	moshiul.alam@btc.gov.bd alambtc@gmail.com

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
21	Mr. Md. Mahmudul Hasan Deputy Chief (Trade Policy Division)	Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC)	01712284691	mahmodul.hasan@btc.gov.bd
22	Mr. Shahidul Islam Student, Brac Business School	BRAC University	01622444082	shahid.eee13@gmail.com
23	Shadman Sakib Rummat Student	BRAC University	01779787570	sadman.rummat@bracu.ac.bd
24	Mr. Moshiar Rahman Liaison Officer	BRAC University	01730350479	moshiar@bracu.ac.bd
25	Ms. Kanis Fatama S.R.A.	Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)	01816929899	kanis.fatama@buildbd.org
26	Ms. Shomi Kaiser President e-CAB and VP, FBCCI	e-CAB	01714085888	mail.kaiser@yahoo.com
27	Mr. Jahangir A Shovon ED	e-CAB	01816919158	jashovon@gmail.com
28	Mr. Muhammad Abdul Wahed Tomal Director	e-CAB	01819284939	awtomal@yahoo.com
29	Dr. Ananya Raihan CEO, iSocial & Member	e-CAB	01919238258	ananya@raihan.net
30	Md. Shafiur Rahman ndc Deputy Advisor	Meghna Group of Industries	01709642862	shafiur.rahman@gmail.com
31	Major General Md Ashraful Islam ndc, psc Chairman	Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB)	01769248800 01713140770	chairmanbtb@gmail.com
32	Md. Nazmul Alam Research Officer	Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB)	01670624058	nazmulalam.bau@gmail.com
33	Mr. Nandan Kumar Banik Additional Chief Controller (C.C.)	Office of the Chief Controller of	01912611413	nandan11banik@gmail.com

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
		Imports & Exports (CCI & E)		
34	Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Hasan Department Head of Business Administration	City University	01712546825	zulfiqar_head.dba@cityuniversity.ac.bd , hasanzulfiqar@yahoo.com
35	Mr. Syed Nasim Manzur President	LFMEAB	01711531722	president@lfmeab.org nasim@apexfootwearltd.com
36	Mr. M. Mosaddek Hossain Managing Director	Unimed & Unihealth Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (on behalf of BAPI)	01929993001	mmh.unigroup@gmail.com
37	Mr. Suvas Singho Roy Director	Unimed & Unihealth Pharmaceuticals Ltd.	01715059288	suvassingho@gmail.com
38	Muhammad Fuad Hussain Director	Akij Food and Beverage Ltd.	01731391344	fuad@akijfood.com
39	Mr. S.M. Jakaria Hussain Joint Secretary	ERD	01721891234	jakaria_huq41@yahoo.com adb.br1@erd.gov.bd
40	Ms. Salma Akhter Jahan Member	Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC)	01911324543	salma4968@yahoo.com
41	Mr. Ataur Rahman Secretary General	ICCB	01552203507	
42	Mr. S M Adnan Rahman Deputy Managing Director	Rahman Group	01907107558	dmd@rahmangroup.net
43	Ms. Sheema Bose Adhara Director - MRP (Market Research & Promotion)	Jute Diversification	01761443322	mrp@jdpc.gov.bd

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
		Promotion Centre (JDPC)		
44	Mr. Md. Mizanur Rahman ndc Registrar (Additional Secretary)	RJSC	01715049699	registrar@roc.gov.bd
45	Mr. Ananta Kumar Paul Assistant Registrar	RJSC	01671060422	ananta_mkt_du@yahoo.com
46	Mr. Monybur Rahman Senior Assistant secretary	BGMEA	01575717688	monybur@bgmea.com.bd
47	Mrs. Priti Chakraborty Senior Vice President	Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI)	01919038833	bci.bci85@gmail.com
48	Ms. Kazi Nahid Hasan	Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI)	01911118881	nahid.bci@gmail.com
49	Ms. Tajmahal Beghum Director, (Deputy Secretary)	BIDA	01917677419	dir.pap@bida.gov.bd tajmahal_beghum@yahoo.com
50	Mr. Noor-E-Khaja Alamin DS (International Cooperation)	Ministry of Industries	01733839999	dsintcop@moind.gov.bd
51	Ms. Shahnaz Gazi Director General (Academic)	Foreign Service Academy	01941436789	fsa@mofa.gov.bd shanz.gazi@mofa.gov.bd
52	Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam PS to Hon'ble State Minister (Deputy Secretary)	MoC	01796582980	ps2minister@mincom.gov.bd
53	Mr. Md Jasim Uddin Joint Secretary (admin-1 Section)	MoC	01715181160	js.admn1@mincom.gov.bd jasim6811@gmail.com

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
54	Dr. Md Razzaqul Islam, BPAA Deputy Secretary (Admin-5)	MoC	01912872616	admn5@mincom.gov.bd
55	Tarafdar Sohel Rahman Deputy Secretary (Export-4)	MoC	01711169603	export4@mincom.gov.bd rahman16132@yahoo.com
56	Mr. Mohammad Jakir Hossain Deputy Secretary (Export -2)	MoC	01717540273	export2@mincom.gov.bd
57	Ms. Sultana Akter Deputy Secretary (Admin-2)	MoC	01712022648	admn2@mincom.gov.bd
58	Ms. Nusrat Irin Deputy Secretary (IIT-2)	MoC	01816195276	iit2@mincom.gov.bd nusratirin76@gmail.com
59	Mr. Sandwip Kumar Sarkar Deputy Secretary (IIT-1)	MoC	01712150158	iit1@mincom.gov.bd
60	Mr. Mohammad ileas Mia Deputy Secretary (WTO-1)	MoC	01786698321	director1.wto@mincom.gov.bd ileas.miah@gmail.com
61	Mr. Shahriar Al-Kabir Siddiqui Senior Assistant Secretary (Export-3)	MoC	01554002552	export3@mincom.gov.bd
62	Mr. Md. Asif Ahmed Public Relation Officer	MoC	01786486462	dioasifahmed35@gmail.com
63	Mahamudul Hassan Research Assistant	DCCI	01722457224	hasanjuir@gmail.com
64	Ms. Afruza Rahman Deputy Director, Investigation Subdivision	Directorate of National Consumers Right	01712062743	dd-investigation@dncrp.gov.bd

Sl.	Name & Designation	Organizations	Mobile No.	Email ID
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