

FICCI Monthly Bulletin

April 2024



MADE IN
BANGLADESH

FTA

FDI

INVESTMENT



INSEE
CEMENT "Build for Life"

BUILD
YOUR
Dreams
WITH OUR
STRENGTH



ABOUT FICCI

Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), the apex chamber of multinational companies, has been working as the development frontier of Bangladesh by creating significant footprints in economic growth since its journey started in 1963. As a leading chamber, FICCI represents Foreign Investors from Thirty-five (35) countries across the globe in Twenty-one (21) sectors in Bangladesh. In its six decades of excellent journey, around 210 member companies of this chamber are contributing around 30% internal revenue of the government and representing more than 90% inward FDI in Bangladesh. FICCI's member companies are aligned with the government's goal and contributing more for the community and society which eventually support the country to attain the vision of "Smart Bangladesh."

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From the desk of Editor

It gives me immense pleasure to share the April Edition of the FICCI monthly bulletin. The month of April brings with it a tapestry of vibrant traditions and celebrations that hold a special place in our hearts and calendars. Eid-ul-Fitr and Bangla Noboborsho are the main festival of Muslim and Bangali community which brought the time of joyous festivities and renewed hope in this month.

For businesses, Eid ul Fitr opens doors to new opportunities. The festive mood boosts consumer spending, providing a welcome surge in sales and customer engagement.

The essence of Bangla Noboborsho is deeply rooted in the agrarian culture, where the new harvest brings promise and prosperity. Businesses, big and small, partake in the tradition of 'Haal Khata' - opening new ledgers, settling old accounts, and inviting customers to start afresh.

However, with opportunity comes the need for due diligence. The FICCI emphasizes the importance of understanding the local markets, regulatory frameworks, and cultural nuances. It is not just about capital infusion but also about building long-term relationships and contributing to the host country's economy.

In this edition, we highlighted the success stories of investors who have navigated the complexities of foreign investment with the support of FICCI. Their experiences serve as a testament to the potential that lies in diverse markets across the globe.

As we look ahead, the FICCI remains committed to supporting its members through advocacy, networking, and providing expert guidance. The chamber is more than a platform for investment; it is a community that values collaboration, innovation, and responsible investing. Let's move forward with the resolve to make this year a benchmark for success and harmony.



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Zaved Akhtar
President, FICCI and
Chairman & MD, Unilever Bangladesh Ltd.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Members, Colleagues and Stakeholders,

Shuvo Noboborsho!

As the vibrant festivities of Pohela Boishakh infuse our lives with color, I am delighted to extend my heartfelt greetings to all FICCI Members, the FICCI Secretariat, the wider Business Community, and our esteemed Stakeholders on the joyous occasion of Bangla Noboborsho. This celebration, marking the first day of the Bengali calendar, is not just a cultural festivity but a beacon of new beginnings, hope, and prosperity. Embracing this spirit of the new year, I am pleased to welcome you to the 3rd edition of the FICCI Monthly Bulletin.

FICCI, while primarily a business chamber, also engages in more than just corporate activities. It organizes cultural gatherings to foster deeper connections among its members and all stakeholders. As part of this, we organized the “**ফিচ্চি বর্ষবরণ ১৪৩১ ও ঈদ পুনর্মিলনী**” (Bangla New Year 1431 & Eid Reunion) event in this month. We received remarkable participation from our member companies, diplomatic missions, and stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including ministries. The overwhelming engagement was heartening and highly valued. In addition to this special event, we have maintained our usual activities throughout the month, which we have endeavored to showcase in this bulletin.

From FICCI we always pledge to enhance our services, provide unparalleled support to our members, and advocate for policies that benefit the broader economic landscape.

My heartfelt thanks to all the industry leaders for their remarkable contributions have greatly enriched our bulletin. I am grateful to the patrons and sponsors who support this monthly publication for their generous assistance. My appreciation extends to the FICCI Advisers for their guidance and to the Secretariat for ensuring the timely publishing of the bulletin.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Here's to a prosperous and successful month ahead!

With Thanks and Regards,

Zaved Akhtar
President, FICCI

Dr. Atiur RahmanEmeritus Professor at Dhaka University
and Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank

The celebration of 'Pahela Boishakh,' the Bengali New Year, has a rich cultural heritage in Bangladesh. It is celebrated with traditional foods, music, dance, and a colorful procession ('Mongal Shobhajatra'), reflecting the country's vibrant culture and heritage. The day holds significance in rural and urban areas, with people coming together to welcome the Bengali New Year with joy and festivity. The Ramna 'Batamul' (The plinth of the Banayan tree) congregation is a significant part of the 'Pahela Boishakh' celebrations in Bangladesh. It is held at Ramna Park in Dhaka, where people gather in numbers to enjoy traditional Bengali music. Alongside this event, the Dhaka University campus and various parks and public spaces in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country witness joyous music, dance performances, and cultural programs on this day. Indeed, this has been a celebration of life for Bengalis, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, and class.

The colorful 'Mongal Shobhajatra' showcasing the country's cultural diversity and unity not only in Dhaka, which is led by the Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, but also elsewhere in the country, has been adding new dimensions to the celebration of 'Pahela Boishakh.' Nonresident Bengalis (NRBs) have also been assembling in major cities like New York, London, Sydney, Madrid, Brussels, etc., to celebrate this day along with other non-resident Bengalis from India and other countries. However, the Ramna 'Batamul' congregation remains the primary symbol of the spirit of Pahela Boishakh, bringing people together to celebrate their heritage and hopes for the new year.

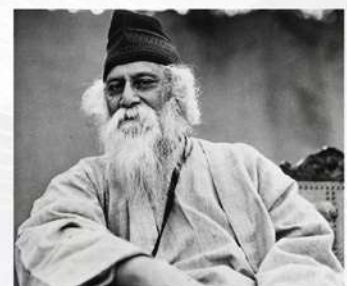


The congregation also took place this year with all the 'pomp and grandeur.' Many foreigners living in or visiting Bangladesh also were seen to have participated in these cultural programs. Of course, this congregation has a checkered history. Chhayanaut, a well-known cultural organization of Bangladesh, took the initiative to start this celebration back in the late 1960s when Bengali culture was under heavy pressure from the neo-colonial illiberal Pakistan state. They even banned the birth anniversary celebration of Rabindranath Tagore, the first Bengali Nobel laureate and writer of 'Sonar Bangla,' the national song of Bengali.



Introducing this program at Ramna's Batamul in 1967 helped attract Chhayanaut's public attention. Rabindranath has been protecting Bengali culture through his creative cultural wealth, similar to the Himalayas protecting nature. Rabindranath has always said that to strengthen the state, its inner strength has to be awakened in society and culture. Therefore, he was in favor of the revival of Bengali festivals. He also asked people to conduct rural fairs to make Bengali culture more well-embraced with Bengalis' lifestyles.

He believed that this would strengthen the social bonds of Bengalis. With that intention, Chhayanaut started this arrangement to celebrate Bengali's New Year on the first day of the calendar. It can be said that Chhayanaut is the name of one of the pioneers of Rabindranath's awakening campaign. Sanjida Khatun said about the idea behind building this organization, "We once used to do a program called 'Shrotar Asar.' We wanted to do 'past' by listening to music. I tried to remind those songs to be Bengali. But in doing so, our country's educational institutions are deficient. Because there was no education, there was only Bulbul Academy then. That's why we thought we needed a school. ... Music has a big cultural impact on people's lives."



That small initiative has now become a gem. Chhayanaaut is an active cultural organization with the efforts of all on the land given by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad has been soaking the minds of Bengalis as a supplementary institution to spread the spirit of liberal culture in society. I am deeply involved with this council. We are working relentlessly to promote Rabindra practice and Rabindra Sangeet nationwide with active support from the Chhayanaaut alums and organizers.

On the day of the inauguration of this cultural building, the late cultural activist Wahidul Haque said, "Chhayanaaut has been somewhat successful in the movement to make the people of the city non-communal. This time, the common people of the village will also have to be given pure culture. If you take everyone with you, you can be completely Bengali."



In the last 53 years, our society and culture have changed a lot. This New Year celebration of Ramna Batamul has now spread all over the country, and many Bengalis now live abroad. Millions of Bengalis took to the streets this year on the occasion of Bengali New Year. Dressed in new clothes, their joyful presence on a bright morning announced the existence of Bengalis. Mangal Shobhajatra also came from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University. These events of the Bengalis are a symbol of extraordinary progress in the development of non-communal consciousness in our society.

But despite this, the old communal forces are trying to darken our path of light by misinterpreting religion. They want to confuse young people. But how long ago Rabindranath had said, "The country where religion mainly unites people and no other bind can bind them, that country is unfortunate." The division that the country itself creates based on religion is the worst of all. True religious wisdom is to accept the value of man as a human being." (Rabindra Rachanbali, Vol. XII, p. 12) 666). Unfortunately, religious divisions continue to tarnish our intellectual life even in determining our curriculum. However, the Ministry of Education of the Government of Bangladesh recently introduced a new curriculum at the primary and secondary levels to facilitate creative and liberal options for modern education. Hopefully, this new education system will help create a new environment for pursuing music, dance, and other cultural programs to promote desired Bengali culture.



Music can give a new perspective to life by ending its inconsistencies. Rabindranath has said about the extraordinary power of music to help bring equilibrium in life in his 'Chhinnapatra.' ('Occasional Letters')

However, this capacity of music and cultural heritage has been an eyesore to the divisive illiberal forces. That is why a bomb was hurled against the participants of the congregation at the bottom of the banyan tree in Ramna Park a few years ago. Some of the culture-loving people were killed in the bombing. I also narrowly survived. I was standing where the bomb had fallen. We got out of there only a few minutes early because we were in a hurry. But the attack on liberal culture has not stopped completely. A nasty attack was made at the café Holey Artisan a few years ago, killing several people, including many foreigners. These divisive, illiberal, nasty moves are still on in digital cyberspace. Unfortunately, many youths are being attracted by these ill-motivated, illiberal campaigns.

Taking advantage of digital technology, the enemies of humanity are very vocal on social media now. That is why the celebration of 'Pahela Baishakh' of Bengalis can strengthen the ill of the liberal-minded people of Bangladesh to fight these hostile forces. It is hoped that the Bengali New Year continues to be celebrated both at home and abroad to expand the space of liberal culture. This year, thousands of voices pronounced the song 'Pahela Baishakh' in New York's Times Square. Celebrating the Bangla New Year certainly will increase special affection and attraction for the motherland left in the minds of expatriates worldwide. The Bangla New Year has become a great source of inspiration for becoming a liberal Bengali, a complete Bengali, and a non-communal Bengali. Let this heritage continue to inspire us all in the days to come. Let the world continue to admire Bangladesh's cultural diversity.



Bangladesh is renowned for its rich array of cultural festivities, among which 'Pohela Boishakh' stands as a major celebration reflecting the essence of Bengali tradition. This day marks the commencement of the Bangla New Year and is widely celebrated across the nation with vibrant festivities and decorative displays to preserve cultural heritage.

Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has celebrated the eve of the Bengali new year with its valuable members and stakeholders amid a colourful grand event titled "FICCI বর্ষবরণ ১৪৩১ ও ঈদ পুনর্মিলনী" on April 18, 2024, at the Aloki Convention Centre, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

"FICCI বর্ষবরণ ১৪৩১ ও ঈদ পুনর্মিলনী" served as a cultural gathering to rejuvenate the community following the Ramadan and Eid holidays, fostering a grand reunion with key stakeholders.

The primary aim of this gathering was to shine a spotlight on Bangladesh's cultural identity by sharing insights into its historical and traditional customs, future outlook, and developmental strategies. It also aimed to strengthen the intercultural bonds with the international investment community and potential business partners.



ବୃକ୍ଷବିମଳ ୨୦୧୯ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁକ୍ତିମଣି EXHIBITION



The event unfolded in two distinct segments. Initially, attendees were treated to a "Baishakhi Mela," a showcase of the nation's heritage through traditional handicrafts, alongside a sampling of local snacks and beverages, and the festive Pitha-Puli.



বর্ষাবরণ ১৪৩৩ ঐক্য শৃঙ্গারি CULTURAL NIGHT



Subsequently, the cultural gala commenced post-Mela, captivating the invitees with an array of Bangladeshi traditional dance performances, folk and band music, contemporary melodies, drama, and an assortment of traditional food delights.

The occasion was **supported by** a distinguished group of sponsors, including **Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd (BPBL)**, **JTI (Japan Tobacco International)**, **HSBC Bangladesh**, **Mastercard Singapore Holding Pte. Ltd.**, and **Grameenphone Ltd.**



What next for Brand Bangladesh?



Mr. Shehzad Munim
Area Director APMEA Central
(BD & SL) & Managing Director
BAT Bangladesh



Why are we lagging behind our peer economies in terms of attracting foreign investment? Photo: Collected

Bangladesh is a nation on the rise. Over the last decade, we have witnessed a remarkable transformation in our economic, social and political spheres, overcoming challenges such as poverty, natural disasters, political instability and security threats. We have achieved sustained economic growth, averaging 6.5 percent annually over the past decade—one of the few economies in the world to have retained our growth trajectory in the face of an unprecedented pandemic—and have made significant progress in human development indicators, such as education, health and gender equality.

Bangladesh has also enhanced its regional and international connectivity, participating in various trade and investment agreements, such as the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). With macroeconomic stability, strategic location, large domestic market and demographic dividend, Bangladesh is an oasis of growth in the world that is facing increasingly turbulent headwinds. Why then are we lagging behind our peer economies in terms of attracting foreign investment?

THE INVESTMENT DECISION

When assessing an investment destination, we typically assess an opportunity through the prisms of stability, productivity, consistency in terms of policy framework, sustainability, and maturity of circular economy. Bangladesh has made significant strides in each of these areas over the last decade, yet since net FDI inflow peaked in 2015, we have not been able to maintain the same buoyant trajectory. Given the vital role FDI plays in the development of an economy, and in the backdrop of current foreign exchange volatility impacting our economy, this merits some introspection.

While there are areas of improvement that often do the rounds in these conversations, such as the need for a comprehensive FDI policy, updating the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, and revitalising existing taxation and VAT policies, there is more to this story than just the objective measures. Despite stellar progress across many socioeconomic metrics, despite strong domestic consumption and the promise of high returns and despite showcasing its resilience in the face of adversity time and again, Bangladesh continues to be regarded as one of the best kept secrets of Asia. The question then becomes: has Bangladesh the brand been able to keep pace with Bangladesh the nation and Bangladesh the economy?



Younger consumers, the growing majority, are seriously concerned with social and environmental causes. Photo: Collected

In a globalised world, a country's brand is a powerful narrative that encapsulates the economic, social, and cultural ethos of a nation. For investors, this brand becomes a key determinant in investment decisions. A strong country brand acts as a lighthouse, signaling a robust economy, a skilled workforce, and a stable political environment, all of which Bangladesh can lay claims to. It's a beacon that attracts foreign direct investment, fostering innovation and growth. As the Managing Director of a leading MNC, I can attest to the magnetic pull of a strong country brand. It is the silent ambassador of a nation, opening doors to global opportunities and partnerships.

THE EVOLUTION OF BRAND BANGLADESH

The narrative arc of Brand Bangladesh has taken many twists and turns over the past five decades. Rising from the ashes in the 1970s, the country started its journey with an economy devastated by war and exploitation.

The task of rehabilitation and reconstruction was immense, and the fertile alluvial plains of Bangladesh, once a breadbasket of South Asia, came to be regarded as a basket case. With Bangladesh in its infancy, after its birth by fire, in the decades between 1970 and 1990, FDI inflows remained at a minimum. The narrative shifted in the mid-90s, with demonstrable evidence of the success of the export-oriented RMG sector, and FDI flow started to rise mainly in RMG, alongside the energy and power sector. Brand Bangladesh made a mark for itself as a cost leader on the world stage.

In the 2000s, Bangladesh made significant strides in economic development. The GDP growth rate reached impressive levels, and poverty reduction performance was among the best in the world. With a developing domestic market and favorable access to world markets, the nation saw major surge in FDI in sectors such as telecommunication, banking and in RMG and textile. The brand narrative consolidated around the central theme of cost leadership, ready for its next step up the ladder.

Since 2009, the country's economy took off. In the 12-year period between 2009 and 2021, our GDP multiplied over 3.5 times. It again demonstrated its resilience, outperforming world economies despite external shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis and the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. The country's export sector demonstrated its commitment towards sustainability, accounting for half of the world's top 100 LEED certified green industrial units.

Yet, the next step for the brand narrative has not quite materialized yet. As any marketing textbook would tell us, taking a cost position in the long run cannot be sustainable. So, what lies ahead for Brand Bangladesh?



For Brand Bangladesh, it has never been more important to tell the story the audience demands. Photo: Collected

CATERING TO A WORLD THAT IS CHANGING

The EY Future Consumer Index, which is based on five rounds of research with 14,500 individuals across 20 countries since the start of the pandemic, show that while quality, convenience, and price still very much matter to consumer choice, factors like sustainability, trust, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility are increasingly gaining importance in how consumers select their products and services. Thirty-one percent of consumers surveyed are "Planet first" and "Society first", a number that is neck-and-neck with "Affordability first" at 32 percent, and over matching the "Health first" cohort at 25 percent.



Younger consumers, the growing majority, are seriously concerned with social and environmental causes, which many regard as being the defining issues of our time. They progressively back their beliefs with their consumption habits, favouring brands that are aligned with their values and avoiding those that are not. Increasingly, they are champions of fairness and social justice.

As consumers make their stand, so must the brands that serve them. If the gap between a brand and its values, and the communities it serves is too large, the brand will inevitably suffer. We see many brands today quickly realigning to the new normal, and demanding the same from their entire ecosystems. Brand Bangladesh cannot afford to dither.



The low-cost-at-any-cost approach cannot be viable for long. As the capabilities of Bangladesh's export sector mature, we must look to move up the value chain, leveraging innovation to create consumer surplus and embed environmental and social governance across the breadth of our operations. From a rags-to-riches story, the narrative must turn towards an economy galvanised by a shared purpose.

FINDING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

We are living in an extraordinary moment in human history. The world is facing some of the greatest challenges of the modern age—whether it is the existential risks from climate change, the social division created by rising inequality, the ever more tangible threat of regional conflicts escalating into bigger conflicts, or the rising tides of nationalism and protectionism that threaten the international cooperation that lies at the heart of progress and prosperity.

While it is easy to lose sight of it amidst the challenges and the human tragedies this is also a time of unprecedented potential. Technology continues to evolve at an extraordinary rate, accelerating change, expanding our reach to segments and enabling the development of exciting and innovative solutions that were never previously thought of. In emerging markets, massive new middle classes are rising, creating enormous opportunities. Global supply chains are realigning, creating opportunities for those that are nimble enough to capture them.



As consumers make their stand, so must the brands that serve them. Photo: Collected

For Brand Bangladesh, it has never been more important to tell the story the audience demands. On one hand, this is an easy task—the story is right there, waiting to be told. On the other hand, the art of storytelling is never easy, and reaching a cohesive narrative to a global audience is certainly not a trivial task.

This is the task that lies ahead of us—and a task we simply must get right. Bangladesh, one of the youngest nations in the world, is still a nation in the making, fuelled by the aspirations, dreams and ambitions of a hundred and seventy million people. For us to realize these dreams and ambitions, for us to achieve our visions for our collective future, we must come together across the industry verticals, across the public and private sectors, across the communities and across every corner of our nation. Our greatest strength has been our unity and a cohesive society. We must come together, set aside our differences and find our collective voice that will carry the story of a rising Bangladesh to the world. A voice that will speak of our progress, our potential and the endless possibilities this nation promises.



*This article was published on February 20, 2024 at The Daily Star

Marubeni Corporation and its History

Marubeni

Mr. Manabu Sugawara
Country Head
Marubeni Corporation



Marubeni Corporation and its History:

Marubeni Corporation, a Japanese conglomerate, was founded on May 1858 and incorporated on December 1, 1949, with head office located at Tokyo, Japan. The trading company engages in diverse activities spanning multiple sectors globally. From energy and infrastructure to trading and finance, Marubeni plays a pivotal role in various industries. With a focus on sustainable development, Marubeni actively invests in renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar, contributing to the global shift towards clean energy. Additionally, the company is involved in agricultural production, machinery, and chemicals, aiming to meet the growing demands of a rapidly evolving world. Its commitment to innovation and collaboration underscores Marubeni's position as a key player in the global marketplace.

Marubeni currently operates in more than 80 countries with 131 branches and offices, and Marubeni Group consists of 317 subsidiaries and 163 affiliated as consolidated companies. Marubeni Group engages around 46,000 employees. As mentioned above, Marubeni diversifies in 16 business divisions and its consolidated net profit was 543 billion Japanese Yen (approx. 3.7 billion USD) in FY2022. Marubeni has been holding a top position for a decade and its vision for the future is creating global cross-value platform. The company anticipates the issues and challenges faced by the society

and create innovative solutions for their target customers and for the world, breaking down barriers between sectors, between internal and external, crossing borders, building on our existing business models, and expanding into new markets. The organization will generate new value by freely combining the Group's strengths, internal and external expertise, individual dreams, and visions, taking the Marubeni Group as one single platform.



Marubeni in Bangladesh:

Marubeni Corporation started its business in Bangladesh back in 1953 establishing an office at Chattogram. The first business between Marubeni and Bangladesh was export of Jute. After two years, in 1955, Marubeni Dhaka Office was established. The main trading businesses are export of RMG, Jute, and Shrimp. The import business includes Textile Machineries, Steels and Metals, Plastic Products, Cement materials, and Cardboard papers. These businesses include partnerships with local companies as well as with MNCs.

Marubeni is not only involved with commercial products. It also has been involved with various projects:

1. Power Sector: Marubeni has been actively working in Bangladesh's power sector, particularly in the development of power plants. For instance, it has been involved in the construction and maintenance of several large-scale power plants, including those based on natural gas (New Haripur 412MW CCPP, Bheramara 410MW CCPP, Bibiyana 400MW CCPP). Recently, Marubeni is developing some solar power projects in Bangladesh. The projects aim to promote renewable energy and reduce domestic consumption of oil and natural gas. Incidentally, Marubeni used to be a supplier for Kaptai Hydro Power Station.



New Haripur 412MW CCPP



Bheramara 410MW CCPP



Bibiyana 400MW CCPP



Kaptai Hydro Power Station



2. Infrastructure Projects: Marubeni has also participated in infrastructure development projects in Bangladesh relating to transportation, telecommunication, and water supply sectors aimed at supporting economic growth and development in the country. Marubeni was one of the investors in Grameenphone in its early days, engaged in an expansion and rehabilitation of Chittagong airport, participated in Karnaphuli water supply project. Recently accomplished Dhaka MRT Line-6 is one of the projects Marubeni delivered entire railway E&M system.

Other than the above, Marubeni has been an investor of KAFCO since its inception, producing UREA fertilizer efficiently more than 25 years at Chattogram. This investment in KAFCO helped country's agriculture sector at large.

Meanwhile, Marubeni has recently identified opportunities of ICT and digital sector in Bangladesh. In 2023, Marubeni invested in BJIT Limited, the largest Bangladeshi company that provides offshore software development services.

Marubeni's Achievements in and Contributions to Bangladesh:

Marubeni's achievements can be observed from the above-mentioned track records in business activities that have been continuing more than 70 years.

In terms of the power projects, Marubeni has contributed to addressing the country's growing energy needs and improving access to electricity for its citizens. Infrastructure development has facilitated improved connectivity and communication within Bangladesh and enhanced the country's ability to efficiently move goods and people. Through its various projects and collaborations in Bangladesh, Marubeni has also facilitated transfer of technology and knowledge helping to build local capacity and expertise in key industries and sectors.

Marubeni's investments and operations in Bangladesh have contributed to job creation, revenue generation, and overall economic growth, thereby supporting the country's socio-economic development goals.

These achievements collectively underscore Marubeni's positive impact and long-term commitment to Bangladesh's development journey.

The future of economic relations between time-tested friends, Bangladesh and Japan

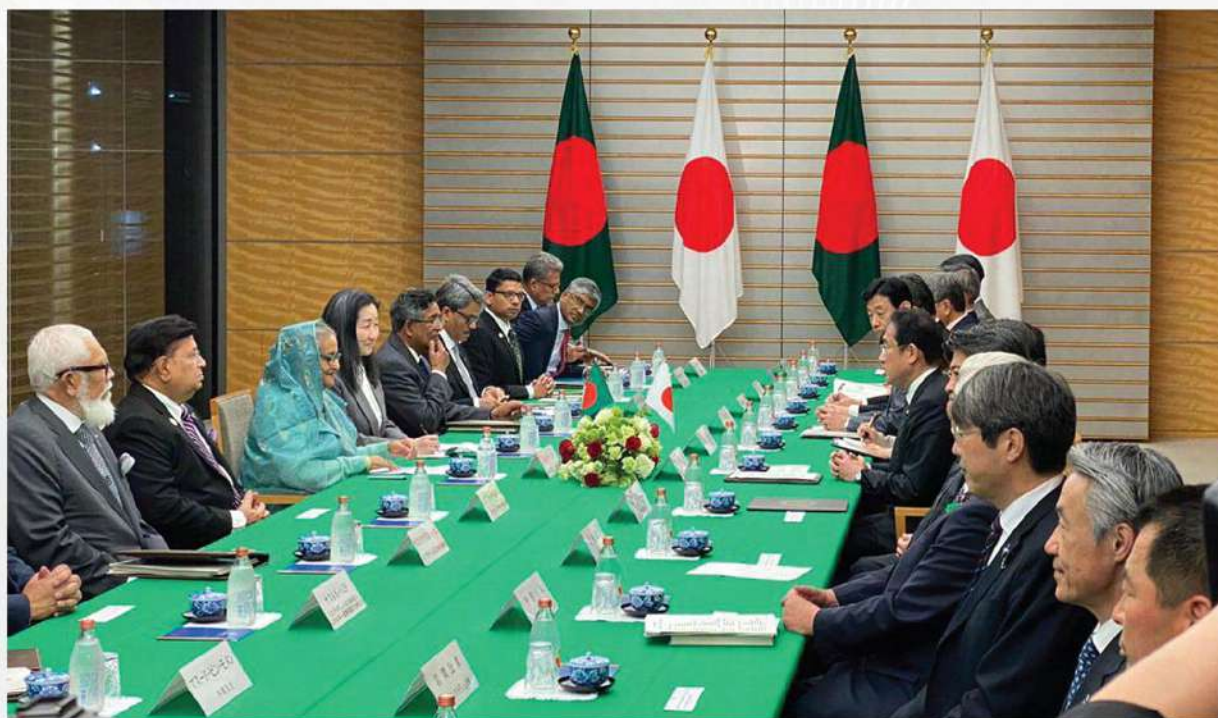
JETRO

Mr. Yuji Ando

Country Representative
Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO)
Bangladesh



In 2023, when India held the G20 Presidency, the term of "Global South" began to be heard frequently. The Global South is often used as a general term for emerging countries in Asia and Africa, such as India and South Africa, but in Southwest Asia, India is leading the way with Bangladesh, accelerating economic development at breakneck speed. Bangladesh used to have the image of "poor country," but over the past 50 years, it has grown to become a part of the Global South. Bangladesh's GDP per capita is \$2,657, higher than India and as high as Indonesia of 15 years ago and Vietnam of 10 years ago. The country plans to graduate from the least developed country (LDC) framework in 2026, and two governments have completed joint research on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in December 2023. Good news is that commencement of negotiations for the EPA has been announced on March 12 of this year.



Bangladesh marked highest record in export of RMG products to Japan with amount of 1,599.80 million USD in 2022/23. If two countries agree to conclude EPA after rounds of negotiations, even after graduating from LDC, we will be able to continue duty-free access to Japan market and will also be able to export goods from Japan without or less custom duty. It is expected that bilateral EPA will provide more opportunities to expand trading between two countries. Moreover, with the launch of direct flights between the two countries from September 2023, we have more potential for deepening the business opportunities. It is great to share that we can travel from Dhaka to Tokyo less than 6 hours.



In Bangladesh, elections ended in January of this year, ensuring political stability, which is essential for Japanese companies to proceed with investment from a long-term perspective. In JETRO's annual Survey of Japanese Companies operating Asia and Oceania region, 61.2% of Japanese companies in Bangladesh answered that they are going to expand their business in next one to two years. In the previous survey in 2022, 71.6% answered that they would expand. Although the ratio to expand has weakened slightly, it is still the third highest in the Asia-Oceania region after India and Laos. While we see high business sentiment in Bangladesh, there are also challenges. In the survey,

"underdeveloped operation of the legal system" (77.1%), "complexity of tax systems and tax procedures" (74.7%), and "complexity of administrative procedures" (74.7%) were the main challenges for management which is indicated as a risk. Japanese companies expected the government to improve the business environment on the basis of stable government.



The EPA will support future bilateral relations and the improvement of the business environment. According to a survey conducted by the Japanese Commerce and Industry Association in Dhaka (JCIAD), which is the organization exclusively for Japanese firms operating in Bangladesh in 2023, 85% of its member companies responded that they have high expectations for the bilateral EPA. There are particularly strong expectations for improvements in the areas of "trade facilitation" and "investment." High expectations are placed on the improvement of the business environment through the EPA, in addition to the ability to enjoy tariff benefits between the two countries.

EPA WITH JAPAN ON THE ROLL

Bangladesh, Japan agree to begin negotiations for EPA by 2026

EPA aims to secure duty-free market access for Bangladesh after its graduation from LDC status

EPA TO BENEFIT BOTH COUNTRIES BY

- Increasing trade
- Reducing tariffs
- Attracting more Japanese investment to Bangladesh



KEY SECTORS IDENTIFIED FOR EPA

Trade in goods, services

Investment

Intellectual property

Dispute settlement

Improving the business environment is always in competition. Even in Japan, which has become a developed country, improving the business environment is a constant effort. In order to attract more investment from Japan to Bangladesh, our true friend, we would like Japan to continue to stand next to Bangladesh and work together to improve the business environment. I look forward to the day when true friends can become family.



Chevron Bangladesh Sponsors Rotaplast International's Reconstructive Surgeries in Sylhet



A formal closing ceremony was held in Sylhet to mark the end of 7th Rotaplast mission to Sylhet, Bangladesh. As part of the mission, 69 patients - mostly children, living near Chevron Bangladesh operated Jalalabad gas-plant received free life-changing reconstructive surgeries to correct cleft-lip, cleft-palate, and other facial anomalies and burns. The 10-day mission was partially sponsored by Chevron Bangladesh and was conducted in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Jalalabad and Sylhet Women's Medical College Hospital (SWMCH). Over 29 volunteers from 6 countries took part in this year's Sylhet mission. The team included reconstructive plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, speech pathologists, orthodontists and nurses.

Attending the event were Mr. Abu Ahmed Siddique, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet; Dr. Kenneth Jacob Funk, Mission Director, Rotaplast; Rtn. Dr. Monzurul Hoque Choudhury, Past District Governor, Rotary Club of Jalalabad & Key coordinator, Rotaplast Mission 2024; Mr. Monjur Al Baset, President, Rotary Club of Jalalabad; Mr. Muhammad Imrul Kabir, Director of Corporate Affairs, Chevron Bangladesh; Prof. Dr. Fazlur Rahim Kaiser, Principal, SWMCH; Brig. Gen. Dr. G. M. Monirul Islam, Director, SWMCH; Prof. Dr. Oyes Ahmed Chowdhury, Managing Director, Holy City Holdings Ltd. A project of the Rotary Club of San Francisco, Rotaplast International is a non-profit, humanitarian organization, which sends multidisciplinary medical teams to provide free reconstructive surgeries, ancillary treatment, and training for the comprehensive care of children with cleft lip and palate anomalies. It works with local professionals, Rotarians, and other organizations, and supports education and research towards prevention of cleft lip and/or palates.

Rotaplast's collaboration with Chevron Bangladesh started in 2013 with logistical support and co-sponsorship of a surgical mission in Chittagong. Thereafter, Rotaplast came in Sylhet, Bangladesh in 2014, 2015, 2018, and 2019 collaborating with Chevron Bangladesh.

Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet, Mr. Abu Ahmed Siddique conveyed his appreciation to Rotaplast International, Chevron Bangladesh, the Rotary Club of Jalalabad and Sylhet Women's Medical College Hospital for their collaborative support of this noble mission. Chevron Bangladesh's Corporate Affairs Director, Mr. Muhammad Imrul Kabir said, "These reconstructive surgeries truly change lives for the better, providing patients with an opportunity to lead normal lives and to reach their full potential. At Chevron Bangladesh, we are proud to support this life-changing program through our social investment initiatives. Health, education and economic development are the core areas of focus for our social investment programs." Speaking on behalf of Rotaplast, Director of Sylhet 2024 Mission, Dr. Kenneth Jacob Funk said, "I would like to thank the real heroes - the parents who brought their children and entrusted their precious gifts to the Rotaplast team."



DHL Express partners with the Women & e-commerce Forum to drive export growth for SMEs in Bangladesh



- This strategic partnership is set to revolutionize the business landscape for SMEs in Bangladesh, focusing on bolstering their export capabilities and equipping them with the necessary tools to thrive in the global market.
- Through its 'Trade and Grow Beyond Borders' initiative, DHL Express will spearhead training sessions to enhance the export readiness of SMEs across the nation.

DHL Express has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Women & e-commerce Forum ('WE'), marking a pivotal collaboration under the DHL GoTrade program. GoTrade, one of DHL Group's sustainability programs, is dedicated to facilitating export-led growth for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) worldwide. 'WE' is a community platform that aims to build a support system for female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh to turn their craft into business.

Under the partnership with DHL, the members of 'WE' will benefit from expert-led sessions covering various topics essential for global expansion, including globalization strategies, financing avenues, marketing techniques, logistics optimization, and e-commerce solutions. Leveraging DHL Express' extensive network and expertise, SMEs of 'WE' will gain invaluable insights and practical guidance to navigate the complexities of international trade.

The partnership symbolizes the start of a collaborative effort between DHL Express and the Women & e-Commerce Forum to empower SMEs and drive economic growth in Bangladesh.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Women & e-commerce Forum," said Md. Miarul Haque, Managing Director of DHL Express Bangladesh. "This program underscores our commitment to supporting the growth and success of SMEs and e-commerce in Bangladesh by providing them with the necessary resources and expertise to expand their reach globally."

The 'Trade and Grow Beyond Borders' is one of the initiatives of the GoTrade program, and is targeted at SMEs across various sectors, including those affiliated with the Women & e-commerce Forum. Moreover, the program aims to extend its reach to SMEs beyond the Forum's network, fostering inclusivity and broadening the initiative's impact on Bangladesh's trade landscape.

"We believe that empowering SMEs is crucial for driving economic development and fostering innovation," said Nasima Akter Nisha, President of the Women & e-commerce Forum. "Through our partnership with DHL Express Bangladesh, we are committed to providing SMEs with the support and guidance they need to succeed globally. Together, we can unlock the full potential of SMEs in Bangladesh and propel the nation towards greater economic prosperity."



In recognition of World Water Day 2024, themed "Water for Peace," JT International Bangladesh (JTIB) reaffirms its commitment to water security and environmental responsibility through its state-of-the-art Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at the GSC Tongi factory.

Since its inauguration in November 2022, the WWTP has been an exemplary sustainable practice, representing a total investment of nearly 1 million USD. The plant utilizes advanced Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) technology in compliance with both local and global environmental regulations. MBR technology-based water and wastewater treatment are superior to conventional water treatment technologies with proven better performance and more efficient economics. This is environmentally more sustainable and allows JTIB to contribute to reducing water pollution in nearby rivers and canals.

To date, the WWTP has effectively treated over 49,763 cubic meters (m³) of water. Approximately 40% of this treated water is repurposed for irrigation and road cleaning. JTIB aims to further harness the potential of treated wastewater by exploring its utilization in the factory's fire pump sprinkler system and toilet flushing mechanisms. Moreover, the company aims to pursue a zero-discharge strategy, with plans to implement a Reverse Osmosis (RO) system for complete utilization of treated wastewater within its industrial processes by 2026.

JTIB also actively engages with other production plants in the area, serving as a catalyst for the adoption of similar sustainable practices across Bangladesh. JTIB's WWTP has already inspired two other production plants to develop their own wastewater treatment facilities, signaling a positive shift towards a greener, more sustainable future.

With this initiative, JTIB is one step closer to its commitment - 'To reducing water withdrawal by 15% and waste by 20% by 2030.'



LafargeHolcim and Sylhet City Corporation to work together for sustainable waste management



A Material Recovery Facility for municipal solid and plastic waste segregation has been installed in Sylhet at a cost of Tk 15 crore 30 lac for sustainable management of plastic waste of the Sylhet City Corporation (SCC). The plant was inaugurated recently at Sylhet's Lalmatia Dumping Ground by the Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Md. Tajul Islam, MP.

Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP, Sylhet 1, Habibur Rahman Habib, MP, Sylhet-3, Muhammad Ibrahim, Local Government Division Secretary, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, Mayor, SCC, Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, CEO, LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited were present along with other officials of both the organizations.

This is the first and one of its kind municipal solid and plastic waste segregation plant in the country which has been installed through a joint initiative of Sylhet City Corporation and LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited. Automatic segregation of non-biodegradable plastic products will be possible through this plant which are harmful to the environment. SCC hopes that Sylhet city will be freed from municipal solid waste and plastic waste due to the launch of this plant.

During the chief guest's speech at the event, the Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives thanked SCC and LafargeHolcim and said, "Sustainable management of plastic waste is our enduring challenge. The whole world has taken various sustainable measures to meet this challenge. Bangladesh government is also working to reduce plastic pollution by taking various short and long term projects at the government level. Today I applaud both LafargeHolcim and Sylhet City Corporation for their initiative."

The Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation said, "One of my goals is to transform Sylhet City into a plastic free city. We are working with LafargeHolcim for this purpose. My request to the people of Sylhet is to be aware and reduce the usage of plastic products. With your help, we want to become the first plastic waste free city in the country."



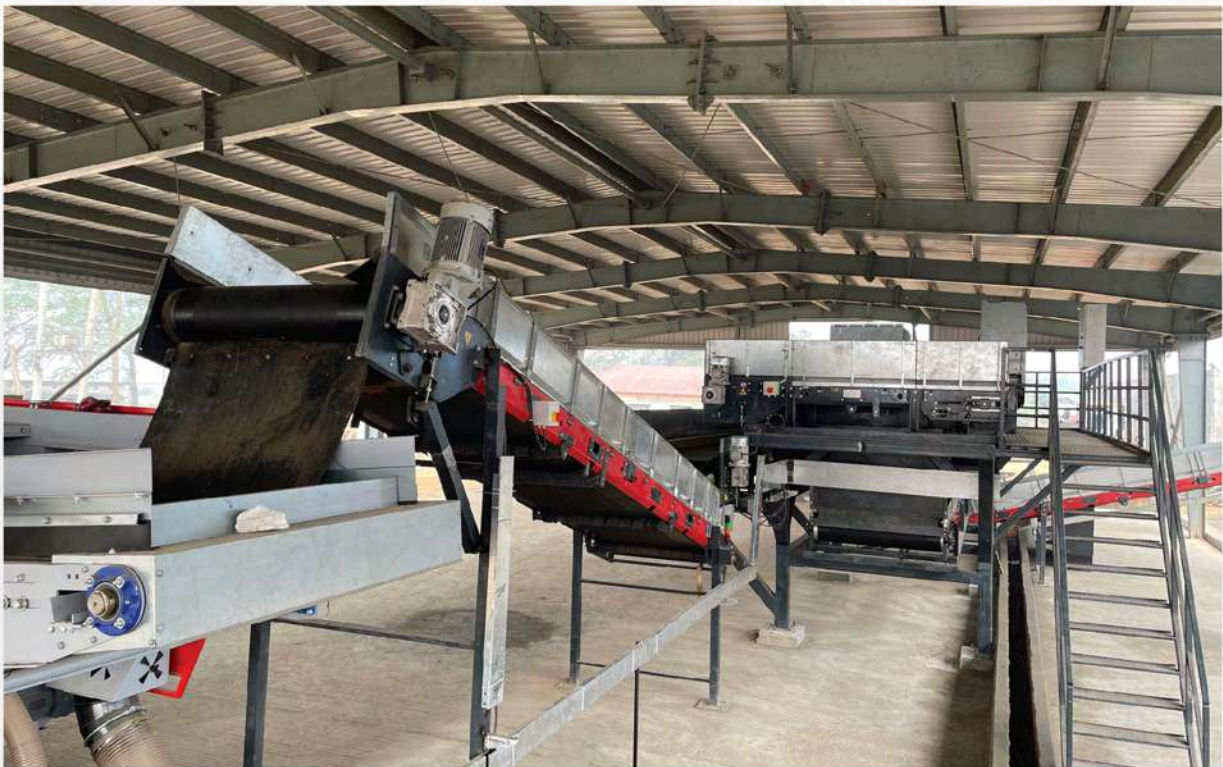
LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited's CEO addressing the media during inauguration

The Chief Executive Officer of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh mentioning the day as a milestone said, "LafargeHolcim is co-processing different types of hazardous and non-hazardous products in a sustainable manner in the only integrated cement plant of the country. We are going to start co-processing Sylhet City Corporation's plastic wastes using our facility. Earlier we worked together in the experimental phase. We will encourage the surrounding municipalities of Sylhet City Corporation to use this facility in future."

"According to a study, by 2025, the total amount of waste in Bangladesh will be 20 million tons per year. Even three decades ago, its quantity was only 5 million tons. Currently, the amount of waste is doubling every ten years. It is a big challenge for our country. A major portion of this waste is plastic, which is extremely harmful to the environment. According to a report of 2021, a person in Bangladesh uses 9 kg of plastic products every year. If the population of 17 crore is calculated, the total amount of plastic products used is more than 16 lakh tons which is returned to the environment. The only way to get rid of this is to manage these plastic products in a sustainable way." He added.

Finally the Chief Executive of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh drew the Minister's attention to the formulation and implementation of a waste management policy/law.

LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited has an integrated cement plant at Chhatak, where clinker is produced. An integrated cement plant with clinker manufacturing facility has opportunity of sustainable waste management. Geocycle is one such sustainable solution. Holcim Group provides this service in more than 50 countries worldwide. The official journey of Geocycle in Bangladesh started in 2017. Currently around 1 lakh tons of waste per year can be managed sustainably in the Geocycle plant. LafargeHolcim has plans to increase its capacity to 300,000 tons per annum in the days to come.





Standard Chartered Bangladesh leads the way with “Best Bank for Sustainable Finance” recognition from The Asset Triple A

Standard Chartered was recently recognised as the “Best Bank for Sustainable Finance” in Bangladesh at The Asset Triple A Sustainable Finance Awards 2024. This prestigious honour underscores the Bank’s unwavering commitment to sustainability, innovation, and to driving positive change within Bangladesh’s dynamic financial landscape.

The Bank received this recognition for financing environmentally friendly manufacturing; executing the nation's first Green Bond and Green Zero-Coupon Bond; extending agriculture credit; and launching several comprehensive community engagement initiatives.



Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bangladesh, said, “Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture - balancing rapid economic growth with pressing environmental and social challenges. Sustainable finance is a powerful catalyst for addressing these challenges, aligning financial activities with environmental, social, and governance principles to create lasting value. It is predicted that the value of this market will grow by 20% a year for the next decade to reach almost USD 30 trillion by 2032. In line with this, the sustainable finance landscape in Bangladesh is evolving rapidly, driven by increasing awareness, regulatory support, and market demand for responsible and ethical financial products and services. We are proud to be able to lead this evolution, leveraging our expertise, resources, and partnerships to drive positive impact and build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Bangladesh.”

Standard Chartered has had a long commitment to Sustainable Finance and supporting the movement of capital from developed to emerging markets. The Bank has the financial expertise, governance frameworks, innovative thinking, technology, and geographical reach to get capital from where it exists to the markets where it matters the most. With over 119 years of uninterrupted presence, Standard Chartered is the only multinational universal bank in Bangladesh. Standard Chartered’s commitment to support Bangladesh’s continued journey of prosperity saw the bank secure 30 major international awards in 2023.

The Asset Triple A Sustainable Finance Awards 2024 shine the spotlight on the trailblazing corporates and institutions, the best deals, and the individuals who are making a difference. This year’s awards programme highlights how collectively domestic and regional banks, as well as the international banks, are integrating and supporting sustainable finance to support the region’s green transition and social development.



Supporting 300 Underprivileged Families: A Heart - to - Heart Ramadan Journey

As the sacred month of Ramadan commenced, essential items such as chickpeas, sugar, lentils, and oil witnessed a surge in prices, ranging from 5% to 10%. This posed a significant challenge for underprivileged families striving to observe Ramadan with dignity and spiritual fullness. In these challenging times, Unilever Bangladesh emerged as a pillar of support and solidarity, launching the extraordinary Heart - to - Heart Market initiative, that not only provided essential aid but also fostered a spirit of sustainability and community involvement.



Under the banner of Unilever Bangladesh's employee volunteering platform, Proyash, this innovative market, held on 28-29 February 2024, at the Unilever Corporate Office, transformed the concept of circular economy into a vibrant reality. It was more than a marketplace; it was a celebration of community spirit and environmental stewardship, where employees donated and purchased pre-loved items, promoting the practice of reuse and reducing waste.

The relentless efforts of 8 passionate volunteers catalysed a massive outpouring of generosity within the Unilever community, leading to an extraordinary level of participation. The market's electrifying atmosphere was filled with the shared commitment of making a difference.

These funds enabled the provision of crucial food rations to 300 families, ensuring they could commence Ramadan with ease and peace of mind. The timely and efficient distribution of food rations was made possible through partnerships with two NGOs, Utsho Bangladesh and Spreeha Bangladesh.

The atmosphere during the distribution was filled with profound joy and communal harmony. Families, some with their children, received the food packages with smiles of gratitude and contentment. Each recipient, young and old, took home not just essential supplies but also a sense of being cared for and supported by a wider community.

The Heart-to-Heart exemplifies how corporate initiatives can significantly impact community support and environmental sustainability. It highlights Unilever Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to social responsibility, setting a benchmark for how companies can contribute positively to societal and environmental needs.



THE HEART - TO - HEART MARKET BY PROYASH



Furthermore, Proyash enables employees to dedicate up to 5 days to participate in impactful social initiatives, addressing crucial social issues such as healthcare, hygiene practices, inclusion, support for underprivileged groups, and care for children and individuals with disabilities. This empowers employees to create a tangible impact in their communities, fostering a sense of purpose, engagement, and connection with the community and the company's values.



FICCI has created a dynamic initiative named "FICCI Leaders Talk" to open up limitless prospects for the next generation of leaders. This initiative showcases eminent leaders from FICCI's member organizations who share their wisdom and experiences from their personal and professional journeys. It offers a unique opportunity for young professionals, recent university graduates, and enthusiastic learners to gain knowledge of corporate tactics directly from these esteemed industry figures.

In the second episode of 'FICCI LEADER'S TALK', the chamber showcased one of the most distinguished business leaders in the country: Ms. Rupali Chowdhury, the Managing Director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited and an Advisor to the Board of FICCI. She also served as the Former President of FICCI.



During this engaging session, Ms. Chowdhury addressed a vibrant audience comprising students from various departments of United International University. She shared her remarkable journey to success, emphasizing her tenacity and curiosity as driving forces. In light of the International Women's Day, she discussed the importance of equitable treatment and highlighted the need for continuous skill enhancement. Additionally, Ms. Chowdhury explored potential collaborations between industry and academia.

The session was skillfully moderated by Mr. T.I.M. Nurul Kabir, the Executive Director of FICCI.

Monisha Abraham to become first female MD of BAT Bangladesh



Ms. Monisha Abraham
Managing Director
British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh

Monisha Abraham is set to become the first female managing director of British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh. Currently serving as the Managing Director and CEO of Ceylon Tobacco Company in Sri Lanka, Monisha will assume her new role at BAT Bangladesh on 1 July 2024.

She will replace Shehzad Munim, who has built a strong legacy at BAT Bangladesh with commendable business results and visionary leadership.

The appointment marks a significant milestone in the company's 114-year history, as she becomes the first woman to hold the position of managing director at BAT Bangladesh.

Monisha Abraham, who has served as a non-executive director on the BAT Bangladesh board since March 2023, will transition to her new role from Ceylon Tobacco Company PLC (CTC), a subsidiary of the BAT Group, where she held the position of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Dr. Riad Joins Novo Nordisk



Dr. Riad Mamun Prodhani
Vice President & General Manager
Novo Nordisk Pharma (Private) Limited



Dr. Riad, a seasoned professional in the pharmaceutical sector, has recently joined Novo Nordisk Pharma (Private) Limited, bringing with him an impressive track record of success spanning over two decades. Prior to his new role, Dr. Riad served as the Country President & Managing Director at Novartis, where he significantly contributed to the company's growth and success from 2017.

Before his tenure at Novartis, Dr. Riad held pivotal leadership positions including Managing Director, Country Chair, and General Manager at Sanofi Bangladesh for a period of 2 years. His extensive experience also includes roles such as Director of Specialty Business (focusing on Diabetes, Cardiology & Oncology) at Sanofi Bangladesh and Head of Specialty Care & Head of Marketing at Novartis Bangladesh. His journey was further extended to Novartis Singapore where he was responsible for the projects pertinent to new launches.

Dr. Riad's journey in the pharmaceutical industry commenced in the marketing unit of Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Ltd., where he spent 2 formative years honing his skills and understanding the particulars of the field.

With a wealth of experience both domestically and internationally, Dr. Riad's strategic insights and leadership acumen are poised to strengthen Novo Nordisk's standing in the pharmaceutical landscape. He will lead the country leadership team of Novo Nordisk Bangladesh as well as will be part of the business area South East Asia leadership team. His arrival at the esteemed organization marks a significant milestone, reflecting the company's commitment to leveraging top-tier talent to drive its mission forward.

Arijit Chakraborti is a Director on Board of PwC Bangladesh



Mr. Arijit Chakraborti
Director on Board
PwC Bangladesh



Arijit Chakraborti is a Director on Board of PwC Bangladesh and is responsible for overseeing the Bangladesh business of PwC. He has more than twenty-eight years of experience in technology led business transformation with specific focus on technology consulting, digital solutions implementation, and performance improvement of businesses. His experience includes managing large transformational projects for clients spanning across industries and geographies. He has significant experience in implementing large cross-border technology-based solutions, setting up off-shore outsourced operations for delivering services to clients, and optimizing technology enabled service delivery globally.

Arijit's passion is to incubate newer technologies and prepare impactful use cases for the business and society. He also pursues his interests in process engineering and quality management.

Arijit has been a regular speaker on public sessions. He writes regularly in the newspaper on technology and its impact in our lives.

FICCI board co-opted new Board of Directors



Marubeni

Mr. Manabu Sugawara
Country Head
Marubeni Corporation

FICCI board has recently co-opted Manabu Sugawara, as the new Board of Director. Mr. Sugawara, who is the Country Head of Bangladesh for Marubeni Corporation, received warm congratulations from the board 2024-25 on his new appointment within the chamber.



FICCI leaders call on Finance Minister

FICCI delegation paid a courtesy call on Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Finance, GoB on 3rd April 2024 at his office, Bangladesh Secretariat. The delegation was led by its President Mr. Zaved Akhtar and comprised of Senior Vice President Mr. Eric M. Walker and other Board of Directors namely Mr. Ala Uddin Ahmad, Mr. Najith Meewanage, Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhury, Mr. Manabu Sugawara and Executive Director Mr. T.I.M. Nurul Kabir.

During the call-on, the FICCI Delegation congratulated Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP on his taking over the charge of the Finance Minister. They appreciated the role he played while serving the Govt. as the Foreign Minister and in several duties throughout his diplomatic career. In the meeting they discussed diverse issues regarding the upcoming national budget, current business climate, investment opportunities and overall economy of the country. FICCI board also proposed for different collaboration and partnership-based initiatives with the government which are significant for Bangladesh's transition to a developed economy by 2041.



FICCI Green Finance (Banking & Financial Services) committee conducted a meeting with Mr. Kazi Sayedur Rahman, the Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank on 25th March at Bangladesh Bank. The meeting was also attended by the respective Executive Director, General Manager, and Director. The FICCI delegation was headed by the Committee Chair, Mr. Najith Meewanage, and included all committee members.



"Representing FICCI, Mr. Ashiqul Alam, Head of External Relations of HSBC Bangladesh, had a meeting with Rear Admiral M Sohail, the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), on April 4th in his office. The discussion centered around FICCI's forthcoming luncheon, which will focus on the National Logistics Policy. Additionally, on behalf of the board Mr. Ashiq presented a memento to the Rear Admiral, commemorating FICCI's 60th anniversary."



"Key figures from the industry and various stakeholders, among them delegates from FICCI member companies, were present at the consultation meeting on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guideline. This session took place on February 25th at the Department of Environment. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kazi Abu Taher, the Additional Director General (Joint Secretary) of the Department of Environment."

The **3rd board meeting** took place on March 18th at the Unilever Bangladesh Limited office located in Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka. The session was presided over by President Mr. Zaved Akhtar, with attendance from the other board of directors.



The FICCI Board extended an invitation to Mr. Yuji Ando, the Country Representative for JETRO Dhaka, to deliver a presentation at their third board meeting held on 18th March. The presentation centered on the Investment Climate and Japanese Experience. Mr. Ando shared the findings of a survey that examined the operational conditions of Japanese businesses in Asia and Oceania, with a particular emphasis on Bangladesh. In recognition of his contribution, the President of the Board presented Mr. Ando with a memento.



Mr. IWAMA Kiminori, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh bade farewell to FICCI's outgoing Director and former Country Representative for Bangladesh and General Manager of Mitsubishi Corporation Dhaka Mr. Myung-Ho Lee on 21st March at his residence for Mr. Lee's exceptional efforts in fostering business and investment ties between Japan and Bangladesh. Mr. Lee also served as the President of the Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (JBCCI).

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A wide-angle photograph of a city at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across the sky and reflecting on a large body of water in the foreground. The city skyline is visible in the background, with numerous buildings and lights. A bridge with many lights spans the water in the lower right. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

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পিছিয়ে পড়া জনগোষ্ঠীর ক্ষমতায়নের মাধ্যমে
প্রবৃদ্ধি নিশ্চিত করাই আমাদের ব্যবসা কৌশল।

২০২০ সাল থেকে নেওয়া আমাদের উদ্যোগগুলিতে
প্রত্যক্ষ ও পরোক্ষভাবে উপকৃত হয়েছে

**দশ কোটিরও
বেশি মানুষ।**



আগামীর স্মার্ট ও উদ্ভাবনী বাংলাদেশ গড়ার প্রত্যয়ে
আমাদের লক্ষ্য হচ্ছে পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ, জনস্বাস্থ্য ও পুষ্টি
নিশ্চিতকরণ, নিরাপদ পানি ও পয়ঃনিষ্কাশন সুবিধা এবং
নারী, যুব উন্নয়ন ও দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে অবদান রাখা।

**বাংলাদেশের
সমৃদ্ধি যাত্রার
গর্বিত সহযোগী**



ইউনিলিভার



JT International Bangladesh Leads Water Security Drive with Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant



- JT International Bangladesh (JTIB) demonstrates its commitment to environmental responsibility and water security through its Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at the GSC Tongi factory.
- Inaugurated in November 2022, the WWTP utilizes advanced Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) technology, complying with local and global environmental regulations, to effectively treat wastewater.
- By treating wastewater, JTIB safeguards the environment and promotes peace within the community by ensuring appropriate water treatment.
- To date, the WWTP has treated over 49,763 cubic meters of water of which 40% is repurposed for irrigation and road cleaning.
- JTIB aims to further enhance its sustainability efforts by exploring additional uses for treated wastewater and pursuing a zero-discharge strategy.
- These efforts have inspired neighboring factories to adopt similar practices and contributing to a greener, more sustainable future in Bangladesh.

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