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BANGLADESH INVOLVEMENT IN BRI

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বাংলাদেশ চায়না চেম্বার অব কমার্স এন্ড ইন্ডাষ্ট্রি

孟中商业工业协会

BANGLADESH CHINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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(VEHICLE FOR ALL)

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* হাইড্রোলিক ব্রেক ও টিউবলেস টায়ার

নতুন প্রজন্মের বাহন

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AKIJ Electric Vehicle

নতুন প্রজন্মের বাহন

* চুরি অসম্ভব, সিকিউরিটি সিস্টেম সংযুক্ত
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Heartiest Congratulations to Hon'ble Prime Minister

MR. TARIQUE RAHMAN, MP

On behalf of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI), we extend our warmest congratulations on your assumption of office as The Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

We are confident that under your visionary leadership, Bangladesh will reach new heights of economic growth, while further strengthening strategic trade and investment cooperation between Bangladesh and China.

বাংলাদেশ চায়না চেম্বার অব কমার্স এন্ড ইন্ডাষ্ট্রি
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About BCCCI

The Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) is a leading bilateral chamber, approved by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, actively promoting trade, commerce, investment, culture, education, and CSR initiatives between Bangladesh and China since 2003. Currently, BCCCI represents more than 750 members, including around 400 Chinese enterprises operating in Bangladesh.

The BCCCI incorporated itself as a member of the Joint Stock Companies and firms, Bangladesh in 13th May, 2003. Subsequently the BCCCI also received affiliation of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FBCCI on 23rd June, 2003. BCCCI enjoys the status of an 'A' class chamber under the FBCCI. the formation of BCCCI is manifestation of strong desire of the Bangladesh business community to take China-Bangladesh trade and economic relations to a new height. The chamber will always make positive contribution in the promotion of trade, commerce and industries between Bangladesh and China. It pragmatically steps in fostering ties, particularly strives to diversify China's business with Bangladesh. BCCCI ardently believes that China-Bangladesh trade, investment and economic relations must be further expanded for the greater benefit of the two peoples due geo-political and geo-strategic bondage, and for the peace and development of the region.

Bangladesh-China friendship is traditional. The relations between these two territories date back to history. Since then, China has always remained as a great friend of Bangladesh. Apart from extending economic and defense cooperation, China lent its support for Bangladesh in different international forums. The Padma Bridge is a glaring example of China's cooperation in the development of Bangladesh. There have been frequent exchanges of visits from the highest political, business and friendship level to other areas of social and cultural life of the two countries. Economic, Trade and Commerce, Culture, Sports, Defense, Science and Technology and Religious delegations visit each other's country.

Vision of BCCCI

Accelerate economic prosperity of Bangladesh and China though trade and investment.

Mission of BCCCI

With the valuable expertise of the honorable members from different business fields from both the countries, BCCCI is committed to provide assistance to the business community of Bangladesh and China at every step of promoting trade and investment for economic prosperity of both the countries.

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BCCCI Services

1. To provide counseling service for industrial or similar sectors on availability of local resources including infrastructure, roads and communications, travel and banking facilities and skilled man power for ensuring efficient utilization of land in the light of clustering principles.
2. To provide guidance for land for private owned economic zones.
3. To appoint private economic zone developer on competitive basis to develop and manage the acquired land and different types of infrastructure etc.
4. To prepare infrastructure development plans of economic zones for implementation and management of own establishment.
5. To allot or lease or rent of land, building or site, on competitive commercial basis in prescribed manner, to investors applied for establishing industrial units, businesses and service providers for implementation and management of their establishment.
6. To ensure infrastructure development of privately owned economic zones within specified period through monitoring of activities of its own and of economic zone developers.
7. To create opportunities for employment through establishing backward linkage industries within private owned economic zones by promoting local and foreign investment including development of skilled labor force.
8. To encourage more efficient management and monitor programs.
9. To take steps to establish backward linkage industries.
10. To take necessary steps to implement social and economic commitments.
11. To expedite implementation of industrial policy of the country by promoting planned industrialization.
12. To provide consultancy for agro-based industrial zones, trade zones and tourism through investment of banking sectors and to facilitate availability of skilled labor and efficient service provisions.



Editor's Note

This edition of the Journal of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) highlights a significant milestone—the 10th year of Bangladesh's engagement with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Over the past decade, the BRI has evolved into a major platform for enhancing regional connectivity, infrastructure development, trade expansion, and economic cooperation. From large-scale infrastructure projects to growing industrial collaboration, including investments in modern manufacturing and garment accessories, the partnership has contributed meaningfully to Bangladesh's economic transformation.

As highlighted in this issue, the evolving cooperation continues to open new avenues in areas such as green growth, healthcare, and industrial development. Increasing focus on sustainable practices and environmentally responsible investments reflects a shared commitment to long-term development. At the same time, sectors like handicrafts and emerging industries are demonstrating promising export potentials, further diversifying the economic landscape.

In today's rapidly changing global environment, the importance of the digital economy is becoming increasingly evident. Expanding collaboration in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence offers significant opportunities to enhance innovation, improve efficiency, and build resilient economic systems. These areas will be critical in shaping the next phase of Bangladesh–China cooperation.

This edition also draws attention to important economic considerations, including the need to reduce the trade gap, promote balanced growth, and create a more enabling environment for both foreign direct investment and local enterprise development. Continued engagement between government institutions, private sector stakeholders, and international partners will be essential to addressing these challenges and unlocking new opportunities.

As Bangladesh and China enter the second decade of cooperation under the BRI framework, the focus must remain on strengthening partnerships that are innovative, sustainable, and inclusive. It is hoped that this issue will provide valuable insights and encourage constructive dialogue among members and stakeholders.

BCCCI remains committed to facilitating stronger business relations, promoting investment, and supporting initiatives that advance shared growth and prosperity.

Dr. Md. Rakibul Hoque
Editor

Message of the Secretary General



It is my privilege to address you through the Journal of BCCCI, a special edition that also marks a significant milestone — the 10th anniversary of Bangladesh's participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). On behalf of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI), I extend my sincere appreciation to our esteemed members, partners, and stakeholders for their continued support and active engagement in strengthening Bangladesh–China economic relations.

Over the years, Bangladesh and China have developed a strong and trusted partnership built on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared development goals. Since Bangladesh formally joined the BRI framework on 15 October 2016, bilateral collaboration has expanded across infrastructure, trade, investment, energy, and connectivity. "Beyond infrastructure, the initiative fosters inclusive development, regional integration, and shared prosperity bringing to life Herbert Marshall McLuhan's concept of a '**Global Village**,' where the world is closely connected and accessible to all." Bangladesh's consistent adherence to the **One China policy** further reflects the depth and stability of this warmest relationship.

China remains Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding USD 19 billion in the fiscal year 2024–25. Alongside trade growth, cooperation has expanded into industrial development, special economic zones and major infrastructure projects, including tunnels, expressways, power plants, and logistics facilities. These developments are strengthening regional connectivity and positioning Bangladesh as a strategic gateway between South Asia and East Asia.

As a bridge between the business communities of the two countries, BCCCI continues to play the proactive role in facilitating partnerships, promoting dialogue, and creating opportunity platforms through business forums, seminars, delegations, and policy engagement. Even during recent global disruptions, our bilateral business cooperation has shown resilience, adaptability, and innovation, particularly through digital transformation and new trade channels.

I encourage all members to stay actively involved with the Chamber and make full use of its platform and services. With continued collaboration and shared vision, we can unlock greater opportunities and contribute to sustainable and balanced growth for both the nations.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership with BCCCI. Together, we look forward to the next decade of stronger Bangladesh–China economic cooperation.

Warm regards,

Jamilur Rahman
Secretary General
Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI)



Message of the Chairman of the Standing Sub-committee on Education & Research

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my greetings to all readers, members, partners, and well-wishers of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) on the occasion of this special edition of our Journal commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Bangladesh's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Over the past decade, the relationship between Bangladesh and China has grown into a comprehensive partnership marked by mutual trust, economic cooperation, cultural understanding, and people-to-people connectivity. The Belt and Road Initiative has played a significant role in strengthening this relationship by opening new avenues for infrastructure development, trade expansion, industrial collaboration, education, technology transfer, and cultural exchange.

As one of the leading bilateral chambers in Bangladesh, BCCCI has remained committed to fostering closer cooperation between the business communities of both nations since its establishment in 2003. Today, with more than 750 members, including a large number of Chinese enterprises operating in Bangladesh, BCCCI continues to serve as an effective bridge for dialogue, investment facilitation, and strategic collaboration.

Beyond economic cooperation, the importance of educational and cultural engagement cannot be overstated. Sustainable partnerships are built not only through trade and investment but also through mutual understanding, knowledge sharing, and respect for cultural diversity. In recent years, we have witnessed increasing collaboration in academic exchanges, technical education, language learning, research cooperation, youth engagement, and cultural programs between Bangladesh and China. These initiatives are helping to build a new generation equipped with global perspectives, technical expertise, and cross-cultural understanding.

The evolving global economy now demands greater focus on innovation, digital transformation, green development, and human resource capacity building. Bangladesh's young population presents enormous potential, while China's advancements in technology, manufacturing, artificial intelligence, and vocational education offer valuable opportunities for collaboration. Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions, technical training centers, and industry stakeholders of both countries can contribute significantly to developing a skilled workforce capable of meeting future industrial and economic challenges.

At the same time, cultural cooperation remains an essential pillar in deepening bilateral friendship. Exchanges in arts, literature, sports, tourism, media, and heritage continue to bring the peoples of Bangladesh and China closer together, reinforcing the historical bonds shared by the two nations.

As Bangladesh and China enter the second decade of cooperation under the Belt and Road framework, it is important to focus on partnerships that are inclusive, sustainable, innovative, and beneficial to the people of both countries. BCCCI will continue to actively support initiatives that strengthen economic prosperity while also promoting educational advancement and cultural harmony.

I sincerely thank all contributors, from our members, stakeholders, and partners associated with this publication and with BCCCI's ongoing efforts. I hope this special edition will inspire meaningful dialogue, deeper cooperation, and renewed commitment toward a prosperous and shared future for Bangladesh and China.

With best wishes and warm regards,

Brig. Gen. Shah Md. Sultan Uddin Iqbal
Chairman
Education & Research Sub-committee
Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI)



China ready to partner with Bangladesh for green growth: Ambassador Yao

Dhaka-Beijing cooperation not zero-sum game, but path towards shared prosperity

Highlighting the importance of green development, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen on Thursday said China stands ready to work with all countries, including Bangladesh, to build a more open, inclusive and mutually beneficial global economy, so that the fruits of cooperation can benefit people around the world.

"Green development is the trend of our time, and win-win cooperation is our shared goal," he said while speaking at the opening ceremony of the "Bangladesh China Green Textile Expo" held at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB).

H.E. Ambassador said facts have proven that Bangladesh-China cooperation is not a zero-sum game, but a path toward shared prosperity. "Our cooperation extends beyond trade figures to encompass improving people's livelihoods and sharing development experiences. It is also a vivid practice of the two peoples working together to pursue a better life," he said.

76 Years of Endeavor, 50 Years of Partnership — Together for a Better and Shared Future of China and Bangladesh

"Let us take this Expo as a new starting point to elevate our bilateral relations and open a new chapter of win-win cooperation and shared development," H.E. Ambassador Yao said.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Chairman Brigadier General S M Zahid Hassan, Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) President Mohd Khorshed Alam and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Vice President Mijanur Rahman also spoke at the inaugural session.

It is the first Bangladesh-China Green Textile Expo which is seen as a new milestone in the bilateral economic cooperation. This Expo, with the theme of 'Green Textile', carries special significance, said H.E. Ambassador Yao, noting that it showcases advanced achievements of Chinese enterprises in green textile materials and equipment, and brings together scholars and business leaders from both countries to discuss the future of the apparel industry.

He said China is ready to work with Bangladesh to promote green transformation in the textile industry, support the introduction of energy-efficient technologies and eco-friendly materials and enhance Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global supply chain."This Expo is also a valuable opportunity for us to expand cooperation in textile machinery, digital printing, and smart manufacturing, and jointly build a sustainable green industrial chain," said H.E. Ambassador Yao.

China-Dhaka Day celebrated with cultural, academic events

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China. "Over the past five decades, under the strategic guidance of our leaders, China-Bangladesh relations have maintained steady growth, with win-win cooperation as its defining feature," said the Chinese envoy.

He said China has remained Bangladesh's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, with

bilateral trade exceeding 24 billion US dollar. Since August last year, more than 20 Chinese companies have signed investment agreements with Bangladesh, with intended investments totaling nearly 800 million US dollar, making China the largest investor since the formation of the interim government, the envoy said.

At the same time, he said, more and more Bangladeshi quality agricultural products are entering the Chinese market. In May this year, the first consignment of fresh Bangladeshi mangoes was exported to China, and they are working actively to provide access for more products such as jackfruit and guava to enter the Chinese market. "China highly values its partnership with Bangladesh. We have expanded market access with an open attitude, granted zero-tariff treatment to 100% of the taxable items of Bangladeshi products, and extended this policy to 2028," said H.E. Ambassador Yao. He said the world today is undergoing profound changes and no country can develop without a fair, stable, and open international environment. Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Tianjin Summit, put forward the Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

Bangladesh welcomes China's Global Governance Initiative

The five core concepts of the GGI, namely, adhere to sovereign equality, abide by international law, practice multilateralism, advocate the people-centered approach, and focus on taking real actions, align with the purposes of the U.N. Charter and contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to improving global governance, said Ambassador Yao. He said China solemnly proclaimed to the world a few days ago that, as a responsible major developing country, China will not seek new special and differential treatment in current and future negotiations at the WTO. The envoy said this move stands as a testament to China's resolve to safeguard the multilateral trading system and advance relevant global initiatives, and also demonstrates China's confidence in promoting open cooperation.



Ten Years of China-Bangladesh Belt and Road Cooperation

Song Yang
Commercial Counsellor
Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Bangladesh

Bangladesh was the first South Asian country to join the Belt and Road Initiative. Belt and Road cooperation has injected strong impetus into Bangladesh's economic growth, brought remarkable improvement to the country's infrastructure development, and contributed significantly to the enhancement of its people's well-being. Ten years after Bangladesh joined the Belt and Road Initiative, we find ourselves at a moment of reflection and renewed confidence.

In 2025, bilateral cooperation was further elevated through high level exchanges. In March, Hon'ble Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus chose China as the destination of his first bilateral visit and met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. The two leaders provided strategic guidance for the long-term development of bilateral relations. In June, Mr. Wang Wentao, Minister of Commerce of China led a delegation of more than 100 Chinese enterprises to visit Bangla-

desh. This visit represents the largest foreign business delegation ever received by Bangladesh in its history, with over 40 Chinese companies expressing their intent to cooperate with Bangladesh and increase investment, thereby enhancing economic and trade exchanges. These interactions have injected strong momentum into China Bangladesh practical cooperation under the Belt and Road framework.

Economic and trade cooperation has remained an important pillar of bilateral relations. China has been Bangladesh's largest trading partner for fifteen consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching approximately 24.14 billion US dollar in 2025. China has granted zero tariff treatment to 100 percent of Bangladeshi tariff lines and extended this preferential policy through 2028, providing strong support for Bangladesh's export diversification. Agricultural cooperation has made encouraging progress, with the first shipment of fresh Bangladeshi mangoes entering the Chinese market in 2025. China is also actively advancing market access for other high quality Bangladeshi agricultural products such as jackfruit and guava. At the same time, Chinese exports of textiles, machinery and industrial equipment continue to support Bangladesh's manufacturing sector and its role in global supply chains.

Investment cooperation has expanded rapidly in recent years. China is now one of the leading sources of foreign investment in Bangladesh, with hundreds of Chinese enterprises operating across sectors including power, energy, transport, textiles, information and communications technology. Chinese investment has contributed to industrial upgrading, job creation and technology transfer, while strengthening Bangladesh's development capacity. In the first three quarters of 2025, Chinese investment in Bangladesh increased by 140 percent. Since the establishment of the interim government, China has become the largest source of investment in Bangladesh. More than 30 Chinese enterprises have signed investment agreements with their Bangladeshi counterparts, with a total intended investment exceeding 1 billion USD.

Belt and Road cooperation has also delivered visible improvements to people's livelihoods. Chinese enterprises have participated in the construction of major bridges, roads, railways and power facilities, improving connectivity, energy security and economic resilience. China has supported Bangladesh in public health, disaster response and social development by providing medical equipment, testing supplies and emergency relief materials. These efforts reflect China's commitment to people centered development and to sharing development opportunities with trusted partners.

Looking ahead, China stands ready to work with Bangladesh to advance high quality Belt and Road cooperation. We will continue to encourage Chinese enterprises to invest in manufacturing, clean energy, digital economy, tourism and other emerging sectors, while promoting deeper integration of industrial and supply chains. China supports exploring institutional arrangements that can further facilitate trade and investment and provide long term stability for business communities on both sides. The active participation of Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and industry leaders will be essential in translating these opportunities into concrete outcomes.

China remains firmly committed to being a reliable friend and development partner of Bangladesh. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Bangladesh's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative, let us build on past achievements, deepen practical cooperation, and work together to bring greater prosperity and wellbeing to our two peoples.



Dhaka-Beijing Trade Gap Must Be Reduced

Mohd. Khorshed Alam
President of Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Director of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association
and Chairman of Little Group

Bangladesh and China stand at a crucial turning point in their economic relationship, where the urgency to rebalance, trade is stronger than ever and the opportunities for meaningful cooperation are greater than policymakers often acknowledge. The numbers are clear and compelling. Bangladesh imports goods worth around USD 16 billion from China, while its exports to the world's second-largest economy remain stuck at only about USD 0.7 billion. This trade gap is massive, persistent, and structurally difficult, and it demands that Dhaka rethinks how to engage with an economy that produces almost everything at unmatched scale, speed, and cost.

China's push for self-dependence, its recalibrated industrial policies, and its aggressive manufacturing capacity have widened this gap. At the same time, Bangladesh has struggled to utilize even the tariff-free access offered by Beijing on nearly a hundred export items. The reality is straightforward: Chinese consumers often find domestic products cheaper than imported goods, even when Bangladesh enjoys duty-free access. Chinese cost competitiveness and strong domestic preferences naturally limit the space for foreign products. This is where Bangladesh must carve out new, unconventional entry points.

The idea of selling Bangladeshi products through Western brands into China has proven inefficient and expensive. Middlemen absorb the margins, branding is diluted, and exporters lose control over pricing. This is why the proposal to open 20 "Made in Bangladesh" retail outlets inside major Chinese shopping malls is not only logical but essential. By selling directly to Chinese consumers under a Bangladeshi label, exporters can avoid intermediaries, reduce costs, and compete confidently in the world's largest consumer market. For garments in particular, this could be transformative because Chinese consumers are already wearing Bangladeshi-made clothing-only under Western labels that mask the origin and inflate prices.

If Chinese authorities approve this initiative, Bangladesh will gain a strong strategic foothold in China's retail landscape. Such outlets can showcase apparel, leather goods, agro-products, handicrafts, and diversified textiles, giving China's vast urban consumers class to Bangladeshi quality at competitive prices.

This direct-to-consumer model offers visibility, reduces intermediary commissions, and helps exporters survive the intense price competition in China's domestic manufacturing ecosystem.

Beyond trade openings, Bangladesh must also strengthen its technological and technical education base. China is now one of the world's leaders in artificial intelligence, digital manufacturing, green mobility, robotics, modern agriculture, and applied sciences. Bangladesh's proposal to establish institutional partnerships between 20-30 polytechnic colleges and Chinese technical institutes should therefore be prioritized. Chinese teachers, training modules, and technological transfers could reshape Bangladesh's workforce and prepare young people for industries where both countries can jointly expand.

Bangladesh needs technicians who can operate and repair Chinese machinery which dominates its factories. It needs programmers who can adapt Chinese digital tools, since China leads the world in hardware-software integration. And it needs engineers capable of supporting future joint ventures

in renewable energy, electronics, motor manufacturing, and mobility solutions.

The proposal to set up a joint venture factory to produce permanent magnetic motors aligns perfectly with this forward-looking industrial strategy. Bangladesh's power sector urgently needs energy-efficient solutions, and a partnership with China could reduce import dependence, generate employment, and strengthen long-term resilience. China has the technology, Bangladesh has the demand, and together they can produce immediate, high-impact results.

Chinese investment in Bangladesh's private sector also requires renewed confidence. While many Chinese investors remain interested, recent uncertainties-particularly the Bangladesh Bank Governor's remark on a zero-share value for a proposed five-bank Shariah merger-have raised concerns. Such comments have surprised investors who expect stability and predictable financial governance. Bangladesh must restore confidence quickly. Chinese investors have always viewed Bangladesh as a promising market, but they want clarity more than incentives. They need assurance that investment guidelines will be fair, consistent, and transparent.

This leads to another important proposal: establishing a full-fledged Chinese commercial bank branch in Bangladesh. Such a bank would ease trade payments, reduce transaction complexities, offer competitive financing, and facilitate settlements in Chinese RMB. Bangladesh and China could even explore limited open RMB trading within Bangladesh's forex market. With proper regulation, this would reduce dependence on third currencies, stabilize pricing, and support bilateral trade expansion. A Chinese bank could also assist exporters, support foreign-invested infrastructure projects, and open new financial pathways for SMEs.

Investment in the Dhaka Stock Exchange is another area where Chinese participation could play a significant role. Bangladesh's stock market suffers from low liquidity, thin foreign portfolio investment, and fragile domestic confidence. Encouraging Chinese institutional investors to participate could inject depth, volume, and market discipline. However, this requires Bangladesh to ensure regulatory stability, improve corporate transparency, and maintain policy consistency to avoid unsettling investor expectations.

Underlying all these proposals is a deeper truth: Bangladesh and China share a long-standing partnership rooted in practical cooperation and mutual respect. China has supported Bangladesh in major infrastructure projects, including the Padma Bridge, highways, tunnels, power plants, and digital connectivity initiatives. This partnership now needs a more balanced economic chapter-one that empowers Bangladeshi businesses to compete in China rather than merely rely on Chinese imports.

The editorial message is clear. Bangladesh must advance the next phase of bilateral engagement by pushing for retail access in Chinese malls, deepening technical education partnerships, restoring investor confidence, building joint industrial capacity, and enabling financial collaboration through a Chinese bank. These proposals are practical, timely, and aligned with global economic trends. They represent the direction Bangladesh must take to secure sustainable growth.

If Bangladesh wants to narrow the trade gap, tariff waivers alone will not be enough. The country must enter the Chinese market with its own presence, branding, and confidence. It must negotiate access boldly. It must equip its youths with modern skills. And it must reinforce financial governance so that foreign investors especially Chinese investors feel secured and valued.

Bangladesh-China cooperation has already reshaped infrastructure. It can now evolve into a dynamic partnership in trade, technology, skills, and investment. The sooner both countries act with sincerity and urgency, the faster the trade imbalance can narrow and the stronger their shared economic future will become.

Chinese Firm Invests in Modern Garment Accessories

A Chinese company is set to invest $15–$20 million in Bangladesh's modern garment accessories sector, with plans to manufacture high-end tags, labels and RFID-enabled products for global apparel and retail brands.

In this regard, Bangladesh Special Economic Zone (BSEZ), the country's Model Economic Zone, signed a Land Sublease Agreement with Leaders Label Material (Bangladesh) Co Ltd (LLB) on 13 January 2026, marking a significant step in attracting high-value, export-oriented manufacturing to the zone, according to a press release.



The agreement was signed at an event held on 13 January at the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone office in Araihazar, Narayanganj, according to a press release issued by the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA). BSEZ is also widely known as the Japanese Economic Zone.

Leaders Label Material (Bangladesh) Co Ltd is a subsidiary of Huzhou Lingxian Silk Ribbon Co Ltd, headquartered in Huzhou, Zhejiang, China. The group is a well-established and reputed player in the tag, label and RFID solutions industry, serving leading global apparel, textile and retail brands.

With advanced manufacturing capabilities and a strong focus on innovation, the company is widely recognized for producing high-quality tags, labels and RFID-enabled products, which play a crucial role in traceability, branding and supply-chain efficiency in the global apparel industry.

Recognizing BSEZ's strategic location, modern infrastructure and investor-friendly ecosystem, Leaders Label Material has chosen the zone as its first manufacturing destination in Bangladesh. Under the agreement, the company has been allocated 1 hectare (10,000 square meters) of land within BSEZ to establish its new production facility.

The company plans to begin construction of the factory in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026. The proposed investment reflects the firm's long-term commitment to Bangladesh and its confidence in BSEZ as a competitive manufacturing hub for export-oriented industries.

The establishment of the factory is expected to contribute to technology transfer, employment generation, and stronger integration of Bangladesh into global value chains, particularly in the apparel and textile accessories segment. The project also aligns with BSEZ's vision of attracting environmentally responsible, high-value and export-focused industries.

BSEZ authorities have welcomed Leaders Label Material (Bangladesh) Co., Ltd. and expressed their commitment to providing full facilitation and support to ensure the timely implementation and successful operation of the project.

BCCCI Submits Six-point Recommendation to Chinese Embassy in Dhaka

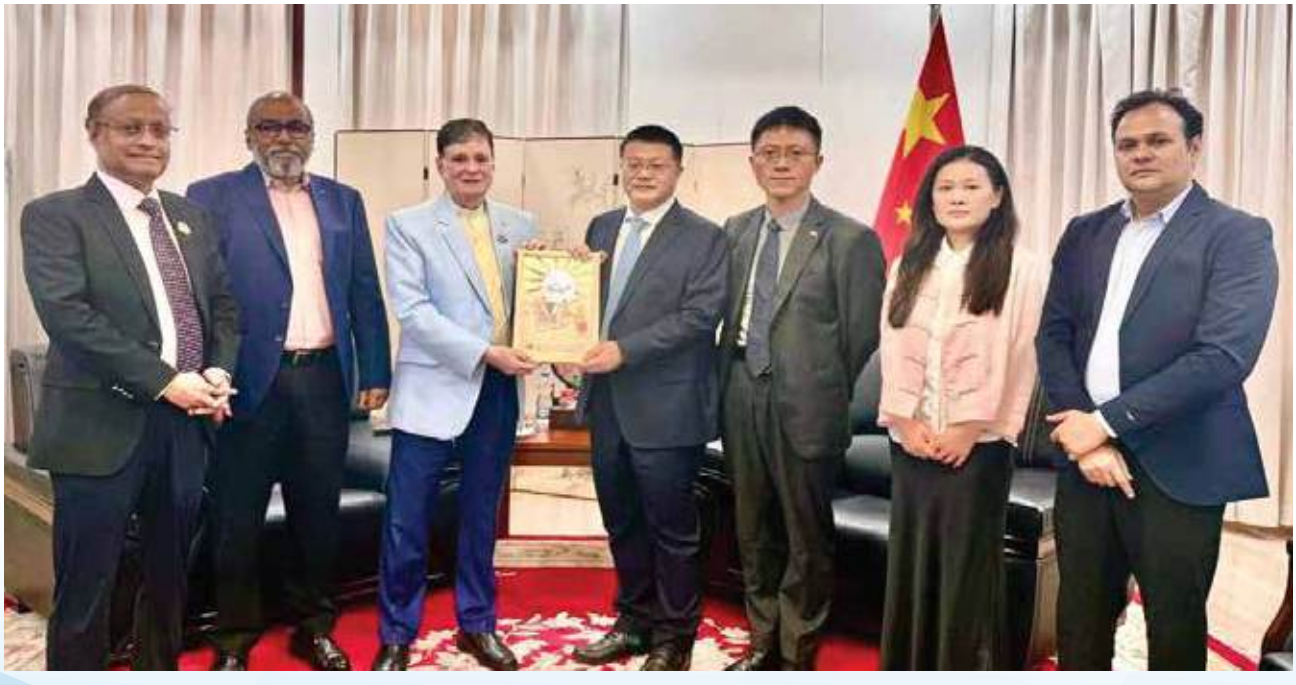
In order to strengthen bilateral cooperation and develop of Bangladeshi businesses in China, Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) has placed six-point recommendation including establishment of "Made in Bangladesh" garments outlets in China to the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka. During the courtesy call-on meeting of the BCCCI delegation headed by its President Md Khorshed Alam with Yao Wen, ambassador of China to Bangladesh, these points were submitted on Monday.

Other points are educational and technological cooperation, encouraging Chinese private sector investment in Bangladesh, establishment of Chinese commercial bank in Bangladesh, set up a Joint Venture (JV) factory to produce power-saving permanent magnetic motors, which are urgently needed in Bangladesh to strengthen the power sector, and investment in the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).

Khorshed Alam said, "The friendship between Bangladesh and China has grown even stronger. Bangladesh has received valuable assistance from most friendly nation, China, which has contributed greatly to numerous development projects in Bangladesh such as the Padma Bridge, road and communication infrastructure, mobile connectivity and power projects."

"We sincerely hope this cooperation will continue and strengthen further in the future. However, the quality of Bangladeshi garments is recognized worldwide. Many famous international brands are selling Bangladeshi products at high prices in the Chinese market. We want to directly supply world-class garment items to the Chinese people under the 'Made in Bangladesh' label," he added. He noted, "To achieve this, we seek your kind cooperation in establishing 20 'Made in Bangladesh' garment outlet sales centers in major cities in China."

BCCCI president highlighted that China plays a leading role globally in applying modern technology in various fields for the welfare of its people. "We would like to transfer some of this advanced technology to Bangladeshi students through institutional cooperation." he further said.



A Decade of Bangladesh in the Belt and Road Initiative: Global Scenario, National Impact and the Road Ahead



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1. The Broader Belt and Road Initiative: Inception, Core Goals, Structural Framework and Sustainability

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping, represents China's principal international cooperation and economic strategy of the 21st century. Introduced as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the BRI aims to strengthen connectivity and cooperation across Asia, Europe, Africa and beyond, drawing inspiration from the ancient Silk Road trade routes. Since its announcement, China has signed over 200 cooperation agreements with more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations, transforming the BRI into one of the largest infrastructure and connectivity initiatives ever undertaken by a single country[1]. At present, the BRI investment stan ds at USD 1.399 trillion[2].

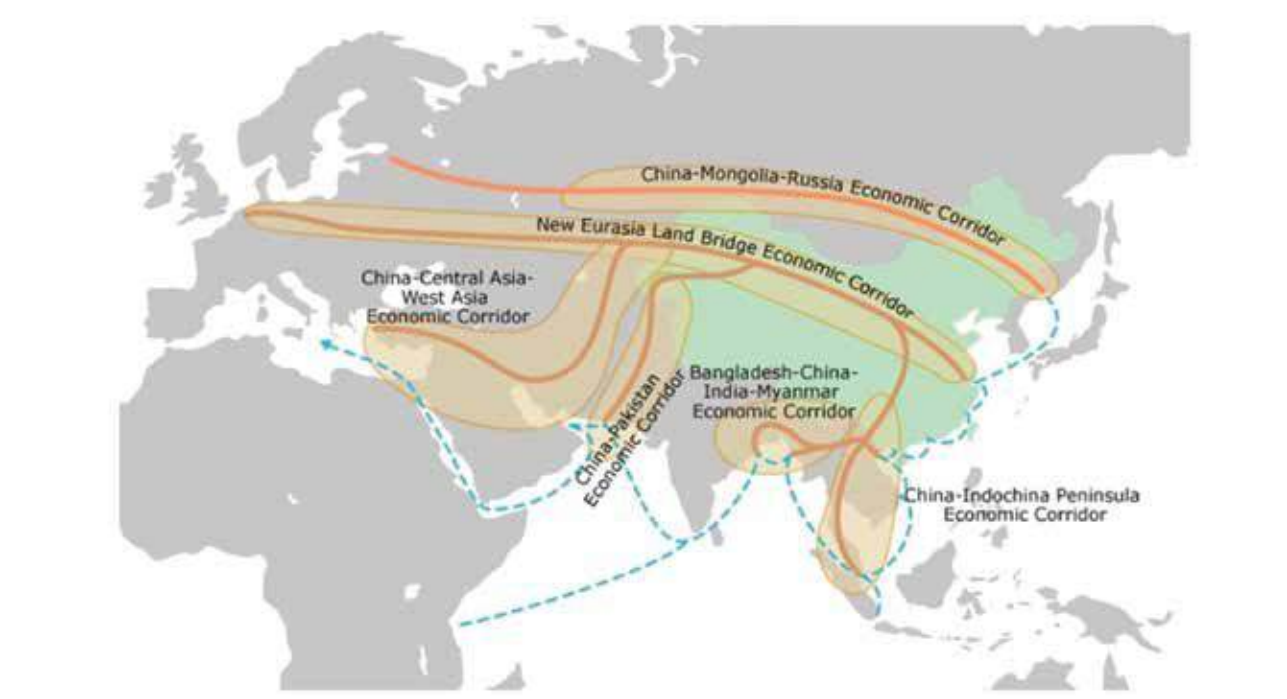
The BRI is guided by five official priorities: policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds. These priorities demonstrate that the initiative extends beyond physical infrastructure to include institutional, financial and societal integration. Structurally, the BRI operates through a framework described as 'six corridors, six routes, and multiple countries and ports,' which provides operational direction to cross regional cooperation. Comprising railways, highways, maritime routes, aviation links, pipelines, and digital information networks, the BRI prioritizes investment in power, energy, transport, and broader connectivity infrastructure.

Since its emergence, the sectoral emphasis of the BRI has evolved. While transport once dominated a relatively large portion of engagement, recent investment patterns indicate a shift toward energy and mining sectors. In 2025, BRI engagement reached USD 128.4 billion in construction contracts[3] and USD 85.2 billion in investments[4],



Figure 1: Objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative

[1] https://www.cdr-news.com/cdr-essential-intelligence/belt-and-road-initiative/china/
[2] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[3] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[4] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/



Source: HKTDC Research

Figure 2: The Six Economic Corridors of the Belt and Road Initiative Across Asia, Europe, and Africa

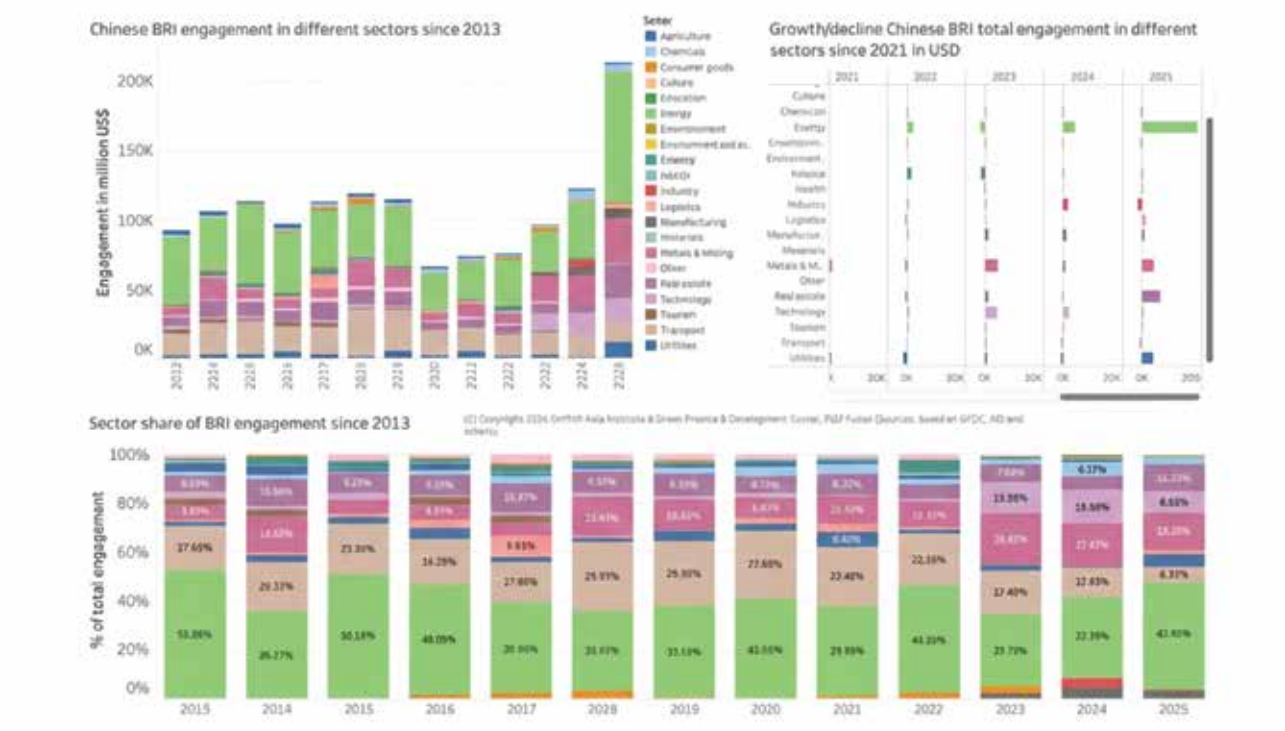
marking the highest annual level recorded. Energy accounted for 35%[5] of total engagement, while transport declined to 7.2%[6], compared to 28%[7] in 2018. Notably, oil and gas engagement surged to USD 71.5 Billion[8], while green energy investment reached USD 18.3 billion[9] in wind, solar and waste-to-energy projects, reflecting what has been described as both the 'dirtiest and greenest' year of BRI energy engagement. In 2026, an increased engagement of BRI in energy is likely along with increased engagement in mining, and advanced technologies[10].

More recently, there has been a recalibration of the BRI from a primarily connectivity-driven initiative to one increasingly framed around sustainability and resilience. The emphasis on a Green BRI has grown progressively since 2017, when guidance on promoting environmentally sustainable Belt and Road cooperation was introduced, and was reinforced at the 2019 Belt and Road Forum where green development and debt sustainability became central priorities. This trajectory reflects an effort to reposition the BRI as a more environmentally conscious and financially disciplined global initiative.

2. Emergence of the Belt and Road Initiative in Bangladesh: Commitments, Sectoral Concentration and Institutional Embedding Since 2016

Bangladesh formally joined the BRI in 2016 during President Xi Jinping's state visit to Dhaka, when commitments amounting to approximately USD 26 billion for BRI projects and USD 14 billion for joint ventures were announced, totaling

[5] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[6] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[7] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[8] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[9] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[10] https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-2025/
[11] https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/bri-10-years-on-and-bangladesh



Source: Green Finance and Development Center, 2025

Figure 3: Investments of BRI in Different Sectors Since 201

around USD 40 billion[11]. This marked a significant milestone in Bangladesh-China relations and positioned Bangladesh as one of the largest recipients of Chinese commitments in South Asia[12].

BRI engagement in Bangladesh has concentrated primarily in energy and transport infrastructure, reflecting the country's infrastructure and other development priorities. Infrastructure investment needs are projected to reach 1.5% of GDP by 2040, underscoring the relevance of external financing partnerships[13]. In this regard, the BRI is likely to remain a significant source of financing and technical support in helping Bangladesh meet its long-term infrastructure development requirements.

3. Importance of BRI for Bangladesh and South Asia: Considerations from Geopolitics to Indo-Pacific Perspectives

South Asia holds strategic significance in China's vision of revitalizing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and Bangladesh's location along the Bay of Bengal enhances its geopolitical relevance. Often described as a maritime crossroads where major shipping routes converge, Bangladesh occupies a pivotal position in regional connectivity and sea-lane dynamics. For China, it represents a critical partner in advancing the Maritime Silk Road. At the same time, the United States views Bangladesh as strategically important within its Indo-Pacific Strategy, particularly in terms of sea-lane security and supply chain resilience, while India regards Bangladesh as central to connectivity and security considerations in its northeastern region.

Consequently, Bangladesh operates within a complex strategic environment shaped by the intersecting, and at times competing, agendas of major regional and global actors. Bangladesh's positioning

[12] https://www.ijirmf.com/the-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-itss-effects-on-the-international-trade-of-bangladesh-a-case-study/

[13] https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/how-much-has-bangladesh-achieved-bri-3993761

exposes the country to geopolitical sensitivities surrounding its engagement with the BRI. India has expressed concerns that certain BRI-linked infrastructure projects, particularly in strategically significant areas such as Chattogram, could affect regional security dynamics. Beyond South Asia, several Western countries also perceive the BRI as a vehicle for expanding China's global influence, adding further scrutiny to participating states. In this context, Bangladesh has adopted a policy of 'balancing without aligning,' seeking to utilize the economic opportunities under the BRI while carefully managing its diplomatic relationships with India, the United States, and other partners to avoid exacerbating regional tensions.

4. Successes of BRI in Bangladesh: Infrastructure Transformation, Energy Expansion, Trade Integration and Employment Generation

The most visible outcomes of BRI engagement in Bangladesh are large-scale infrastructure projects, including the Padma Bridge Rail Link, the Karnaphuli Tunnel, the Payra Power Plant, as well as multiple highways, bridges, and railway expansions. Chinese enterprises have participated in at least 27 power and energy projects[14], alongside numerous transport and bridge initiatives, underscoring the concentration of cooperation in core infrastructure sectors.

Financially, Chinese companies have secured construction contracts worth approximately USD 22.94 billion across sectors, while cumulative Chinese investment is estimated to exceed USD 7 billion[15]. Beyond physical infrastructure, these projects have contributed to industrial development and employment generation, creating an estimated 600,000 jobs, particularly within export processing zones and manufacturing-linked initiatives[16].

The economic impact also extends to trade. China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, supplying machinery, capital equipment, and intermediate goods that sustain key export industries such as garments, leather, and electronics[17]. Overall, improvements in transport and energy infrastructure through the BRI initiative have enhanced trade efficiency and strengthened Bangladesh's prospects of positioning itself as a regional connectivity hub.

5. Fiscal Pressures, Climate Risks, and Trade Asymmetry Lined to BRI: Risks, Lessons, and Implications for Bangladesh

(i) Debt Sustainability and Lessons from International Experience

Debt sustainability has become a central consideration in evaluating the long-term implications of the Belt and Road Initiative. Sri Lanka's experience is relevant in this regard. Facing mounting external debt pressures and repayment difficulties, Sri Lanka leased the Hambantota Port to a Chinese company, intensifying debate over the fiscal and strategic consequences of large externally financed infrastructure projects. On the other hand, Pakistan's experience under the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has similarly drawn attention to sustainability concerns. While CPEC has delivered major infrastructure investments, Pakistan's broader debt distress and recurring balance-of-payments pressures have raised questions about the capacity of heavily indebted economies to absorb and service substantial external financing commitments.

These cases underscore key lessons for Bangladesh. Infrastructure projects must be grounded in rigorous economic feasibility assessments to ensure long-term viability and repayment capacity. Transparent loan terms and procurement processes are essential to maintain fiscal accountability, while diversification of development partners can reduce overdependence on a single source of financing. Strengthening regulatory and environmental oversight further ensures that infrastructure expansion supports sustainable growth without generating structural financial vulnerabilities.

[14] https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/how-chinas-belt-and-road-changing-bangladeshs-infrastructures-709826

[15] https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/how-chinas-belt-and-road-changing-bangladeshs-infrastructures-709826

[16] https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/how-chinas-belt-and-road-changing-bangladeshs-infrastructures-709826

[17] https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/394131/can-bangladesh-handle-china-s-rise-in-investmen

(ii) Environmental and Social Risks

Environmental sustainability has been another critical concern. Coal-based projects and large-scale infrastructure developments have raised questions regarding ecological impact and community displacement Research indicates that a significant proportion of BRI projects globally face environmental or governance risks, underscoring the need for stronger safeguards. As Bangladesh is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, this underscores the urgency of ensuring that BRI investments align with national climate resilience goals and do not exacerbate environmental or livelihood vulnerabilities.

(iii) Bangladesh-China Trade Imbalance and Its Implications for Bangladesh

The trade structure between Bangladesh and China remains heavily skewed, as reflected in the most recent data. In the first half of FY2025, Bangladesh imported more than $22 billion worth of goods from China, accounting for roughly a quarter of the country's total imports during that period. In contrast, exports to China were only about $850 million. This indicates a trade gap exceeding $21 billion within just six months, pointing to a deeply asymmetrical trade relationship and limited penetration of Bangladeshi products into the Chinese market.

This imbalance has important implications for Bangladesh. A large trade gap increases pressure on foreign exchange reserves and deepens dependence on China for critical industrial inputs. It also reflects Bangladesh's limited export diversification and weak access to the Chinese market. The key challenge, therefore, is to expand value-added exports so that engagement with China becomes more balanced and less structurally dependent.

6. Aligning BRI with Bangladesh's Development Priorities: Renewable Energy, Industrialization, and Strategic Autonomy

Looking ahead, Bangladesh's development trajectory will increasingly depend on its ability to expand renewable energy capacity and modernize its industrial base in line with its long-term growth ambitions. As the country seeks to reduce energy vulnerabilities, improve environmental sustainability, and move up global value chains, external partnerships will play an important supporting role.

In this context, aligning BRI financing with renewable energy expansion, the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), industrial upgrading, and technology transfer could reinforce Bangladesh's national development priorities rather than merely expanding physical infrastructure.

However, the developmental impact of such cooperation will depend on the quality of implementation. Strengthening public–private partnerships, ensuring competitive and transparent procurement processes, and enhancing regulatory oversight will be essential to maximize efficiency and long-term economic returns. Greater emphasis on local capacity-building and knowledge transfer would further ensure that BRI-supported projects contribute not only to short-term capital formation but also to sustainable industrial transformation.

7. Conclusion: Managing Power, Connectivity and Geopolitical Balance in the Second Decade of BRI Engagement

A decade into its BRI engagement, Bangladesh has witnessed substantial infrastructure transformation, energy expansion and enhanced connectivity. At the same time, governance reform, environmental stewardship, trade diversification and geopolitical balancing remain critical to ensuring sustainable outcomes. If approached with prudence, transparency and strategic alignment, the BRI can continue to serve as a platform for economic modernization while preserving Bangladesh's strategic autonomy.

[18] https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/11/china-belt-road-initiative-trade-bri-silk-road/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22228224717&gbraid=0AAAAAoVy5F5-1IBbqENvHJ964V15n8qm6&gclid=CjwKCAiAwNDMBhBfEiwAd7ti1HBvTsj7ed1MsfNMEcj5Zd25xDb00yin23RLUrfeMB929Qea5Z_39xoCC5cQAvD_BwE

Bangladesh Air Force and CETC International Sign Technology Transfer Agreement



The Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and China Electronics Technology Group Corporation International (CETC International) signed a government-to-Government (G2G) agreement for the establishment of a UAV manufacturing and assembly plant and the transfer of technology. The signing ceremony was held at the Air Headquarters, Bangladesh Air Force.

The Honorable Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmud Khan, BBP, OSP, GUP, NDC, PSC, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The agreement was signed under the "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Manufacturing and Assembly Plant and Technology Transfer (ToT)" project.

Under the agreement, the Bangladesh Air Force and CETC International will jointly establish a state-of-the-art UAV manufacturing and assembly facility in Bangladesh. The collaboration includes technology transfer, capacity building, industrial skill development, and joint technical cooperation, aimed at achieving long-term self-reliance in UAV production. Initially, the Bangladesh Air Force will acquire the capability to manufacture and assemble various types of Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UAVs and Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) UAVs. In addition, the Bangladesh Air Force will produce its own indigenous UAVs through this project.

The UAVs produced under this initiative will play a significant role not only in military operations but also in humanitarian assistance and disaster management. As a result of this agreement, national capacity will be expanded with a view to achieving full self-reliance in domestic UAV production, thereby supporting both national and international demand. At the same time, the initiative will make a notable contribution to national technological advancement through specialized training, knowledge exchange, and the development of a skilled aerospace workforce.

The event was attended by His Excellency Mr. Yao Wen, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Bangladesh; Lieutenant General S M Kamrul Hasan, BSP, NDC, HDMC, PSC, PhD, Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division; Mr. Md. Saifullah Panna, Secretary, Chief Adviser's Office; Dr. Hafiz Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division; senior officials of the Bangladesh Air Force; representatives of CETC International; officials of the Armed Forces Division; senior officials from various ministries; and other distinguished guests.



Delegations from Zhejiang Junxi Ocean Engineering Co., Ltd. and Ningbo Haida Engineering Survey and Design Co., Ltd. met with Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, President of BCCCI to explore technical and investment collaboration

On 17 November 2025, delegations from the esteemed Chinese enterprises, Zhejiang Junxi Ocean Engineering Co., Ltd. and Ningbo Haida Engineering Survey and Design Co., Ltd., paid a courtesy call on



Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, President of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI), at the BCCCI office in Gulshan, Dhaka. The meeting featured comprehensive deliberations on advanced marine and terrestrial survey technologies, encompassing marine mapping, side-scan sonar operations, sea-sweeping surveys, seabed pipeline inspections, as well as land settlement and displacement assessments. Both parties conveyed a mutual interest in identifying potential avenues for strategic cooperation and exploring prospects for future collaborative engagements. The discussions were also attended by Mr. Masud Ali Khan, Vice President of BCCCI and Md. Abu Taher, Office Secretary of BCCCI.

The Honorable President of BCCCI addressed a seminar on China's 15th Five-Year Plan and Bangladesh–China joint development

On 17 November 2025, the President of the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) delivered a speech as Special Guest at the seminar titled "Sharing the Opportunities of the 15th Five-Year Plan and Promoting the Joint Development of China and Bangladesh." The event was graced by Her Excellency Madam Chen Xu, Honorable Minister of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, as Chief Guest, and His Excellency Mr. Yao Wen, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Bangladesh, as Guest of Honour. The event was organized by the Apon Friendship Exchange Center at their Baridhara DOHS office, Dhaka.



An 11-member business delegation from Yunnan Province, China visited BCCCI to advance bilateral trade and investment cooperation



A formal discussion meeting between the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) and an 11-member business delegation from Yunnan Province, China, held on 19 November 2025 at the BCCCI Office in Gulshan, Dhaka, reaffirming mutual commitment to strengthening bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation. The meeting was led by Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, President of BCCCI, and Ms. Tan Shasha, General Manager of Yunnan Living Room Supply Chain Management Co., Ltd., with the participation of visiting delegation members, Honorable Executive Committee members and General members of BCCCI.

Export Potential of Bangladesh's Handicraft Sector: Challenges and Strategic Pathways for Global Integration

Abu Mukhles Alamgir Hossain
Director (Current Charge)
Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)



Export diversification remains a critical development objective for Bangladesh as the country seeks to reduce its heavy reliance on readymade garments (RMG). Within this context, the handicraft sector presents a viable alternative export avenue due to its strong backward linkages with rural employment, cultural heritage, and environmentally sustainable production. Despite its long tradition and growing global relevance, the sector has not achieved commensurate success in international markets. This paper explores the export potential of Bangladesh's handicraft industry by

analyzing its current performance, identifying key constraints, and outlining policy-oriented solutions.

Global Market Trends in Handicrafts

The global handicraft market has experienced sustained growth over the past decade, driven by increasing consumer awareness of sustainability, ethical sourcing, and cultural authenticity. Hand-made and eco-friendly products are increasingly preferred in developed markets, particularly in Europe and North America. Moreover, the expansion of e-commerce platforms has reduced entry barriers for small producers, enabling artisans from developing countries to access global value chains. Artworks and traditional crafts are also gaining recognition on humanitarian and cultural grounds, further strengthening demand.

The global market size of handicrafts— encompassing textile, metal, wood and stone, ceramic, pottery, vegetable fiber–based handicrafts, as well as eco-friendly products—is estimated at USD 1,107 billion and is projected to reach USD 2.3 trillion, growing at a CAGR of 10.15%.

Bangladesh's Export Performance in Handicrafts

Bangladesh's handicraft exports are concentrated largely under HS Chapter 46, which includes manufactures of straw, esparto, and other plaiting materials such as basket ware and wickerwork. Although exports have shown gradual growth, Bangladesh's global market share remains very insignificant compared to major exporters like China and India. Weak branding, limited product diversification, and inadequate promotional efforts have limited the sector's ability to scale up exports despite favorable global demand conditions. The export performance of the last five years is furnished below:

There is a significant strategic planning gap between Bangladesh's export performance and the market size of the leading importing countries. Bangladesh can further increase its market share by deepening penetration in existing markets and pursuing product and market development. Import data of the leading countries for the last four years are presented next page:

Beyond **HS Chapter 46**, exports from other segments of the handicraft's sector—classified under HS codes 560900, 420221, 420211, 340600, 630590, 570500, 570210, 530310, 531010, and 480210—are estimated at approximately USD 380 million. The global market size for these segments is estimated at USD 31.93 billion, of which Bangladesh accounts for only 1.18 percent of the world market share.

China is a dominant force in the global handicrafts sector, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the world market. Its handicrafts industry integrates traditional craftsmanship with mechanized production and a vast skilled workforce. China leads global exports of glassware, metal crafts, and textiles, with the European Union and the United States as its principal markets.

Bangladesh's exports of handicraft products to China—particularly handbags with an outer surface of leather, composition leather, or patent leather (HS Code 420221), and jute (excluding flax, true hemp, and ramie), raw or retted (HS Code 530310)—remain minimal. Given China's dominance across all segments of the global handicrafts market, penetrating the Chinese market poses significant challenges for Bangladeshi exporters. Nevertheless, Bangladesh may enhance its market presence in these product categories by aligning production, design, and marketing and promotional strategies with evolving Chinese fashion trends and consumer preferences.

Table-1

(Value in million US$)

Product HS CODE	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
HS Code Chapter -46 Product made of Straw, Esparto, other Plaiting Materials like Bamboo and Cane	33.97	42.83	29.71	34.95	37.68

List of top 5 Importers for the Handicraft products (Chapter: 46)

Table-2

(Value in million US$)

Importers	2021	2022	2023	2024
World	2823.21	2952.51	2245.11	2412.13
United States of America	872.50	874.67	609.48	650.87
Japan	191.31	188.80	174.23	158.10
Germany	196.65	234.49	150.19	156.53
France	153.27	192.44	140.25	149.55
United Kingdom	163.03	159.12	91.89	110.89

Source: ITC Trade Map

Competitive Advantages of Bangladesh

Bangladesh possesses several intrinsic strengths that support the development of a competitive handicraft export sector. These include an abundant supply of skilled artisans with traditional craftsmanship, a strong raw material base in jute and natural fibers, and alignment with global sustainability trends. In recent years, there has also been progress in design development and export compliance, enhancing the sector's readiness for international markets. These advantages provide a solid foundation for future growth if supported by targeted interventions.

Internal Constraints and Structural Weaknesses

Notwithstanding its strengths, the handicraft sector faces significant internal challenges. The absence of dedicated research and development (R&D) and design centers limits innovation and product upgrading. Access to finance remains constrained, particularly for small producers and informal enterprises. The sector also suffers from a shortage of skilled artisans, inconsistent availability of raw materials, rising input costs, and inadequate logistic infrastructure for storage and transportation. Furthermore, weak institutional coordination and insufficient government support have resulted in poor integration between local producers and global markets.

External Challenges and Competitive Pressures

Externally, Bangladesh's handicraft exports face intense competition from established producers, notably China and India, which benefit from scale economies, advanced design capabilities, and strong country branding. The proliferation of low-cost substitute products further erodes price competitiveness. Additionally, the lack of a coherent national branding strategy and limited international promotion reduce the visibility of Bangladeshi handicrafts in global markets.

Emerging Opportunities

Despite these challenges, several emerging trends offer new opportunities for the sector. The global shift toward sustainable lifestyles, growing demand for eco-friendly and locally made products, and the availability of donor funding for artisan development create a favorable external environment. Government policy initiatives aimed at product upgrading, combined with the rapid growth of e-commerce, present additional pathways for enhancing export performance.

Policy Implications and Strategic Recommendations

To realize the full export potential of the handicraft sector, a comprehensive and updated policy framework is essential. Key measures should include the establishment of R&D and design centers, improved access to finance through targeted credit facilities and incentive schemes, and strengthened skill development and capacity-building programs. Investments in infrastructure, logistics, and digital platforms are also critical to enhancing market access and export competitiveness.

The Handicrafts Policy 2018 (or existing policy) has not yet been revised to adequately reflect the current global market dynamics and the evolving challenges faced by sector stakeholders. Immediate government intervention is therefore necessary. In addition, nationwide cluster mapping to develop an accurate and updated database of artisans and enterprises is crucial for evidence-based policymaking and effective government support.

Equally important is the development of a strong country branding strategy and proactive participation in international trade fairs and online marketplaces. Emphasis on sustainable and eco-friendly production should remain central to policy interventions.

Conclusion

Penetrating the Chinese market remains a significant challenge due to China's strong competitiveness in the handicrafts sector. However, Bangladesh enjoys preferential market access across nearly 100 percent of Chinese tariff lines, which creates a valuable opportunity for exporters, particularly in the jute and leather-based handicrafts sectors, to expand their presence in this vast market.

Beyond China, the handicrafts sector offers Bangladesh a strategic pathway for export diversification, rural employment generation, and sustainable development. Despite facing both internal and external constraints, favorable global trends and emerging market opportunities justify renewed policy focus. With coordinated institutional support, targeted investment, and effective international market positioning, Bangladesh can strengthen the competitiveness of its handicrafts industry and secure a more prominent role in the global handicrafts market.

BCCCI seeks Chinese joint ventur investment in textile industries



Bangladesh-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCCI) President Mohd. Khorshed Alam urged Chinese investors to invest in the country's textile sector, particularly in sick and non-operational industries, through joint ventures. "Revitalizing dormant facilities would yield more effective commercial outcomes than establishing entirely new industries," he said while meeting with leaders of the Chinese Enterprises Association in Bangladesh (CEAB) at the CEAB's city office.

He further assured that BCCCI is ready to provide necessary support services, including assistance in expediting SB clearance procedures within the legal framework for CEAB members. CEAB President Han Kun highlighted several priority areas for enhanced cooperation, including infrastructural development, Government-to- Government (G2G) projects, power generation and renewable energy initiatives, and expansion of trade in construction materials, said the release. He reaffirmed CEAB's

commitment to strengthening bilateral economic relations and expressed confidence that coordinated and collaborative efforts between BCCCI and CEAB would be more effective in identifying challenges, proposing policy-level recommendations, and resolving outstanding issues.

Among others, Senior Vice President of BCCCI AZM Azizur Rahman, President of the CEAB Textile and Garments Branch Mike Ge, Marketing Director of CEAB's Bangladesh Branch Tao Tao, Vice President of CEAB Ma Rui and Secretary of CEAB Zhou Meimei spoke at the meeting.

Yunnan Delegation Visits BCCCI to Explore Deeper Cooperation

A delegation from the Foreign Affairs Office of Yunnan Province, China, led by Ma Zuoxin, Deputy Director-General, paid a courtesy visit to the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCCI) on 3 December 2025. During the meeting, Ma Zuoxin highlighted Yunnan's capacity to extend technical cooperation, particularly in the medical and nursing sectors, noting that the province is well positioned to support Bangladesh through institutional partnerships and knowledge-sharing. He also underscored opportunities for collaboration in technical and vocational education, where enhanced cooperation could generate significant value.

Welcoming the delegation, BCCCI President, Mohd Khorshed Alam, stressed the need to establish medical and nursing institutes in Bangladesh through joint initiatives to meet rising national demand. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation in polytechnic and technical education by leveraging Chinese expertise and technology to improve institutional performance. He further identified strong prospects for collaboration in renewable energy, particularly in expanding solar power projects.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to expanding cooperation in health (especially nursing), tourism, technical and vocational education, textiles, trade fairs and expos, investment, and renewable energy. The discussions underscored the importance of deepening strategic engagement between Bangladesh and China, with particular focus on enhancing ties with Yunnan Province.

BCCCI was also represented by Secretary General, Jamilur Rahman; Senior Vice President, A Z M Azizur Rahman; former Senior Vice President, Brig Gen (Retd) Sultan Uddin Iqbal (Bir Pratik); former Joint Secretary General, Md Faizul Alam; Member, Dr Farial Choudhury; and Executive Director Md Abu Taher.

The visiting delegation included Yin Hongda, Director of the International Exchanges and Cooperation Division of the Health Commission of Yunnan Province; Yang Yue, Deputy Director of the Policies and Regulations Division of the Foreign Affairs Office of Yunnan Province; and Wang Qianwen, Staff Member of the South Asian Affairs Division of the Foreign Affairs Office of Yunnan Province.



BCCCI Unveils New Membership Certificate Folder, Marking a Significant Milestone

A proud moment for BCCCI as the newly introduced membership certificate folder was unveiled. Honorable President of BCCCI Mohd. Khorshed Alam presented certificates to new members. Ms. Sun Pin, Director of BCCCI and Md. Abu Taher, Executive Director, BCCCI were also present during the Certificate giving ceremony held on 09 December 2025 at BCCCI Office, Gulshan, Dhaka.



Joint BCCCI–CEAB Delegation Calls on the Chief of the Special Branch to Strengthen Institutional Cooperation



A joint business delegation comprising representatives from the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) and the Chinese Enterprises Association in Bangladesh (CEAB) led by Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, President of BCCCI paid a courtesy call on Mr. Golam Rasul, Chief of the Special Branch (SB) of Bangladesh Police on 10 December 2025 at the SB Head Office in Dhaka.

During the meeting, the Honorable SB Chief extended a warm welcome to the delegation members and engaged in a constructive discussion on several important issues concerning Chinese businessmen operating in Bangladesh. He addressed matters related to visa processing, SB security clearance, work permit formalities, and other administrative procedures.

The Presidents of both BCCCI and CEAB expressed their sincere gratitude to the SB Chief for his proactive measures and visionary initiatives. They stated that such coordinated efforts will greatly improve the overall investment environment for Chinese entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. They also expressed confidence that issues related to work permits, visas, security clearances, and associated administrative formalities will be resolved more effectively through this structured approach. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both parties acknowledging the importance of sustained cooperation to further strengthen bilateral business relations. Secretary General of BCCCI Mr. Jamilur Rahman, Senior Vice President Mr. Hanjing Chao, Executive Director Md. Abu Taher and Senior members of CEAB were also present during the meeting.



BCCCI, in collaboration with SAV Digital Power Technologies Co. Ltd. successfully hosted the Golden Night Event



The Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) & SAV Digital Power Technologies Co., Ltd., successfully hosted the Golden Night Event on 15 December 2025 at Sheraton Dhaka. The program, graced by the Honorable President of BCCCI, Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, aimed to showcase innovative, environmentally friendly, and reliable power solutions designed to promote sustainable industrial development in Bangladesh.

BCCCI inaugurated a blanket distribution program for underprivileged communities across several districts, reflecting its commitment to social responsibility.





Humanitarian Outreach Campaign: Winter Blanket Distribution for the Underprivileged by BCCCI. A Blanket Distribution Program 2025 has been inaugurated among the underprivileged by the initiative of Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI), the country's largest bilateral chamber. Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, President of BCCCI, A Z M Azizur Rahman, Senior Vice President, Mr. Chao Chongchong, Vice





President, Khandaker Atiqur Rahman, Vice President and members of BCCCI officially inaugurated the blanket distribution program at BCCCI office premises on 22 December 2025. In this acute winter season, the BCCCI has undertaken a humanitarian initiative to support helpless and vulnerable communities across the country. Under this initiative, BCCCI distributed winter blankets in several districts including Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari and Munshiganj. In addition, blanket distribution activities were carried out in various madrasas and orphanages within the Dhaka district. This nationwide humanitarian campaign was conducted from 22 December to 29 December 2025, reflecting BCCCI's strong commitment to social responsibility and community welfare during this challenging winter period.

Opportunities and challenges of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Local Investment in Bangladesh



A.Z.M Azizur Rahman
Senior Vice President
Bangladesh-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Chairman & CEO, Investors Services Co. Ltd.
Former Member, BEPZA
(Prime Minister's Office)

Developing countries compete to attract local and foreign direct investment (FDI) because of its potential benefit to boost up local economy, which includes employment generation, technology transfer, stronger managerial and organizational skills, increase access and expansion to foreign markets, foreign exchange earnings, setting up backward and forward linkage industries, export diversification, increase service-oriented industries and develop uninterrupted supply chain. FDI can enhance productivity, increase investment in research and development and create better paying and more stable jobs in the host countries. Foreign investors have started investing in the manufacturing sector in Bangladesh especially since 1980 and increase rapidly.

Investment is the prime vehicle for the country's overall development and progress especially in the developing and underdeveloped countries like Bangladesh. The contribution of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and local investment in the economic sector is inevitable for any country. The investment provides earning of foreign currency, poverty alleviation, employment generation, transfer of technology, skill development, boost up export, develop backward and forward linkage industries, establishing satellite town, service oriented and supportive service industries and overall economic emancipation of the country. So, rapid growth of the private sector through FDI and local investment is dominant for the massive economic development for Bangladesh. Visualizing this necessity of FDI and local investment, the Government took the decision to setup Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Bangladesh in 1980 and the Private Export Processing Zones-1996. After the astounding success of EPZs of Bangladesh, the Government has decided to establish government, private and foreign Economic Zones (EZs) in Bangladesh. The Government has decided to establish Private Export Processing Zones in Bangladesh so that any foreign or Bangladeshi companie can setup Private Local or Foreign Export Processing Zones and attracting more and more FDI and local investment and diversification of types of industries and sector of investments, the government has enacted Bangladesh Economic Zones Act-2010 with a vision of establishing Economic Zones in Bangladesh.

Economic development also plays a key role in terms of FDI attraction. Low-income countries are mostly categorized as "unfree" and are less likely to attract FDI. Macroeconomic factors— trade freedom, quality of infrastructure, market expansion, and human capital, for instance— positively impact FDI. These elements create an attractive investment landscape for foreign investors seeking opportunities with strong domestic demand. Economic freedom serves as a proxy for market size and return on investment in developing economies, making it an appealing factor for FDI. Furthermore, the level of openness and domestic market size plays a vital role in FDI attraction, with trade freedom being statistically significant in certain regions. But it is a severe competition among the developing and underdeveloped countries as each and every country sets their investment in fields and rules to allure and to satisfy the investors.

Any restrictions imposed on international trade and investment and also increase or decrease duties or import and export can result in significant operational expenses for companies.

In addition, the limitations placed on the international movement of capital and labor are both critical factors influencing FDI. These limitations increase transaction costs and consequently reducing the inflow of FDI.

Finally, there in an important factor that a democratic and politically stable government encourages foreign investors to engage with a country. Furthermore, research emphasizes the long-lasting influence of political stabilization on a country's capacity to attract FDI. In light of this fact, it becomes evident that political freedom is not only a fundamental aspect of democratic governance but also a crucial determinant of a country's capacity to attract FDI.

Why the foreign and local investors and local investors should invest in Bangladesh or any other countries for following reasons:

a) Investment-friendly Law & Order situation
b) Proper Infrastructure Facilities
c) Reduction of Lead Time involvement for importers raw materials and export.
d) Political stabilization and smooth transfer of government in a country.
e) Low Cost of Doing Business and Ease of Doing Business.
f) Investment friendly clear policies of the government.
g) Lucrative Incentives both Fiscal and Non-Fiscal are attractive.
h) Tax holidays or Tax rebate.
i) Proven success Story of a EPZs, EZs, Korean EPZ, exports and overall investment climate
j) Asia's Low-Cost Production Base and also low cost of labor
k) Continuous abundance of manpower
l) Easily trainable workforce
m) GSP facilities about 37 countries
n) FTA/ EPS with developed countries are in progress.
o) Signatory of MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency)
p) Signatory of ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute)
q) Member of WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization)
r) Member of OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation)

Bangladesh should sign FTA (Free Trade Agreement)/ EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) with the developed countries before LDC graduation.

Bangladesh explores an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with developed countries before graduation from the club of least developed countries (LDCs). South Korea already has FTAs with around 70 countries including China, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Europe. Bangladesh and South Korea have close trade ties. The East Asian nation is the fifth-largest source of FDI for Bangladesh, and most of the investments come from the manufacturing sector. About 93% of Bangladeshi products got duty and quota-free market access in South Korea. There is a huge potential for South Korean nationals to invest in the textile, electronics and electrical products, garments, tent, leather & leather goods, metal products, jute and jute goods, sports shoes, construction equipment's and materials, ceramics, glass, high tech & light engineering, food & food products, mobile phone, laptop, computers, pharmaceutical and ICT sectors in Bangladesh. Also, we encourage for more export competitiveness on numerous product diversifications. For massive development in investment, we need business to business (B2B) contacts, exchange of trade and investment delegations, and chamber to chamber interactions are crucial for increasing bilateral trade and narrowing the trade gap with several countries like Japan, China, India and other countries.

To attract and encourage local and FDI and to attract more and more investment following Legal Framework enacted by the Government:

- The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority Act-1980

- The Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act-1984
- The Bangladesh Private Export Processing Zones Act-1996
- The Bangladesh Economic Zone Act-2010
- The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Act-2010
- Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority Act- 2010
- The PPP Authority Act -2010

The investment friendly Government is offering a very competitive and wide range of packages of incentives and facilities for the investors. The overall investment climate low-cost production base and low cost of doing business which is favorable for foreign investment. Bangladesh has been consistently updating and modernizing its foreign and local investment policies. The existing investment and Industrial Policy have put greater emphasis on free economy, deregulation, promotion of private sector, overall macroeconomic structural adjustment. To ensure speedy economic development the Government is going to implement "One Stop Service" (OSS) in different organizations for simplification of the investment procedures and operation.

Foreign Investors are encouraged to invest in Bangladesh especially in the following organizations:

Export Processing Zones (EPZ) and BEPZA- EZ A success story in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority Act was passed in the Parliament. Bangladesh EPZs Authority is an organization which has been working under guidance and leadership of the Honorable Prime Minister of the country. BEPZA has been empowered for creation, development, operation and management of Export Processing Zones (EPZ).

Types of Investment

Type A: 100% Foreign Ownership.

Type B: Joint Venture between Bangladesh and Foreign investors (no limit on extent of equity share).

Type C: 100% Bangladeshi Ownership.

Package of incentives

Fiscal

- 7 years Tax holiday for Uttara, Ishwardi and Mongla EPZ; first 03 years 100% exemption, next 03 years 50% exemption and last 01 (7th) year 25% exemption
- 5 years Tax holiday for Chattogram, Dhaka, Comilla, Adamjee and Karnaphuli EPZ; first 02 years 100% exemption, next 02 years 50% exemption and rest 01 year (5th) 25% exemption
- Duty free import of raw materials, machinery, equipment and construction materials
- Duty free export of finished goods
- Relief from double taxation
- Exemption from dividend tax for tax holiday period
- Exemption from income tax on salaries of foreign technician for 3 years (Project approved before March 22, 2009)
- Duty free import of two/ three vehicles for A & B type industries subject to certain conditions (Project approved before March 22, 2009)
- Full repatriation of profit, capital and establishment

Non-Fiscal

- No ceiling on foreign and local investment
- 100% foreign ownership permissible
- Enjoys GSP benefits in EU countries, Japan, Australia, Canada
- Foreign currency loan from abroad under Off-Shore Banking Unit (OBU) facilities
- Medium/long term external borrowing facilities
- Non-Resident Foreign Currency Deposit (NFCD) allowed for 'A' Type industries
- Operation of FC account by 'B' and 'C' Type industries allowed
- 100% backward linkage, raw materials, accessories are allowed to sell for export- oriented industries inside and outside EPZs and many more.

BEPZA – Economic Zone

The Economic Zone activities have already started and many local & foreign investors are taking plots in the zone. Presently, investors from 38 countries have invested US$4,138.87 million in the eight EPZs of BEPZA. Despite high demand, it was not

possible to allot land to local and foreign investors for the last few years due to scarcity of land in the EPZs located in Dhaka and Chittagong regions. In this fact, it would be possible to allocate land to the potential investors of BEPZA whether the BEPZA Economic Zone starts at Mirsarai near Chittagong. Moreover, proven expertise of BEPZA in setting up EPZs, operational experience and professional knowledge will accelerate the activities of development of the BEPZA Economic Zone. BEPZA is relentlessly working to increase and diversification of export, generation of employment by attracting investment in the country. In the last fiscal year, the EPZs gained US$ 404.36 million investment and exported goods worth US$ 6676.32 million. BEPZA has been contributing around 20% of FDI and total national export for the last consecutive years. Presently around 4,63,000 Bangladeshi nationals are working in the 462 operational enterprises of EPZs, among them 64% are female. BEPZA is playing an outstanding role in socio economic development of the country alongside economic development and women empowerment.

Govt. EZs, foreign EZs and Private EZs started operation and under construction stage

Mirsarai government EZ, a gigantic Zone at Bangabandhu Shilpa Nagar, Mirsarai, Chottogram has started operation with a number of industries and also ongoing infrastructural development going on. Several govt. EZ and Private EZs got permission to set up EZs in the country.

The Japanese EZ at Araihazar, Narayangonj, and Dhaka is on full swing construction stage and also expecting 100 Japanese investors will set up industries there.

Meanwhile, the Meghna EZs (Meghna Group) has started 2 EZs with number of industries are in operation. Abdul Momem EZ, City Group EZ, Jamalpur EZ (Nitol Niloy) Group, Bashundhara EZ have also started operation.

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA)

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) has established with the enactment of Bangladesh Economic Zones Act, 2010 with the objective to develop regional and lagging areas of the country by developing industrial land attract investment in export and import substitute industries, foster and generate employment and thereby ensure economic development of the country. BEZA has targeted to establish 100 Economic Zones across the country with the objectives to create 10 million jobs and ensure US $40 billion additional production and export within the time frame of 15 years.

Fiscal Incentives & Benefits for individual Unit Investors (Individual industry) in EZS

Incentive	Approved Incentives by Governing Board
Tax holiday	for all Economic Zones Income Tax Holiday (ITH)- – 1st and 2nd year 100%, 3rd year 80%, 4th 70%, 5th 60%,6th 50%, 7th 40%, 8th 30%, 9th 20% and 10th year 10%.
Custom duty	Duty free import of raw materials, construction materials, capital machineries, finished goods.
Income tax	Exemption from dividend tax (After tax holiday over) others
Repatriation	Full repatriation of capital and dividend.
Free flow FDI	No ceiling of FDI.
Backward linkage	100% backward linkage raw-materials and accessories to sell for export-oriented industries (EOI) in Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
Local sale	20% sale of finished product to DTA (From Export Processing Area –EPA).
Subcontracting	Sub-contracting with DTA allowed.
Stamp duty	50% exemption of stamp duty and registration fees for registration of leasehold land/ factory space.
Vat	80% exemption of VAT on all utility services consumed inside the zone.
Custom duty	Duty exemption on Export and many more.

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)

Established under Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Act 2016, the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) is the Prime private investment promotion and facilitation agency of the Government of Bangladesh.

The Act was created on September 01, 2016. The Act mandated BIDA for providing diversified promotional and facilitating services with a view to accelerating industrial development of the country. In addition, the government also entrusted BIDA with some more functions in its service list. Combining all, BIDA's present functions can be categorized as follows:

- Investment Promotion: BIDA is responsible for attracting of FDI into the country
- Local Support: We provide key information only as a local entity.
- Post-establishment service: We provide specialized support for strategic aspect once settled.
- Extensive experience: It is key static sectors of the country's industry.

Enhancing Competitiveness and Investment Facilitation

- Offers an attractive and competitive package of tax incentives.
- Imposes no foreign equity restrictions on manufacturing activities or on some service.
- Provide assistance in the provision of visas and work permits to facilitate entry and subsequent operation for a foreign-owned business.
- Waives restrictions on land ownership by foreign entities.
- OSS (One Stop Services)

Korean Export Processing Zones (Foreign Private EPZ)

The Government has enacted "The Private Export Processing Zone Act" in 1996 for setting up Private EPZs by foreign and local investors. Meanwhile, a South Korean investment conglomerate Youngone Corporation has set up Korean EPZ (KEPZ) Corporation (BD) Ltd. in Anowara on 2492 acres of land on the other side of Karnaphuly river in Chattogram. The Korean EPZ has already set up 32 factories on 6.5 million sft floor space after completion of the land development in the entire zone where more than 35 thousand people are working, majority of Whom is from the neighboring villages.

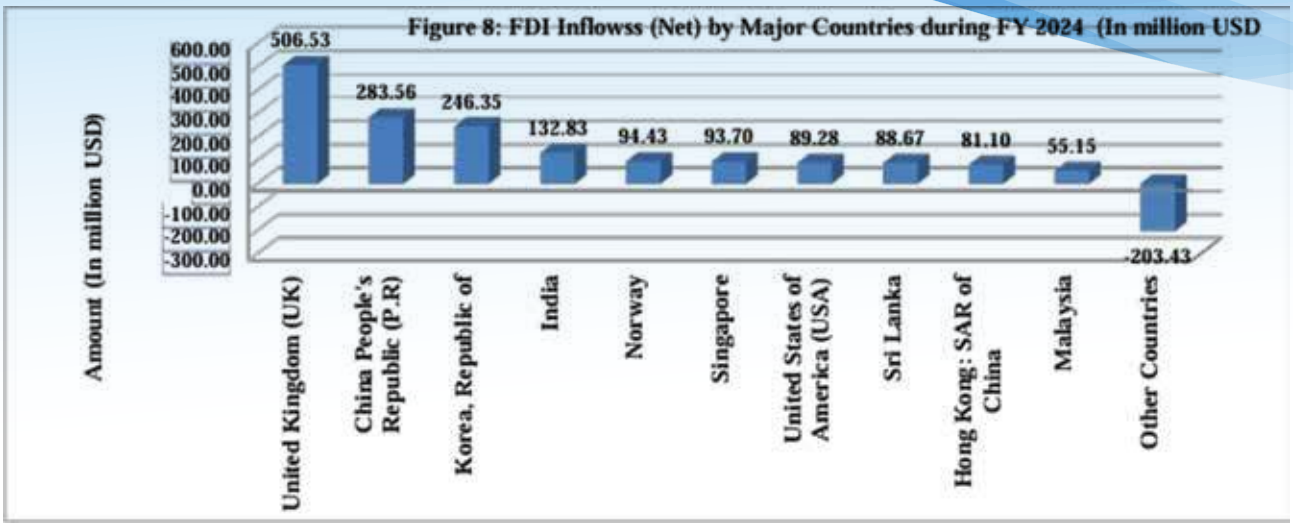
To support the local RMG Industry on sourcing quality MMF (Man Made Fiber) based backward linkage products a Textile Village comprising 5 separate factory units having 2 m sft floor space for the most technologically advanced technology.

Currently Youngone Corporation employs nearly 90 thousand people in the country in Chattogram EPZ, Dhaka EPZ and Korean EPZ in Bangladesh.

Special Incentives for Investors of High Tech Parks

- 12 years exemption of Income Tax for park developers.
- 10 years exemption of Income Tax for investors.
- Exemption of Import Duty, Regularity Duty and Supplementary Duty for locally production of ATM machine and CC camera;
- Exemption of Duties on importing Capital Equipment and Construction Materials by the Investors;
- Hi-Tech Parks are declared as Bonded Warehousing Station;
- Exemption of Income Tax on Dividend, Share Transfer, Royalty, Technical Fees for investors;
- Exemptions of Income Tax for Foreign Employees;
- Exemption of Income Tax on declared Dividend by industrial Park Developers;
- Exemption of VAT during production level of goods by the Investors;
- Exemption of Duties on importing Goods/Materials to be used for the development of Hi-Tech Parks by the Park Developers;
- Exemption of Duties on importing Transport by the investor;
- Exemption of stamp duty on the deed registration/ mortgage deed registration
- Investment in Bangladesh (EPZs) including South Korea

FDI Inflows (Net) by Major Countries





BRI- CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Brig. Gen. Shah Md. Sultan Uddin Iqbal Bir Protik
ndu, psc, MBA, PhD (Retd)
Advisor to the President, BCCCI

1. Introduction:

During the decades of the Cold War, the West led by the United States (U.S.) attempted to define an international system that included structures and laws that formed the basis of today's post-World War II global governance. With the demise of the Soviet Union, this bipolar world passed and an era of American unipolarity ensued that for some heralded a second "American Century [1]

Meanwhile, the fall of the USSR and emergence of newly made Republic of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in the early 90s, gave the Chinese leaders a strategic insight to the new geo-political arena. It was an opportunity of the century for the Chinese not only to address the problems of her restive Xinjiang Province but also explore the natural resources of the Central Asian nations (and also Xinjiang of China). During this time, the US geo-political focus was outside Central Asian scenario.

According to the preliminary estimation, the gross domestic product of China was 90.03 trillion yuan or 13.61 trillion US dollars in 2018. China's nominal GDP surpassed that of Italy in 2000, France in 2005, the United Kingdom in 2006 and that of Germany in 2007, before overtaking Japan in 2010, making China the world's second largest economy after the United States. China became the world's second largest economy as early as in 1999 surpassing Japan and others only excepting USA. By 2026 the Chinese GDP is expected to rise to US $ 20.85 trillion maintaining its position as world's second largest economy with up to 5% yearly growth.

2. The Belt and Road Initiative:

Bangladesh's professor Rahman Subhan was the first to float the idea of CONNECTIVITY in Asian context in one of the conferences in Kunming in 1999. However, the initiative in real sense was formally launched by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary Xi Jinping in 2013 while visiting Kazakhstan. It aims to invest in over 150

[1] Krauthammer 1990; El-Doufani 1992; Zuckerman 1998, retrieved on 21st Apr 2026.

countries and international organizations through six overland economic corridors and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The BRI is central to Chinese foreign policy, promoting trade connectivity and China's leadership role in global affairs. As of 2025, participating countries account for nearly 75% of the world's population and over half of global GDP, based on aggregated membership and international economic datasets. The initiative is widely described as having the potential to enhance global trade, connectivity, and economic growth, particularly in developing economies. At the same time, it has been associated wit h concerns regarding environmental impact, human rights and governance standards, debt sustainability, and the dual-use nature of certain infrastructure projects.[2]



An Overview of Chinese Investment and Construction Engagement -BRI

According to official documents, the strategic goals of BRI include several pillars:

a. Policy coordination,
b. Connectivity of infrastructure.
b. Free trade,
d. financial integration,
e. Stronger people-to-people connections.

The ultimate aim is to improve cross-country transport and communication infrastructure, facilitate cooperation in trade and investment, tourism, and financial markets, and strengthen cultural ties between participating nations in a flexible and mutually beneficial way.[3]

3. Prospects and challenges of the initiative:

a. Bridging the economies of Europe and Asia in general and the three 'integrations', the EU, the EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) and China, is the main theme of the concept. The EU, the EAEU and China account for almost 40% of the world aggregate GDP. Including the countries in-between, an estimated 60% of global GDP and up to a third of the world's population potentially is to be covered by BRI. It is interesting to note that, a number of earlier initiatives by China had similar objectives (for instance, the 'Go Global'/'Go Out' and 'Peaceful Rise' policies).

b. This venture is backed by financial infrastructure involving multiple sources: the Silk Road Fund (US$ 40bn), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (US$ 50bn), the New Development Bank of BRICS (US$ 10bn), the Silk Road Gold Fund (US$ 15bn), and the China, Central and Eastern Europe Investment Co-Operation Fund (US$ 11bn). In addition, the project is supported by bilateral funds (China-Russia, China-India, China-Africa development funds) and specialized Chinese organizations (for instance, the China Export-Import Bank and China Development Bank), as well as complementary initiatives by the World Bank, EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and other international development organizations operating in the region.

4. The Chinese interest on the issue of BRI is mainly guided by the followings:

a. Geostrategic interests. The BRI is fully consistent with the overall strategic goal of China to increase its regional and global influence along multiple dimensions, including economic, political, people-to-people linkages, and to create a 'circle of friends' in the focused nations of Asia, Europe and Africa.

b. Secured access to strategic resources: The economy of China is highly dependent on access to energy resources, metals and other natural resources. The New Silk Road will provide (is providing) new and alternative routes to secure access to mineral resources from the commodity-based economies of

[2] Wikipedia
[3] Hong Kong Trade Development Council.

Central Asia and the Middle East.

c. The need to revisit its economic growth and development model: China's economy has been growing at an accelerated pace for years driven by exports of labor-intensive goods. Nowadays, as the country's income levels have increased and it is facing a structural economic growth slow- down and a 'middle-income trap, previous sources of growth need to make way for new drivers. Policymakers in China recognize the need to transition to a more sustainable economic growth and development model.

d. Development of backward regions of China: Closely related to the above is China's need to facilitate the development of its less developed Western regions (specially Xinjiang), reduce income inequality and thereby improve the internal cohesion of the country.

e. Value of Yan and Expansion to new markets: The BRI will help China gain improved access to new markets for goods and services, as well as facilitate investments to help optimize the composition of its value chains in light of its new development paradigm. Deepening trade and investment linkages will help further strengthen the role of the Yuan in the region and beyond.

5. Disadvantages:

a. Participation by members in BRI is not bounded by any legal frameworks and conditionality, which could turn away some potential partners.

b. The envisioned Silk Road Economic Belt passes through a range of landlocked countries located in highly mountainous or desert terrain, which makes it especially costly to develop infrastructure.

c. Moreover, some big countries also doubt the real intention of BRI that is Chinese hegemony in the long run.

6. Risks and Potentials of BRI:

a. Tremendous size and scope: BRI economies account for one-third of global GDP and trade, and close to two-thirds of world population. If BRI projects are successful, countries like Kenya, Uzbekistan, Laos, Djibouti stand to benefit a large number of poor people and huge swaths of the world's economies [the percentage of the population living below the poverty line ($1.90 a day), are still high (25 percent in Kenya, 23 percent in Uzbekistan and Djibouti, and 21 percent in Laos)].

b. Large unexploited potential: BRI countries' contribution to global exports has nearly doubled in the last two decades. A handful of nations like China, are responsible for the lion's share of these exports. Trade of many BRI economies such as Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, and Laos is below potential due to inadequate infrastructure, weak policy and other gaps.

c. Improving connectivity: It currently takes about 30 days to ship goods from China to Central Europe by sea whereas shipping goods by train can cut transit time in half, but costs much more. Improving the capacity and network of railways and other transport infrastructure could lead to more cross-border trade, increased investment, and improved growth in BRI economies.

d. Policy barriers create thick borders: Cumbersome customs procedures, delays while crossing borders and restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI), affect BRI countries trade. In Central Asia, for example, it can take up to 50 days to comply with all procedures to import goods, whereas it takes less than 10 days in G7 countries.

e. Risks involved with major infrastructure projects: There are potential environmental, social, and corruption risks associated with any large infrastructure project. These could include, for example, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, or elite capture. These risks may be especially significant in countries involved in the BRI, which tend to have relatively weak governance.

f. Macro risks: For some countries, the financing required for BRI projects may expand debt to unsustainable levels. For instance, the construction of the Lao PDR section of the Kunming –Singapore Railway has an estimated cost of US$ 6 billion – nearly 40 percent of GDP of Laos in

2016. Countries participating in BRI projects will need to balance the need for these development projects with the vulnerabilities created by increased debt levels.

7. Operation Fury and ME War:

a. The Gaza War, Trump's decision to launch Operation Epic Fury, alongside Israel's Lion's Roar campaign against Iran, was driven by considerations extending far beyond the immediate threat that pre-war Iran posed to American interests in the Middle East and the rest of the world. It was also shaped by the broader strategic competition between the United States and China for global primacy in the 21st century. Trump's various decisions regarding conduct, justification and secur-

ing help from NATO in the war has led to differences of opinions amongst its NATO allies. This has resulted in discontent amongst various members of NATO.

b. The war with Iran is affecting the BRI at three levels. First, it directly disrupts a key node (Iran). Chinese projects in Iran face uncertainty, suspension or destruction and infrastructure facilities in the corridor tied to Iran are now high-risk or unusable. Second, China depends heavily on Gulf energy, much of it passing through the Strait of Hormuz which has been blocked by Iran. This hits the economic foundation of BRI (cheap energy combined with trade stability). Third, the war creates a spillover of instability across other countries involved in the BRI. Chinese investments in the Gulf states (ports, smart cities, LNG, infrastructure) are now exposed to military escalation risk and energy shortages due to disruptions linked to the war affect the entire Southeast Asia region. The war also makes the alternative land and ocean routes that pass-through Pakistan and India more important and that increases the pressure that already exists between these countries leading to potential renewal of military conflicts between them.[4]

Geopolitical Assessment:

a. Tehran stands as China's principal trading partner in the Middle East, supplying nearly half of Beijing's imported oil. Chinese yuan (CNY) is reportedly the primary currency used in many of these transactions.

b. However, this strategic energy relationship is vulnerable to regional volatility. Any attempt by Iran (due to pressure) to close the Strait of Hormuz—often invoked as a retaliatory measure—would not only disrupt its own export routes but also jeopardize China's imports from other key energy suppliers. Saudi Arabia, China's second-largest source of oil, as well as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which provide natural gas, all rely on safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz for maritime deliveries to East Asia.

c. Given the strategic vulnerability of maritime routes, Beijing and Tehran have moved to establish an overland freight corridor intended to maintain trade continuity, reducing dependency on the Strait of Malacca, a chokepoint largely under US strategic influence in times of crisis. This infrastructure assumed heightened strategic importance following the Trump administration's reintroduction of the 'maximum pressure' campaign, which aimed, among other objectives, to reduce Iran's oil exports from 1.5 million barrels per day to zero by targeting key purchasers, notably China.

d. Recent statements from Israeli leadership suggest that military operations may not end with Iran. Indications have emerged that Pakistan could also become a target in the aftermath of a decisive Israeli campaign against Tehran. This prospect holds significant implications for China, given that Pakistan hosts the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a cornerstone of the Belt and Road Initiative, anchored by the strategic Gwadar Port.[5]

Conclusion:

BRI architects may shift their focus from expansion to risk management. China is already stockpiling energy and is cautiously restricting exports. The war weakens the "Iran corridor" since Iran can no longer function as a stable anchor and the overland routes that goes through it to the Middle East has become unreliable. Instead, the BRI is likely to increase its reliance on alternative routes through Central Asia and Russia (despite the complications caused by the War in Ukraine) and maritime routes via Southeast Asia. [6]

Instead of one integrated system, the BRI is likely to experience increased fragmentation into regional "mini corridors" with more selective investments. Thus, the war doesn't just slow BRI—it forces China to rethink the entire concept from expansion to resilience. However, Pakistan opening of six land routes to access Iran through Gwadar and Karachi ports needs a special deliberation in view of the existing geo-political scenario.

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[4] Boaz Golany... is an Emeritus Professor at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology where he has served in various leadership positions. He also serves as a member of the Board and as a strategic consultant to some companies and organizations.

[5] Silvia Boltuc: Special Eurasia Co-Founder & Managing Director. She is an international affairs specialist, business consultant and political analyst who has supported private and public institutions in decision-making by providing reports, risk assessments, and consultancy.

6. Silvia Boltuc: Special Eurasia Co-Founder & Managing Director. She is an international affairs specialist, business consultant and political analyst who has supported private and public institutions in decision-making by providing reports, risk assessments, and consultancy.

China needs to address the following points from this war:

a. Disruptions of key trade corridors.
b. Energy supply shocks.
c. Financial and Investment risks.
d. Security risks to infrastructure.
e. Strategic shifts in BRI routes.
f. Deeper China Iran realignment.

Some critics argue that this war would further improve and deepen China's position in the world geo-political arena and make the BRI more accessible and constructive to the concerned 150 nations. Perhaps there could be a partial geo-political shift amongst various nations. The difference of opinions amongst US and its allies regarding the justification of this war, is likely to have a positive effect on the BRI issue too. A war without strong strategic vision might affect US geo-political position and ultimately economic state in the world arena. The Chinese are likely to take advantage of such opportunities.

A delegation from BCCCI paid a courtesy call on Md. Tofazzel Hossain, Honorable Chief Controller at Office of the Chief Controller of Imports & Exports (CCIE)



A delegation from the Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI), led by Mr. A. Z. M. Azizur Rahman, Senior Vice President of BCCCI, paid a courtesy call on Mr. Md. Tofazzel Hossain, Honorable Chief Controller (Additional Secretary) on 23 December 2025 at Office of the Chief Controller of Imports & Exports (CCIE), Dhaka. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the challenges faced by Chinese nationals regarding the IRC, particularly the difficulties related to work permits. During the discussion, BCCCI strongly highlighted the ongoing complications faced by Chinese investors, which are affecting their ability to continue business operations smoothly in Bangladesh. The Honorable Chief Controller listened attentively to the concerns and assured the BCCCI delegation that the issue would be resolved very shortly. With this positive assurance, BCCCI expressed optimism that Chinese entrepreneurs and investors will be able to continue their business activities smoothly in Bangladesh. The meeting was attended by Ms. Sun Pin, Director of BCCCI, Mr. Abu Taher, Executive Director of BCCCI, and a representative from Taifu International.

BCCCI organized a day-long excursion at Dhali's Amber Nivaas, Munshiganj, celebrating fellowship and institutional unity.





The Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) successfully organized a day-long excursion at Dhali's Amber Nivaas, Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj, on 27 December 2025, with the participation of over 250 guests.





The event was graced by the presence of the Honorable President of BCCCI, Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam, along with Senior Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents, Directors, and Members of the Chamber. Distinguished attendees also included government officials, representatives of the Chinese Enterprises Association of Bangladesh (CEAB), the Confucius Institute at the University of Dhaka, the Confucius Institute at North South University,



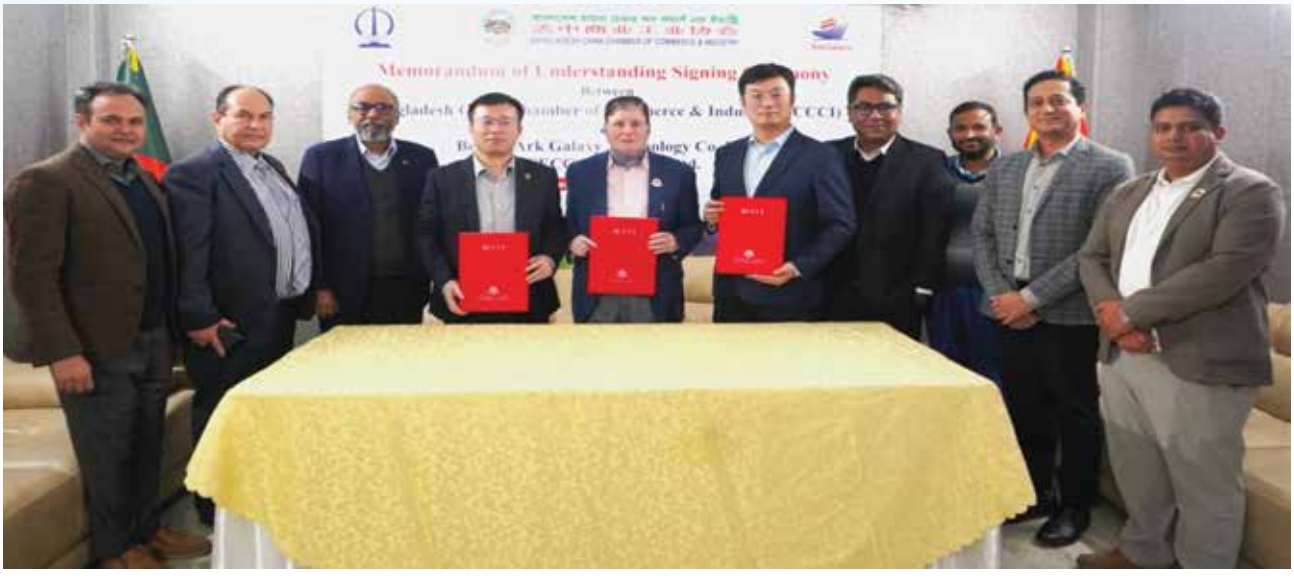






representatives from leading Chinese companies operating in Bangladesh, representative from media, and other invited dignitaries. Family members of participants, BCCCI officials and staff, well-wishers of the Chamber were also present.

BCCCI Signs Landmark MoU with Beijing Ark Galaxy Technology Co., Ltd. and CCECC to Strengthen Bangladesh–China Cooperation in Vocational Education and Skills Development



The Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Beijing Ark Galaxy Technology Co., Ltd. and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) with a view to strengthening bilateral cooperation in vocational education, skills development, and human resource capacity building between Bangladesh and China.

The MoU was signed on 3 January 2026 at the BCCCI Office, Gulshan, Dhaka, and aims to establish a long-term and sustainable cooperative framework between affiliated vocational institutions of Bangladesh and leading vocational institutions of China. Under this strategic partnership, the parties will collaborate on technical training programs, institutional exchanges, technology sharing, and capacity development initiatives, thereby contributing to industrial growth and workforce modernization in both countries.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Honorable President of BCCCI, Mr. Mohd. Khorshed Alam; Mr. Yue Xueshan, General Manager of Beijing Ark Galaxy Technology Co., Ltd.; and Mr. Lu Yong, Deputy General Manager of CCECC Bangladesh Ltd. (China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation).

On behalf of BCCCI, the event was also attended by Honorable Secretary General Mr. Jamilur Rahman, Advisor to President Mr. Md. Faizul Alam, Vice President Mr. Khandaker Atiqur Rahman, Vice President Mr. Masud Ali Khan, Director Mr. Asif Haque Rupo, Executive Director Mr. Md. Abu Taher & Dr. Md. Sadi, Principal, Yidai Yilu Chinese Institute.

The presence of senior representatives from all participating organizations reflected the growing momentum of Bangladesh–China collaboration in education, industry, and workforce development, reaffirming a shared commitment to deepening bilateral relations and advancing sustainable economic growth through skilled manpower development.

This MoU represents a significant milestone in strengthening institutional cooperation and fostering long-term partnerships aimed at supporting inclusive development and industrial competitiveness.

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- Fire License 消防執照
- Factory License 工廠許可證
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- Provisional Custom Bond License 臨時海關保稅許可證
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AZM AZIZUR RAHMAN
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