

**Nothing endures but changes;
FBCCI must get ready for change,
change in its size, structure, tenure and leadership**



**FBCCI initiates dialogue & discussion with
Chambers & Associations leaders to initiate reform in FBCCI**

From the Desk of the Administrator



Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to present the monthly E-bulletin for the month October, 2024. This edition includes a variety of contents produced by FBCCI from different aspects including new business approaches, necessary reforms in business bodies and a possible future administration in FBCCI.

Students and mass people uprising in Bangladesh during July and August, 2024 have paved the way for heralding changes in many sectors including trade and businesses. The youth-led movement also demanded for corporate accountability and reforms in the business sector.

The pressure was so powerful that many institutions unwilling to bring coveted changes were compelled to undertake changes hitherto unthinkable. The movement centered around demands for justice, equality, and reform, have directly impacted the country's political and business landscape. The heat was felt in the chambers and associations bodies where there was a growing urge for changing boards, adopting new policies and regulations to foster democratic and participatory election and to select

energetic and accountable leadership through a fair, free and transparent election process. The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) - the apex trade body of Bangladesh is no exception to this. The strong current of social and political elements have compelled its pervious leadership to resign and thus allowing government to appoint an administrator to conduct a free, fair and participatory election.

As administrator it is going to be my second month and during this time, I have the opportunity to understand and grasp the complexity, dynamics and greatness of this business body. The interaction with different business bodies like chamber, joint chambers and associations, the visit to markets, the interplay between businessmen and policy makers really worth studying. It is a daunting task nonetheless a unique opportunity to for civil servants like us to gauge the challenges and risks undertaken by businessmen of our country. I am really indebted to the government and FBCCI for providing me this wonderful opportunity. Taking the opportunity, I would like to put it on record that I shall leave no stones unturned to conduct a reliable, acceptable and participatory election for FBCCI. I

am also committed to bring necessary reforms in this business body after threadbare consultation and meeting with chambers and associations and its leaders. The month of October is very important due to this consultation processes. During this month we have initiated discussion formally and informally with business leaders and member of trade bodies.

As I shoulder the responsibility of FBCCI, it is important for me to help Government's measures to stabilize the daily essential commodities in the market & as doing so, I visited along with FBCCI's Market Monitoring Cell different kitchen markets in Dhaka to motivate businesses community to work together to keep the commodity prices stable. We also held discussions with retailers, wholesalers as well as corporate bodies aiming to keep the supply chain of the essential commodities like egg, chicken, onion and potato stable. To create a conducive environment and to help businessmen to carry out their business activities safely and responsibly, FBCCI held a number of zoom meetings with business leaders from sectoral associations during October.

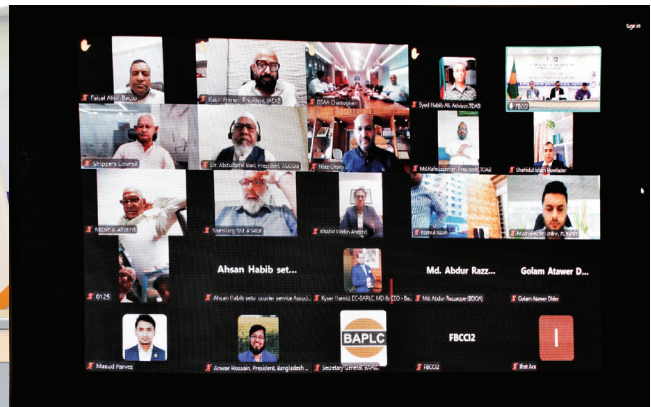
Though there were some set back in trade & business during July-August uprising, but with the passage of time, things have settled down and now business is getting momentum, inflation is gradually contained. FBCCI though is run by administrator, it has not deviated from it's goals. FBCCI still remains committed to its mission of promoting and protecting the interests of the private sector through providing valuable insights and creating opportunities.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our members, partners, and stakeholders for congratulating me and giving their support to FBCCI's endeavors. Together we aspire to bring change and reforms in the economic & trade sector of Bangladesh. We also look forward to a democratic and business friendly milieu in our country.

Warm regards,

Md. Hafizur Rahman
Administrator, FBCCI

Consultation with Chamber & Association leaders on Reforms & Election of FBCCI



A series of meetings with the leaders of Chambers and Associations on FBCCI's reform and election were held virtually on 20, 23, 27 and 28 October, 2024.

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator, FBCCI presided over the meetings.

A number of recommendations were raised by the

representatives of Chambers and Associations. They mainly called for election of office bearers and directors by direct voting by general body members, rationalization of numbers of FBCCI Board, interval of candidature after consecutive 2 (two) term election, formulation of criteria for selecting GB members etc.

They were also opined for abolition of nominated director system.

FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Wing Mr. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Additional Secretary General Shah Md. Abdul Khaleque and other officials also joined the meeting.

Discussion Meeting on Stabilizing the Market of Essential Commodities

FBCCI hosts a discussion meeting with retail and wholesale traders, aiming to stabilize the market of essential commodities including egg, chicken, onion and potato. The meeting was held at FBCCI Board Room on October 17, 2024.

FBCCI Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman chaired the meeting.



While talking, FBCCI administrator said, due to natural disasters like floods, prices of some essential commodities slightly increase sometimes. But prices have abnormally been increasing nowadays, which has caused discomfort to consumers. The business community needs to ing. work together to reduce unnecessary handling and deliver goods to consumers at reasonable prices.

Retailers and wholesalers called upon producers and corporate entities to ensure the normal supply of essential commodities like eggs, chicken, onions, and potatoes to stabilize market prices.

Among others, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Assistant Director of the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection Mr. Md. Abdul Jabbar Mondol, Director of Bangladesh Competition Commission Dr. Urmi Binte Salam, business leaders, market analysts and other dignitaries were present at the meet

FBCCI Market Monitoring Team visited different Kitchen Markets in the city



FBCCI Market Monitoring Team visited Karwan Bazar Kitchen Market on October 13, 2024 and Kaptan Bazar kitchen Market on October 27, 2024 in the capital. Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administra-

tor of FBCCI led the Monitoring Team.

Market Committee Leaders, business leaders were present at the time.



During the visit, FBCCI Administrator exchanged views with retail and wholesale traders; and urged traders to support the government to keep the essential commodities market stable.

Discussion workshop to finalize Economic Census-2024 Question Paper



A discussion workshop with business representatives to finalize Economic Census 2024 Question Paper was held on October 8, 2024 at FBCCI. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) & FBCCI jointly organized the workshop.

Mr. Md. Mahbub Hossain, Secretary, Statistics and Informatics Division (BBS) graced the workshop as the chief guest. The workshop was chaired by the Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman.

Among others, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Wing Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Director General of BBS Mr. Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, Project Director of the Economic Census 2023 Project-BBS Mr. S M Shakil Akhter were present at the workshop.

Officers of the Department of Narcotics Control, undergoing Special (1st) Foundation Training Course in BPATC visited FBCCI



Officers of the Department of Narcotics Control, undergoing Special (1st) Foundation Training Course in Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) visited FBCCI Office in Motijheel on October 9, 2024.

Mr. Md. Shaugatul Alam, MDS and Mr. Md. Abul Basher, Course Adviser and Course

Director respectively, joined the delegation. Faculties of BPTAC were also present.

During the visit, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir briefed the delegation on mission & vision of FBCCI and its various activities through a PowerPoint presentation. After the presentation, a

question-answer session was held where participants raised different questions and FBCCI authority replied.

Among others, Head of International Wing of FBCCI Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Senior Additional Secretary General Mr. Shah Md. Abdul Khaleque were present at the sessions.

Discussion Meeting between FBCCI and EBFCI



A discussion meeting with the delegation from Europe-Bangladesh Federation of Commerce and Industry (EBFCI) was held on October 01, 2024 at FBCCI office in Gulshan, Dhaka.

The Administrator of FBCCI Md. Hafizur Rahman chaired the meeting. Dr. Wali Tasar Uddin, President, EBFCI led the delegation. Issues related to trade & economic relation and future prospect between Bangladesh and European countries were discussed in the meeting.

Training Program on Disaster Management and Preparedness at Kurigram

FBCCI and Kurigram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) jointly organized a training program titled "Disaster Preparedness, Business Continuity and Multi-Hazard Management" on October 20, 2024 at Kurigram.

The Deputy Commissioner of Kurigram Ms. Nusrat Sultana graced the program as the chief guest.

KCCI President Mr. Abdul Aziz Mia, Coordinator of FBCCI Safety Council Mr. Md. Manjur Kader Khan, business leaders and others were present at the program.



Pakistan envoy met FBCCI Administrator



Mr. Syed Ahmed Maroof, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh met Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman,

Administrator of FBCCI on October 30, 2024 at the FBCCI Office in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Issues related to trade and economic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan were discussed in the meeting. They especially focused on trade agreement, B2B meeting, Joint Business Council, acceptance of certificates between quality control authorities of both countries, import-export of halal food, SME, pharmaceutical and other potential sectors.

Among others, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Wing Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal, FBCCI Safety Council Adviser Mr. Abu Nayeem Md. Shaheedullah, business leaders were present at the meeting.

Leaders from Sammilito Babosayee Parishad met FBCCI Administrator

Mr. Mir Nizam Uddin Ahmed, Convener, Sammilito Babosayi Parishad and Former Vice President of FBCCI met the Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on October 20, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

They exchanged views regarding necessary reforms of the FBCCI and urged for conducting a free and fair election as early as possible. Administrator requested business community to support him in this effort.

Among others, Former Director of FBCCI Mr. Hafez Hazi Mohammad Enayet Ullah, Mr. Mohd. Ishaqul Hossain Sweet, Haji Md. Abul Hashem, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir and business leaders were present at the meeting.



REHAB Vice President met the FBCCI Administrator

Mr. Abdur Razzaque, Vice President (Finance), Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh met Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on October 27, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

REHAB Director Mr. Md. Kamrul Islam, Mr. Md. Emdadul Haque, Mr. Muhammad Labib Billah, Dr. Haroon Rashid were present at the meeting.



BGAPMEA Leaders paid a courtesy call on FBCCI Administrator



Mr. Md. Shahriar, President, Bangladesh Garments Accessories & Packaging Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGAPMEA) met Honorable Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on October 31, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

REHAB Vice-President (Finance) Mr. Mozaharul Haque Shahid, Director Mr. Kazi Fahad, Mr. Md. Saiful Islam Sabuz, Mr. Md. Atikur Rahman and others were present at the meeting.

BREA President met FBCCI Administrator

President of Bangladesh Rice Exporters Association (BREA) and Former Director of FBCCI Mr. Mohd. Ishaqul Hossain Sweet met the Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on October 03, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

Among others, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir was present at the meeting.



Administrator of FBCCI attended the opening ceremony of the 19th National Furniture Fair-2024

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI, as the Chief Guest attended the opening ceremony of the 19th National Furniture Fair-2024, organized by Bangladesh Furniture Shilpa Malik Samity (BFSMS) at International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB).

Among others, Mr. Anwar Hossain, Vice-chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Dr. K.M. Akhteruzzaman, President of Bangladesh Furniture Export Association, businessmen, industrialists and other dignitaries were present at the opening ceremony.

Mr. Selim H Rhaman, President of BFSMS presided over the ceremony.

The five-day long furniture fair will be held during October 15-19, 2024 every day from 10.00 am to 9.00 pm.



FBCCI Administrator attended a program on the occasion of World Standards Day 2024



FBCCI Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, as special guest, attended a program on the occasion of World Standards Day 2024 organized by Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) at Foreign Service Academy on October 14, 2024.

Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan, Honorable Adviser, Ministry of Industries and Ministry of Housing & Public Works graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The program was presided over by Ms. Zakia Sultana, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Industries.

Mr. S M Ferdaus Alam, Director General (Grade-1), BSTI delivered his welcome remarks while Professor Dr. Abdul Hasib Chowdhury, Pro-Vice Chancellor of BUET presented the keynote paper at the program.

Former President of Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association met with FBCCI Administrator

Mr. Khandaker Ruhul Amin, Former President of Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association (BROA) and Former Director of FBCCI met the Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on September 26, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka. He requested Administrator to look into harassment of restaurant owners by different agencies in the name of compliance. He reiterated that restaurant owners would like to follow government's directions and work to have license from one authority.



President of Bangladesh Paper Importers Association paid a courtesy call to FBCCI Administrator



Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam Vorosha, President of Bangladesh Paper Importers Association (BPIA) and Former Director of FBCCI met the Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on September 26, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

President of BPIA requested to conduct election after undertaking proper reforms in Trade Organization rules and regulations. He also requested Administrator to reduce VAT, Taxes on paper imports. Administrator assured them to look after the matter.

BAFISA President met with FBCCI Administrator

A delegation from Bangladesh Food Stuff Importer & Suppliers Association (BAFISA), led by its President Mr. Md. Borhan-E-Sultan, met the Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on September 30, 2024 at FBCCI office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

BAFISA President congratulated Administrator for taking the charge of FBCCI. He requested Administrator to take measures for conduct election after taking necessary reforms. Administrator requested them to support him in this effort.



Bangladesh- Argentina Trade Opportunities and Challenges

The relation between Bangladesh and Argentina reached a new height when at the end of Qatar world cup in 2021, Argentinian Foreign Minister came to Bangladesh in 2022 to inaugurate the Embassy building of Argentina in Bangladesh. In the Qatar World Cup, Bangladeshi fans wholeheartedly supported the Argentinian team which created a great sensation among the Argentinian People and government. It is this football mania that was a great factor to expedite the strong relationship between the two countries. The friendship between the two countries which was based on football ultimately transformed into business and other relations.

Bangladesh imported products such as soybean oil, sugar and edible oil worth \$791 million from Argentina in the 2022-23 fiscal year. On the other hand, Bangladesh exported products worth \$9.52 million during the same FY. There are opportunities for better trade with Argentina. There is a huge trade deficit with Argentina and Bangladesh can minimize that trade gap by increasing exports, especially of RMG items. If barriers are removed, Bangladeshi exports can reach to \$1-1.5 billion in the short time.

Bangladeshi goods, such as garments, jute and leather products, generic drugs, pharmaceutical products, ceramic and plastic, home textiles, agricultural and processed agricultural products, shrimp, frozen food, bicycles, refrigerators, air conditioners, light engineering products have a good chance to be exported to Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay.

But as ill luck would have it, Bangladeshi products face tariffs ranging from 8% to 35% when entering the Argentine market. In addition, there are also barriers such as anti-dumping policies. Argentina has imposed an anti- dumping duty of \$16 per kg on Bangladeshi jute bags and sacks.

It is against this reality that Free Trade Agreements (FTA) or Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA) with other countries, including Argentina and other members of the Southern Common Market, commonly known as Mercosur should be signed at the earliest. For this initiative G2G and B2B initiatives should be started soon. The present delegation is visiting Brazil to explore such opportunities and to establish people to people, B2B connectivity.

Last year, Bangladesh and Argentina, signed three agreements and a MOU with the visiting Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Mr. Santiago Andrés CAFIERO with his counterpart in Bangladesh.

Under the MoU Bangladeshi footballers will have the opportunity to get training in Argentina. Another two agreements include cooperation between the sports academies of the two countries, and allowing Bangladeshi government officials to travel to Argentina without Visa.

During the visit Argentine Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero opened the new Argentine Embassy in Dhaka. With the reopening of the embassy and its consular section, the country seeks to exploit the potential of the bilateral relationship, mainly in the commercial aspect.

Executives from companies - Marolio, Ecofactory, Vetanco, Lipotech, Luna de los Andes, Letis, Santo Pipó, Instituto Nacional de la Yerba Mate (INYM), The Halal Catering Argentina HCB, Havanna, Arcor, Baltazar -Alfa Pampa, Suplefeed, Ronaldb, Club Atlético River Plate and Cargill - travelled with Cafiero.

In 2022, bilateral trade with Bangladesh was US\$765 million. Argentine exports reached US\$742.9 million and imports from Bangladesh totaled US\$22.1 million. A trade surplus for Argentina of US\$720.8 million was registered in 2022.

Bangladesh and Argentina also signed a memorandum of understanding for the first time for bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture. Under the MoU, Bangladesh will receive priority in smart agriculture technical support, greater agricultural trade and collaboration including the import of wheat and soybeans.

FBCCI OFFICE ADDRESS

FBCCI Icon
60 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka- 1000, Bangladesh

FBCCI Extended Office, Gulshan
Tower of Aakash, Level-9, Plot-54, Road-132, Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212,

Phone : 88-02-223380588, 223381470

Fax: 88-02-223355902

E-mail: secretariat@fbcci.org
Website: www.fbcci.org