

## Driving Economic Growth through Policy & Partnership



**Vietnam-Bangladesh Business Forum 2025 hosted by FBCCI**

## From the Desk of the Administrator



**Dear Fellow Members, Colleagues, and Stakeholders,**

With great privilege, we present the May edition of our Monthly E-Bulletin, a dedicated chronicle of our ongoing efforts to bolster trade and investment through targeted strategies, inclusive activities, and impactful policy advocacy.

In today's rapidly evolving global economic landscape, fostering a resilient and responsive trade and investment ecosystem has become more crucial than ever. This bulletin offers a comprehensive overview of our multi-faceted engagements over the past month, ranging from high-level stakeholder dialogues and sector-specific consultations to enabling sustainable growth, reducing trade barriers, and creating a conducive environment for both domestic and foreign investment.

In light of this, FBCCI organized the 'Vietnam-Bangladesh Business Forum 2025' on 14th May 2025 at a city hotel in Dhaka.

Highlighting the potential sectors, the forum stressed trade deals and economic partnership between Bangladesh and Vietnam to explore new avenues of trade and investment.

As the global landscape becomes increasingly digital and interconnected, leveraging the full potential of all human capital, particularly women, has become not only a matter of equity but also a strategic imperative for sustainable development. Realizing the context, FBCCI organized a seminar on Women in Technology on 8th May 2025, aiming to reinforce initiatives to enhance women's engagement in technology, fostering a women-led economy, and thus ensuring women's empowerment.

The FBCCI, in association with NTV, organized a pre-budget view exchange programme titled 'Kemon Budget Chai' on-aired live on 27 May 2025. Distinguished speakers shared their insights and views on the proposed National Budget for

the FY 2025-2026. Additionally, the FBCCI and the International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the month of May, aiming to collaborate in research & policy analysis.

Throughout May, the FBCCI actively engaged in strategic dialogues and consultative meetings with key stakeholders, national business leaders, and distinguished representatives from various chambers, associations, and industry forums. In addition, FBCCI continues to play a pivotal role in representing the diverse interests of the business community in high-level discussions on both national and international platforms.

This edition features an article titled 'AI-Powered Trade Transformation in Bangladesh', contributed by FBCCI's Research and Planning Department.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all our members, business leaders, and stakeholders for their unwavering support. I firmly believe that the collective efforts of dedicated individuals across all sectors will undoubtedly contribute to the continued advancement of our thriving economy.

*Warm regards*

**Md. Hafizur Rahman**  
 Administrator, FBCCI

## Vietnam-Bangladesh Business Forum 2025 hosted by FBCCI



The 'Vietnam-Bangladesh Business Forum 2025' was held on 14 May 2025 at Hotel InterContinental Dhaka.

A 16-member Vietnamese business delegation, led by H.E. Phan Thi Thang, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of Vietnam, joined the forum. The event was hosted by FBCCI.

Emphasizing the need for boosting bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and Vietnam, both countries stressed on the need of trade agreements and economic partnerships.

Addressing the forum, Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade H.E. Phan Thi Thang called for easing of tariff and non-tariff barriers to strengthen bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and Vietnam.

She highlighted the trade potential in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, pharmaceuticals, fisheries, and ICT.

Additionally, she stressed the importance of further developing connectivity, transportation, and logistics to unlock opportunities in untapped sectors. She also recommended mutual cooperation, technology transfer and information sharing between businesses of the two countries.

Echoing similar views, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh Mr. Abdur Rahim Khan underlined the importance of minimizing tariff and non-tariff barriers to facilitate trade and investment between Bangladesh and Vietnam. He also suggested further simplification of transaction mechanisms between the two countries.

In his welcome address, FBCCI Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman noted that the opportunities for enhancing trade and investment are vast and remain largely untapped. Key sectors such as infrastructure development, renewable energy,

agro-processing, and the growing tech industry in Bangladesh hold immense potential for collaboration. Similarly, Vietnamese expertise in manufacturing, particularly in electronics and high-value agriculture, can find a receptive and expanding market in Bangladesh, he added.

Vietnamese Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Nguyen Manh Cuong emphasised the importance of joint ventures and mutual cooperation to expand trade between the two nations. Bangladesh's Ambassador to Vietnam H.E. Mohammad Lutfor Rahman called for ease of business visa to strengthen trade ties.

Mr. Do Van Trung, head of the Vietnam Business Association, highlighted the need for deeper communication and partnerships among entrepreneurs and businesses from both countries.

Secretary General of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, Former Director of FBCCI and member of the Shohayok Committee Mr. Abdul Haque and Ms. Nasreen Fatema Awal, Former Director of FBCCI Dr. Ferdousi Begum, Business Leaders, General Body Members of the FBCCI Mr. Zakir Hossain (Noyon), Mr. Zakir Hossain and others were present in the forum, among others.



## FBCCI hosts a Seminar on Women in Technology



FBCCI, the country's apex trade body, organized a seminar titled 'Women in Technology' in honor of the visiting business delegation from Saudi Arabia on 08 May 2025 at the FBCCI office in Motiheel, Dhaka.

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

Mr. Shish Haider Chowdhury, ndc, Secretary of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division, graced the seminar as the Chief Guest.

In his address, the ICT Secretary emphasized the government's commitment to promoting women's engagement in technology. He highlighted ongoing initiatives aimed at fostering a women-led economy through employment and entrepreneurship, thereby ensuring

women's empowerment and development. Commending FBCCI for hosting the seminar, he stressed the importance of women's participation in technology in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Speaking as the special guest, Nurun Nahar Chowdhury, additional secretary (development) at the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, addressed the social challenges women face. She urged changing the social mindset towards women's engagement in technology and the digital economy, for a more inclusive economy.

A business delegation from Saudi Arabia, led by Professor Dr. Selwa Al-Hazzaa, CEO of the health-tech startup SDM, also participated in the seminar. She shared her experience in leveraging technology for healthcare and women's empowerment in Saudi

Arabia, and expressed interest in launching the health-tech services & solutions in Bangladesh.

In her keynote address, Rubaba Dowla, country managing director (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan) of Oracle, called for stronger public-private partnerships to provide tech training, foster innovation, and support women's entrepreneurship. She also advocated for more investment in women-centric development initiatives.

Other speakers included Mahreen Nasir, director of Mir Telecom; Sumaiya Tabassum Ahmed, head of sustainability at PRAN-RFL Group; Sadia Haque, CEO of ShareTrip.com; and Md. Aminul Islam, assistant professor at the Bangladesh University of Health Sciences.

Among others, the secretary general of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, members of the FBCCI Shohayok Committee Mr. Abdul Haque, Mr. Md. Giasuddin Chowdhury (Khokon), Mr. Md. Belayet Hossain Bhuiyan, general body member of the FBCCI Ms. Sayeda Akhter, Mr. Zakir Hossain, women entrepreneurs, business leaders, academicians, and other dignitaries were present at the seminar.

Mr. Zakir Hossain Nayon, president of the Bangladesh CNG Machineries Importers Association, delivered the vote of thanks.



## Pre-budget View Exchange Programme titled 'Kemon Budget Chai' held

'Kemon Budget Chai' (the budget we want), a pre-budget view exchange programme, jointly organized by NTV and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) aired live on NTV. The programme took place on May 27, 2025, at the NTV Studio in Tejgaon, Dhaka.



The programme was graced by the presence of Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Former Minister and member of BNP's National Standing Committee Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan, Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) Mr. Md. Abdur Rahman Khan FCMA, Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Administrator of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, President of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) Mr. Mohammad Hatem, and several eminent figures from the nation's business community.

'Kemon Budget Chai' served as a platform for an in-depth exchange of views on the national budget for the Fiscal Year 2025–2026. Distinguished speakers shared their insights and views on the proposed budget, and engaged with the audience by addressing their queries.

## The Chairperson of EuroCham met the FBCCI Administrator



Ms. Nuria Lopez, Chairperson of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (EuroCham) met the FBCCI Administrator Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman on May 27, 2025 at FBCCI's office in Gulshan, Dhaka.

They had a fruitful discussion on the issues related to trade and investment between Bangladesh and European countries.

Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Head of International Affairs Wing of the FBCCI was present, among others.

## FBCCI and IBFB signed MoU for Joint Collaboration in Research & Policy Analysis

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Joint Collaboration in research & policy analysis on May 21, 2025 at FBCCI Office in Motijheel, Dhaka.

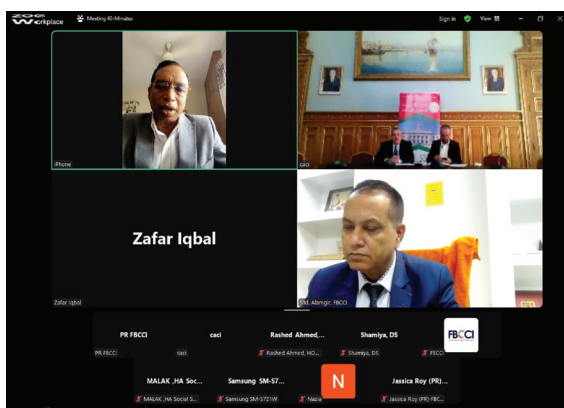
Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI and Ms. Lutfunnisa Saudia Khan, President of IBFB signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.



The MoU will facilitate evidence-based policy advocacy to address the challenges faced by the business community in Bangladesh. It aims to foster collaboration and partnerships that promote economic and social development. Additionally, it will explore opportunities for in-depth research and policy analysis on issues and constraints related to the business environment and cross-border trade in Bangladesh.

Among others, Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Affairs Wing of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, Executive Director of IBFB Mr. S M Selim Reza were present at the signing ceremony.

## Virtual Meeting between FBCCI and ACCI to Finalize a Draft MoU



A virtual meeting between the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) and Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) was held on May 19, 2025 to finalize a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen trade and investment relations between Bangladesh and Algeria.

The meeting also discussed on mutual trade & commerce related interests

between FBCCI and ACCI for strengthening bilateral ties. The MoU between the two chambers is expected to facilitate exchange of information and research on different areas of cooperation with a view to promote bilateral commercial relations. It will also facilitate in exploring possibilities of Joint Ventures in the areas of ship building, ICT & agriculture etc.

Joining the meeting, Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI emphasized on deepening bilateral trade in the sectors like leather, fisheries, textile, pharmaceuticals, plastic, processed food, flower etc. and called upon the Algerian businessmen to invest in Bangladesh.

Mr. Kamel Hamenni, President of ACCI urged the Bangladeshi investors for establishing leather companies in Algeria and Algerian business community will extend cooperation in this regard. He also urged to keep close contact and information sharing between the two countries.



Both sides agreed in exchanging business delegation between Bangladesh and Algeria to explore mutual trade potentials. Both the chambers agreed to approve the draft MoU and sign it in a virtual meeting.

FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Head of International Affairs Wing of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Zafar Iqbal ndc, representatives of Bangladesh High Commission in Algeria, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh joined the meeting, among others.

## FBCCI Shohayok Committee Meeting

FBCCI's Shohayok Committee Meeting was held on 22 May 2025 at FBCCI office in Moti-jheel, Dhaka.

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator, FBCCI chaired the meeting. Issues related to FBCCI's current activities and upcoming programs were discussed in the meeting.

Members of the FBCCI Shohayok Committee Mr. Abdul Haque, Mr. Md. Giasuddin Chowdhury (Khokon), Mr. Prabir Kumar Saha, Mr. Belayet



Hossain Bhuiyan, FBCCI Secretary General Mr. Md. Alamgir, Senior Additional Secretary General Mr. Shah Md. Abdul Khaleque were present in the meeting.

## Shohayok Committee Member visited FBCCI's Haatkholo Building



FBCCI Shohayok Committee Member and Former Director Mr. Md. Giasuddin Chowdhury (Khokon) visited FBCCI's Haatkholo Building located in Tikatuli, Dhaka on May 18, 2025. The Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir, and others accompanied him.



## FBCCI Administrator attended the discussion on World Metrology Day 2025



The Administrator of FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, as the special speaker, attended the discussion on the occasion of the World Metrology Day 2025, organized by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) on 20th May 2025 at the auditorium of Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM), Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Professor Dr. Abdul Hasib Chowdhury, Pro Vice Chancellor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), graced the ceremony as the chief guest.

The discussion emphasized the importance of metrology in driving sustainable development and ensuring the reliability of measurements across key sectors such as health, industry, environment, and trade.

Among others, Ms. Maksura Noor NDC, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Industries; Mr. S M Mahbubul Alam, Managing Director of the Walton Hi-Tech Industries Plc; Mr. S M Ferdous Alam, Director General of the BSTI and other dignitaries were present at the event.

## FBCCI attended a Conference on Water Reuse and Recycle: Launching of National Alliance

Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of FBCCI, as Special Guest attended a conference on 'Water Reuse and Recycle: Launching of National Alliance' jointly organized by the Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO), 2030 Water Resources Group (WRG), and the World Bank Group, on 21 May 2025 at Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka.

Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Honorable Adviser, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh graced the ceremony as the chief guest.

Dr. Sheikh Abdur Rashid, Secretary of the Cabinet Division; Mr. Nazmul Ahsan, Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources; Mr. Alauddin Ahmad, Director of the Foreign Investors' Chamber



of Commerce & Industry (FICCI); Mr. Md. Anwar Hossain, Administrator of the BGMEA; Gayle Martin, Country Director for Bangladesh (Interim), World Bank; Mr. Michael John Webster, Program Manager of 2030 WRG, World Bank, and other dignitaries were present at the conference.

## FBCCI Administrator attended a Focused Group Discussion on Leather Sector



Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman, Administrator of the FBCCI, as special guest attended a Focused Group Discussion on 'Sustainable Export Growth in Post LDC Era: Strategies for the Leather Sector' organized by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) on 25 May 2025 at DCCI Auditorium, Motijheel, Dhaka.

Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan, Honorable Adviser of the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Housing & Public Works, graced the event as the chief guest.

DCCI President Mr. Taskeen Ahmed, Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) President Mr. Syed Nasim Manzur, Chairman of the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) Mr. Md. Saiful Islam, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce (WTO Wing) Dr. Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury, Director General of BIDA (Strategic Investment) Mr. Md. Ariful Hoque, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and other dignitaries were present in the meeting.

## Bi-monthly Coordination Meeting of the BPP on Disaster Management

The bi-monthly coordination meeting of the Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership-Phase 2 (BPP2) hosted by FBCCI Safety Council was held on May 26, 2025 at Hotel Golden Tulip, Dhaka.

The Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir chaired the meeting. The importance of the private sector's role in disaster management was emphasized in the meeting.

Among others, Additional Secretary and Chair-BPP Mobilization Desk Mr. K.M. Abdul Wadud, Adviser of the FBCCI Safety Council Brig. Gen. (Retd.) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidulla, Co-founder of the Institute of Disaster Management Vulnerability Studies Professor Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen, Program Coordinator of the FBCCI Safety Council Mr. Monjur Kader Khan, academia, government officials,



and private sector representatives attended the meeting. Senior Project Management Specialist of the ADPC-HQ (Bangkok) Ms. Shivani Gupta joined the meeting virtually.

In his remarks, the Secretary General of FBCCI Mr. Md. Alamgir stated, coordinated efforts by the government, non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector as well as international partners are essential in our country's disaster management and preparedness.

Several initiatives have been undertaken through the FBCCI Safety Council to reduce disaster risk and strengthen emergency preparedness within the private sector, following the guidelines assigned to FBCCI through the Standing Order on Disaster Management, he added.

The meeting highlighted monthly updates, key decisions, disaster management strategies, and solid progress under BPP2 with impactful presentations.



## Meetings on Strengthening Local Business Community on Disaster Resilience

Three district-level meetings titled “Strengthening Local Business Community on Disaster Resilience” were organized by FBCCI Safety Council and the safety cell of the Cox’s Bazar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CBCCI), Kurigram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), and the Bagerhat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).



The first meeting was chaired by Mr. Abu Morshed Chowdhury, President of the Cox’s Bazar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, held on 14 May 2025 at Cox’s Bazar. Thirteen local business associations were participated the meeting.

The second meeting was chaired by Alhaz Abdul Aziz Mia, President of the Kurigram Chamber of Commerce and Industry, held on 21 May 2025 at Kurigram. It engaged about fifteen local business associations.

The rest of the meeting was chaired by Mr. Sk Mainul Islam Mostafa, Convener of the Sommilito Business Owners Association of Bagerhat, on 28 May 2025 at Bagerhat. It also engaged about 14 local business associations. Beside this, team FBCCI Safety Council met with additional executive director of the Mongla EPZ and discussed on formation of a private sector emergency response team at the export processing zone of Mongla, Bagerhat. They principally agreed to extend cooperation in the initiatives of FBCCI regarding disaster resilience.

Additionally, 33 business associations in Kurigram, Cox’s Bazar and Bagerhat have been assessed regarding their disaster preparedness capacity using the new tool.





## FBCCI Administrator attended a seminar on Anti-Dumping & Countervailing Duties

Administrator of the FBCCI Mr. Md. Hafizur Rahman attended a seminar on 'Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties' organized by the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTTC) on May 28, 2025 at the Conference Room of BTTTC, Segunbagicha, Dhaka.

Dr. Mainul Khan, Chairman of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTTC) graced the seminar as the chief guest.



## AI-Powered Trade Transformation in Bangladesh

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is emerging as a powerful tool that can revolutionize industries worldwide.

Bangladesh, a nation with a thriving economy with strategic geographic location, stands poised to harness the potential of AI to transform its international trade landscape. By integrating AI into its trade processes, Bangladesh can streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and ultimately boost global competitiveness.

Bangladesh's export-oriented economy has benefited from preferential trade agreements such as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) offered by the EU under its "Everything But Arms" (EBA) scheme. However, as the country is set for graduation by 2026, maintaining trade competitiveness through diversification and value addition is crucial. Emerging sectors such as ICT, light engineering, and agro-processing are expected to play a growing role in the country's export.

On the import side, Bangladesh primarily imports industrial machinery, raw cotton, petroleum products, food items, and capital goods to support its manufacturing and development sectors. China, India, and ASEAN countries are Bangladesh's major import partners, supplying essential raw materials and machinery critical to its export-driven economy.

Despite its success, Bangladesh's international trade faces several challenges including port congestion, customs inefficiencies, and inadequate transportation infrastructure. The country's reliance on a single sector, RMG, exposes its economy to global market volatility. Environmental compliance has become increasingly important as global buyers demand sustainable and eco-friendly production practices, particularly in the textile, leather, and agro-processing sectors.

The upcoming LDC graduation presents both challenges and opportunities. While the loss of preferential market access could increase tariffs for Bangladeshi exports, the transition also encourages policy reforms, technological upgrades, and trade diversification. Bangladesh's focus on achieving deeper integration with trade blocs such as ASEAN, African Union and Mercosur, leveraging the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and expanding its digital economy can help sustain its trade momentum.

Modern technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) provide transformative opportunities to address these challenges, enhance competitiveness, and align with global norms such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Bangladesh's customs processes often suffer from delays due to manual documentation and inspections. AI can address these issues by automating the processes, as demonstrated by Singapore's TradeNet system. TradeNet leverages AI to streamline electronic document submissions, classify goods, and flag high-risk shipments, enabling 90% of imports to clear customs within 10 minutes. In Bangladesh, implementing a similar AI-enabled system at Chattogram Port could transform trade efficiency. For example, AI could integrate with the existing The Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) world system, analyzing trade patterns to identify discrepancies in import-export declarations. This would reduce manual errors and expedite clearance times, significantly benefiting exporters and importers.

Bangladesh's RMG sector, which contributes over 82% of the country's export earnings, faces challenges such as delayed shipments and high logistics costs. AI can optimize supply chain efficiency, as seen in India's adoption of digital freight platforms like Rivigo that uses AI to optimize truck routes, reduce idle time, and improve delivery predictability, reducing logistics costs by up to 20%.

In Bangladesh, AI-powered logistics platforms can address bottlenecks such as port congestion and inefficient transportation networks. For instance, integrating AI into the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's (BIWTA) operations could optimize river transport, a crucial yet underutilized trade channel. AI could recommend the best routes based on real-time traffic and weather data, ensuring timely delivery of goods and reducing costs for exporters.

With increasing pressure from global buyers to adopt sustainable practices, Bangladesh must align its industries with environmental standards. Vietnam provides a relevant example, where AI tools are being used to monitor energy consumption and carbon emissions in manufacturing. For instance, the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association partnered with AI developers to create tools optimizing resource usage and reducing water waste in garment production. Vietnam's focus on circular economy principles has led to innovations in waste recycling and byproduct utilization. Another notable example from Vietnam is how textile factories have implemented AI-based sorting systems to identify reusable materials, turning what was once waste into valuable inputs for other industries. For example, fabric scraps are now processed into insulation materials or padding for furniture, creating additional revenue streams while reducing landfill waste.

Bangladesh's RMG sector can replicate this success. Factories participating in the Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT) initiative could adopt AI solutions to monitor dyeing and finishing processes, reducing water and chemical usage. Additionally, AI-powered predictive maintenance tools can help identify inefficiencies in production lines, further minimizing environmental impact and ensuring compliance with sustainability standards set by trading partners like the EU.

Similarly, the leather industry, a major export sector, can leverage AI to mitigate its environmental impact, especially in the tannery sector. This can be achieved by implementing effluent monitoring systems that detect harmful chemicals and recommend pollution-reducing adjustments. By leveraging predictive maintenance tools, industries can optimize energy-intensive machinery, significantly lowering operational costs and carbon footprints. Additionally, AI can revolutionize the design of sustainable leather products, such as vegetable-tanned leather, catering to the growing demand for eco-friendly fashion.

Despite its landlocked geography and limited resources, Rwanda has demonstrated the transformative power of AI in trade facilitation. By implementing an AI-powered Electronic Single Window, the country has slashed customs clearance times from 11 days to less than 48 hours, aligning with WTO TFA. Bangladesh can learn from this success story by deploying AI-powered chatbots to provide real-time information to traders and strengthen risk management frameworks.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are vital to Bangladesh's economy, yet they often struggle to access international markets due to limited resources and complex procedures. Bangladesh's SMEs can benefit similarly through AI-integrated e-commerce platforms that can personalize product recommendations and improve supply chain logistics for small sellers. AI could also enable SMEs to access trade finance by analyzing alternative credit data, ensuring underserved entrepreneurs secure funding to expand their businesses.

Artificial intelligence has already marked its footprint by transforming industries across Bangladesh. For example, Unilever, by using Fordo, a precision marketing AI product, has achieved new heights in their marketing campaigns. Similarly, BAT has elevated its brand campaign execution accuracy by leveraging Shobdo, a speech recognition AI product. In the fintech sector, IDLC Finance has revolutionized its operations by utilizing Dharapat, a FinTech AI product, to process CIB reports in a record-breaking time of under 30 minutes. Moreover, bKash has experienced remarkable growth and productivity gains by implementing Nimonton and Biponon, two retail AI products.

These are just a few examples of how AI is reshaping the business landscape in Bangladesh. As AI continues to advance, we can expect to witness even more innovative applications that will drive growth and development across various sectors.

While AI holds immense promise for Bangladesh's trade sector, challenges such as limited infrastructure and skill gaps persist. Policymakers must develop a clear and comprehensive strategy for AI and disruptive technology adoption, including capacity building initiatives, public-private partnerships, and implementation frameworks. A particular emphasis should be placed on AI literacy programs for customs officials, logistics professionals, and SMEs. Collaborations with international organizations such as the World Bank or UNCTAD could provide essential technical assistance and funding for AI-driven trade facilitation projects.

Artificial Intelligence is not merely a technological upgrade but a transformative force capable of addressing key challenges in Bangladesh's international trade. From streamlining customs procedures to optimizing supply chains and promoting sustainability, AI offers solutions that are critical for the country's economic growth and global competitiveness. With government and private stakeholders working collaboratively, the integration of AI into trade processes will not only simplify operations but also solidify Bangladesh's position as a major trade hub in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

*[Prepared by the Research and Planning Wing, FBCCI]*



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