

গ্রিন টেক্সটাইল এক্সপোর উদ্বোধনীতে চীনা রাষ্ট্রদূত বাংলাদেশে ৫৮০ কোটি ডলার বিনিয়োগের পরিকল্পনা চীনের

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

চীন টানা ১৫ বছর ধরে বাংলাদেশের বৃহত্তম বাণিজ্য অংশীদার হিসেবে রয়েছে। দুই দেশের মধ্যে দ্বিপাক্ষীয় বাণিজ্যের পরিমাণ ২ হাজার ৪০০ কোটি ডলার ছাড়িয়েছে। ২০২৪ সালের আগস্ট থেকে ২০টিরও বেশি চীনা উদ্যোগ বাংলাদেশী অংশীদারদের সঙ্গে বিনিয়োগ চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করেছে। এসব চুক্তির মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশে প্রায় ৫৮০ কোটি ডলার বিনিয়োগের পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে বলে জানিয়েছেন ঢাকায় নিযুক্ত চীনা রাষ্ট্রদূত ইয়াও ওয়েন। তিন দিনব্যাপী 'বাংলাদেশ-চায়না গ্রিন টেক্সটাইল এক্সপো (বিসিজিটিএক্স) ২০২৫' শীর্ষক এক প্রদর্শনীর উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথির বক্তব্যে তিনি এ কথা বলেন। রাজধানীর আন্তর্জাতিক কনভেনশন সিটি বসুন্ধরায় (আইসিসিবি) যৌথভাবে এ প্রদর্শনীর আয়োজন করেছে সেভর ইন্টারন্যাশনাল লিমিটেড ও চায়নিজ এন্টারপ্রাইজেস অ্যাসোসিয়েশন ইন বাংলাদেশ (সিইএবি)। সহযোগী অংশীদার হিসেবে রয়েছে বাংলাদেশ গার্মেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন (বিজিএমইএ) ও সাংহাই ক্লাইমেট উইক।

উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথির বক্তব্যে ইয়াও ওয়েন বলেন, 'চীন বাংলাদেশকে বস্ত্র শিল্পে সবুজ রূপান্তরকে উৎসাহিত করতে প্রস্তুত রয়েছে। দুই দেশ যৌথভাবে একটি টেকসই সবুজ শিল্পশৃঙ্খল গড়ে তোলার জন্য বস্ত্র যন্ত্রপাতি, ডিজিটাল মুদ্রণ ও বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত উৎপাদনের (স্মার্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারিং) ক্ষেত্রে

সহযোগিতা বাড়ানোর সুযোগ খুঁজছে।' চীন বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে তার এ অংশীদারত্বকে অত্যন্ত মূল্যবান মনে করে উল্লেখ করে চীনা রাষ্ট্রদূত বলেন, 'চীন উন্মুক্ত মনোভাব নিয়ে বাজার সুবিধা সম্প্রসারণ করেছে। বাংলাদেশের শতভাগ গুরুযোগ্য পণ্যের ওপর গুরুমুক্ত সুবিধা দিয়েছে। এ নীতিটি ২০২৮ সাল পর্যন্ত বাড়ানো হয়েছে।' অনুষ্ঠানে বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন বাংলাদেশ গার্মেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের (বিজিএমইএ) সহসভাপতি (অর্থ) মিজানুর রহমান, বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস করপোরেশনের (বিটিএমসি) চেয়ারম্যান ব্রিগেডিয়ার জেনারেল এসএম জাহিদ হাসান, বাংলাদেশ-চীন চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রির (বিসিসিসিআই) সভাপতি মো. খোরশেদ আলম, বাংলাদেশে চাইনিজ এন্টারপ্রাইজেস অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের (সিইএবি) সভাপতি হান কুন, সাংহাই ক্লাইমেট উইক এক্সিকিউটিভ কমিটির নির্বাহী মহাসচিব গুয়ান জিয়ে, চীনের জিয়াংনান বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক ফু জিয়াজিয়া, সিইএবি টেক্সটাইল অ্যান্ড গার্মেন্ট শাখার প্রেসিডেন্ট গা বেনইউ (মাইক গা) এবং সেভর ইন্টারন্যাশনালের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক মো. ফয়জুল আলম। আয়োজকরা জানান, প্রদর্শনীতে মোট ৮০টি স্টল স্থাপন করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া থাকছে পরিবেশবান্ধব ও পুনর্ব্যবহারযোগ্য টেক্সটাইল প্রযুক্তি প্রদর্শন, সেমিনার, বিনিয়োগ ও উচ্চপর্যায়ের নেটওয়ার্কিং ইভেন্ট। প্রদর্শনীটি ২৫ অক্টোবর পর্যন্ত প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০টা থেকে সন্ধ্যা ৭টা পর্যন্ত দর্শনার্থীদের জন্য উন্মুক্ত থাকবে।



24 OCT 2025

Easing problems facing shrimp and fish export

Bangladesh's once-thriving shrimp- and frozen fish-export sector is now gasping for survival. Already reeling from an unfavourable international market, the industry has been pushed deeper into crisis by the government's prolonged inaction. Exporters are caught in a severe liquidity trap, unable to sustain overseas trade because of the government's failure to release long-overdue cash incentives --- funds that serve as lifelines for an industry under stress.

According to a report carried in The Financial Express, which is based on the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association's (BFFEA's) claim, arrears amounting to Tk 1.74 billion remain stuck with the authorities. This non-disbursement has crippled exporters' operational capacity, jeopardising their ability to honour export commitments and retain a foothold in key markets. In a recent letter to the government, the BFFEA lamented that the arrears have been pending with Bangladesh Bank since September 2025. The association made it clear that the export incentive is not a mere "bonus" but a policy tool essential for sustaining foreign exchange earnings and protecting livelihoods of coastal communities. The shrimp and fish export industry, a vital contributor to the economy for over five decades, directly and indirectly employs thousands -- many of them

impoverished farmers from vulnerable coastal belts. Industry insiders say disbursement of incentives has remained suspended for nearly a year owing to unresolved audit objections. Although those objections were reportedly cleared by September 2024, no subsequent payments have been made. This bureaucratic inertia has left exporters in limbo, their working capital depleted and their confidence in policy support severely eroded. Many warn that further delay could inflict lasting damage to the sector, which is

Releasing the outstanding cash assistance would provide at least a temporary reprieve. While it may not reverse the long-term export slump, timely disbursement could restore liquidity and enable exporters to meet commitments

already struggling to stay afloat in a turbulent global market. Shrimp exports have been on a steady decline for years, with slide steepening in recent times. Demand for Bangladesh's premium black tiger shrimp has fallen sharply in traditional markets such as the European Union and the United States, which together absorb around 80 per cent of the country's shipments. Persistent recessionary pressures in the West, coupled with aggressive pricing from lower-cost producers in Southeast Asia and Latin America, have eroded Bangladesh's competitiveness. Once the country's major foreign exchange earner after garments and jute, the shrimp sector is now a shadow of its former self. Despite its renowned quality and distinct flavour, Bangladeshi shrimp is losing ground amid global oversupply and buyers' price sensitivity. Export earnings from shrimp and frozen fish fell by 4.26 per cent in the last fiscal year --- a reflection of the mounting challenges and policy neglect confronting the industry. At this critical juncture, releasing the outstanding cash assistance would provide at least a temporary reprieve. While it may not reverse the long-term export slump, timely disbursement could restore liquidity and enable exporters to meet commitments, and support investment in quality and compliance. The government must act with urgency and clarity. Failure to do so risks not just the collapse of a traditional export pillar but also the livelihoods of thousands who depend on it.

Export 2.0: The untapped potential of Bangladesh's agro-processing

Shadique Mahbub Islam
Journalist



ANALYSIS

Worth over \$4 trillion, unlocking even a fraction of the global agro-processing market would dramatically diversify our export basket. Yet the absence of strong policy support, investment in cold chains and quality upgrades remain as barriers

Stuck with low-value products

Agro-processing already contributes about \$1.2 billion to Bangladesh's export earnings. Yet over 75% of agricultural output still leaves farms unprocessed; exporters often ship frozen vegetables, raw spices, dry foods, and juices in bulk without building globally recognisable brands.

One of the main reasons behind this is capacity. According to industry insiders, only 12% of processors meet international export standards like ISO or ICCHAP. A large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) lack access to modern machinery, proper packaging, cold chain facilities, or internationally accredited testing and certification systems.

In comparison, countries like Vietnam have built strong agro-industrial ecosystems, allowing them to export branded, high-value food products worth \$62 billion in 2024. Bangladesh's export is less than 2% of that.

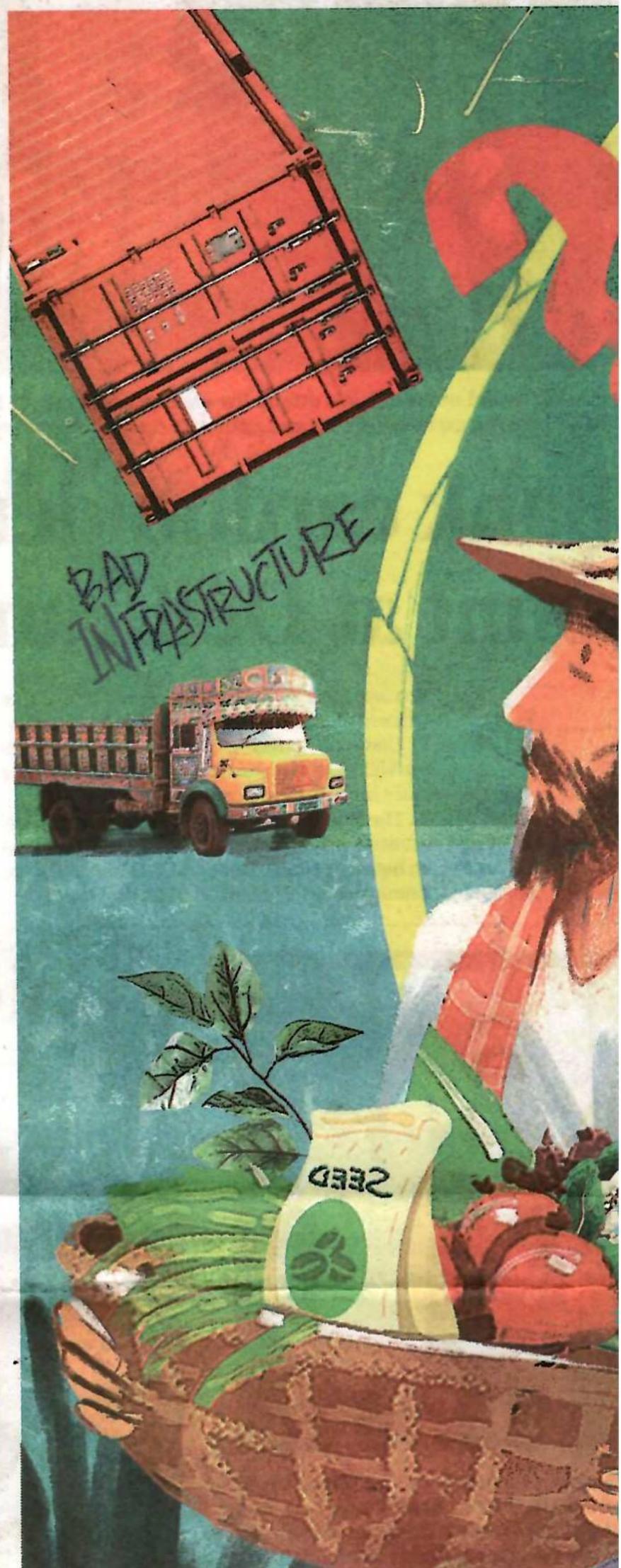
Agricultural economist Jahangir Alam says, "We are currently stuck at exporting raw produce or semi-processed products. If we can increase processing, the value will naturally rise."

He stresses that industrial capacity is a precondition for upgrading exports.

"The development of the processing industry should not rely solely on private enterprise. The private sector is often reluctant to move forward without adequate support. Industries need to be developed to process these goods," Alam adds.

Meeting global sanitary and phytosanitary standards

The agro-processing sector's export ambition collides with one of its biggest hurdles: meeting international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards.



BANGLADESH'S AGRO-PROCESSING EXPORT SECTOR

CATEGORY	IN NUMBERS
Global agro-processing market value	\$4 trillion
Bangladesh's current agro-processing export earnings	\$1.2 billion
Share of agricultural output unprocessed	75%
Exporters meeting international standards	12%
Bangladesh's agricultural export earnings (FY25)	\$989 million
Agro-processed exports (subset)	\$341.7 million
Top export markets (diaspora-focused)	13 countries
Share of diaspora-driven markets	>75% of processed food exports

The untapped potential of Bangladesh's agro-processing sector

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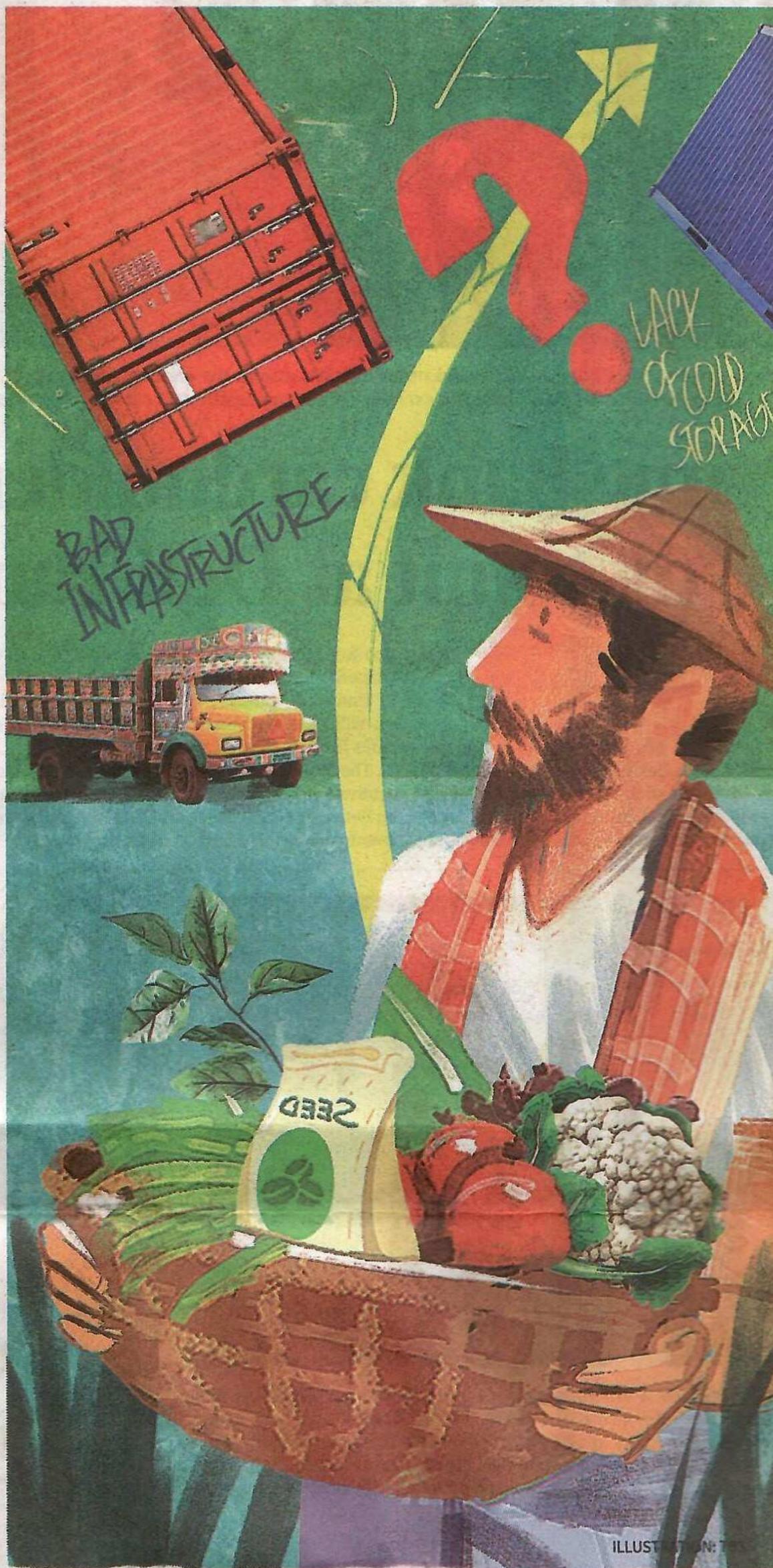
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The RMG sector's export-marketing strategies contrast sharply with those of agro-processing, a disparity which requires urgent attention. Authorities are now revamping engagement tools to ensure continuous stakeholder collaboration beyond expos, aiming for deeper networking. Success hinges on unified support from all involved parties.

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MD AL AMIN RUMI
AGM (BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT)
CEMS BANGLADESH

Importing destinations such as the EU, Japan and the US have strict protocols around pesticide residue, microbial contamination, traceability, and hygiene. Bangladesh lacks internationally recognised testing laboratories, forcing exporters to rely on facilities in India or Thailand, which increases costs and delays shipments.

The Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association has long argued that BSTI certificates are not recognised abroad. A national testing lab is under development but remains far from meeting exporters' needs.

Farm-level practices are another weak link. Inappropriate use of chemicals, weak traceability and poor post-harvest handling frequently result in rejected consignments. The Bangladesh Food Safety Authority has introduced guidelines, but compliance remains patchy among SMEs and smallholders.

Jahangir Alam points out that the problem is not just technical but systemic, "It is essential that the processed product is hygienic, germ-free and produced under excellent conditions. Producing this high-quality, finely processed product must be our goal."

Diaspora markets vs mainstream global markets

For the past three decades, Bangladesh's agro-processing exports have depended on its overseas diaspora. More than 75% of processed food exports are concentrated in just 13 countries – mainly the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the UK, the US, Malaysia, and Singapore. These markets are sustained by Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani consumers who buy puffed rice, chanachur, spices, pickles, parathas, and juices from small ethnic stores.

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Export 2.0: The untapped potential

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

But exporters have struggled to reach mainstream supermarket shelves where branding, quality assurance and packaging standards are non-negotiable.

"Currently, the products and processed foods we export primarily go to the diaspora markets abroad," Alam explains. "However, if we improve our quality, everyone will buy them, including foreign nationals in those countries. Therefore, quality is paramount."

Kamruzzaman Kamal, director (marketing) of PRAN-RFL Group, says "When we were primarily catering to the ethnic market, we supplied basic products. However, as we move towards the mainstream global market and focus on major international supermarket chains, we are required to develop a premium-quality product range, and we are indeed doing so."

"The reason we couldn't achieve this sooner is essentially because the market needed time to mature. If we introduce very high-end products right from the start, it can be difficult to achieve market penetration. The majority of our exports are still bought by the diaspora community — our non-resident citizens — who are the primary consumers," he adds.

Cold chain, logistics and government support

Bangladesh's perishable agro-export suffers heavily from inadequate cold chain infrastructure and fragmented logistics. Perishable vegetables, dairy and meat products face spoilage before reaching ports. There is little coordination between farmers, processors and logistics providers.

Government incentives exist on paper: reduced corporate tax for fruit and vegetable processing until 2030, duty exemptions on capital machinery, and a 10% export subsidy for halal meat. But in practice, the absence of coordinated infrastructure investment is a bottleneck.

According to recent investment promotion data, agro-export earnings rose by 9.3% in the first half of FY25, reaching \$595.5 million. Yet experts argue that increasing exports will require integrated investment in cold chains, modern packaging, airport scanner facilities, and logistics coordination.

Alam emphasises, "While the government has policies in place, implementation is crucial. The government must provide robust support and assistance to the private sector. Currently, this support is often insufficient."

Amin Rumi, AGM-Business Development, CEMS Bangladesh, said, "The RMG sector's export-marketing strategies contrast sharply with those of agro-processing, a disparity which requires urgent attention. Authorities are now revamping engagement tools to ensure continuous stakeholder collaboration beyond expos, aiming for deeper networking. Success hinges on unified support from all involved parties."

"This shift seeks to bridge long-standing gaps and strengthen export readiness across industries, moving past one-off events towards sustained growth. Collective effort remains vital for meaningful progress," he added.

A billion-dollar sector that could triple in size

The numbers paint a clear picture. Agro-processed exports currently stand at around \$341.7 million annually, part of the broader \$989 million in agricultural export earnings. That figure has grown slowly, from \$964 million in FY24, despite huge potential.

Global agro-processing is projected to reach \$4.2 trillion by 2027. If Bangladesh could raise its market share from 0.03% to even 0.24%, as projected in sector studies, exports could cross the \$3 billion mark.

The transformation of the RMG industry offers useful lessons. In the early 1980s, Bangladesh exported garments mainly to diaspora retailers. With policy support, training, infrastructure, and trade access, the country moved up the value chain to become the world's second-largest RMG exporter.

Experts argue that agro-processing could follow a similar trajectory — if the government and private sector act together. "Without processing industries, we are severely limited. The current slow pace needs a significant boost," says Jahangir Alam.

Key exporters such as PRAN-RFL Group, Bombay Sweets and Company Limited and Square Food & Beverage Ltd have already built regional footprints in the Middle East and South Asia. But their exports remain overwhelmingly diaspora-focused, with little penetration in Western retail chains.

To triple agro exports by 2030, Bangladesh will need a clear policy and investment roadmap. Experts call for establishing common facilitation centres for SMEs, launching accredited national food testing labs, and integrating export logistics within economic zones.

Investments in branding and marketing are equally important. Competing countries like Vietnam

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Kamal thinks the private sector has to step up to increase agro-processing export.

"There is one key limitation in Bangladesh that we constantly discuss: the sourcing of raw materials. The prerequisite for safe food is a safe ingredient. This is why we always highlight the gap in implementing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in Bangladesh. If GAP can be properly ensured, we will be able to perform testing domestically. Currently, we are forced to get our products tested, at the very least, from Singapore or India, which is both time-consuming and expensive," he explains.

At a recent roundtable on agro-processing export, Md Al

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Investments in branding and marketing are equally important. Competing countries like Vietnam and Thailand offer coordinated government promotion of food brands through trade fairs and export promotion missions.

Bangladesh's duty-free access to 52 markets — including the EU and GCC — provides a valuable head start. But to capitalise on this advantage, the country must deliver high-quality, traceable and certified products.

The next phase of growth will depend on how quickly the country can shift from exporting raw commodities to exporting trusted brands. As Jahangir Alam sums it up, if we can increase processing, the value will naturally rise. "This increased value will undoubtedly benefit everyone involved."

