The Daily Star

Exporters seek wider use of UK trade scheme

EPB, British High Commission discuss boosting awareness of DCTS benefits

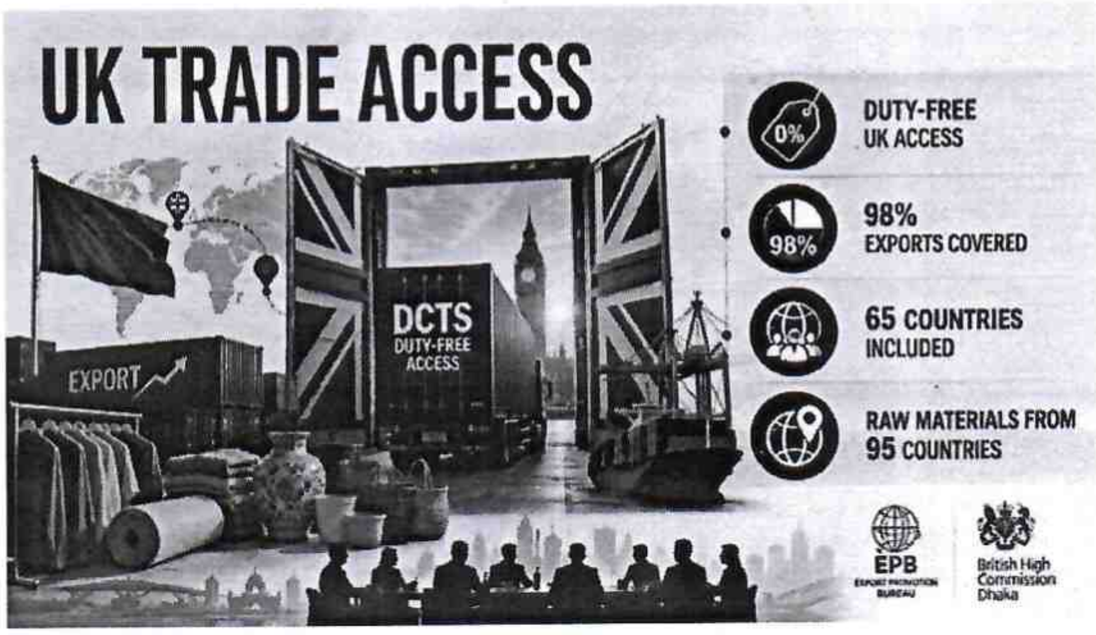
Star Business Report

Bangladeshi exporters have called for fully utilising the British government's duty-free market access scheme for developing countries, known as the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS).

The call came at a roundtable on the scheme jointly organised by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the British High Commission at the bureau's office in Dhaka today, according to an EPB statement.

The event brought together representatives from leading export associations, chambers and trade bodies to discuss strategies for enhancing the utilisation of DCTS preferences, addressing market access challenges and preparing Bangladeshi exporters for the country's graduation from LDC status.

The discussion focused on raising awareness and increasing utilisation of the DCTS, barriers to accessing the UK market, and lessons from the ready-made garment (RMG) sector for diversifying exports across other promising industries.



Participants welcomed the initiative and called for continued collaboration among the government of Bangladesh, the British High Commission and the private sector to maximise the benefits of the DCTS and strengthen Bangladesh's competitiveness in the UK market after LDC graduation, the press release said.

To support this objective, the EPB and the British High Commission agreed to undertake a series of awareness and capacity-building initiatives in the coming months.

In her keynote paper, Ellie Parker, regional trade for development adviser for South Asia, Central Asia and South Caucasus at the British High Commission, highlighted the implications of Bangladesh's LDC graduation, recent improvements under the DCTS, and opportunities available to Bangladeshi exporters.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice chairman and chief executive (additional secretary) of the EPB, informed participants that a comprehensive DCTS booklet would be published to provide exporters with practical information and guidance on eligibility requirements, rules of origin, documentation procedures and preference utilisation.

He also said a series of sensitisation workshops would be organised in Dhaka and Chattogram in collaboration with the British High Commission and relevant sector associations and chambers to strengthen exporters' understanding of the scheme and improve utilisation rates.

Both organisations will also undertake broader information dissemination activities through business associations and digital platforms to reach exporters across the country.

The roundtable was attended by the presidents of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCMEA), Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) and Banglacraft.

Representatives of major trade and industry bodies, including the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), also took part in the discussion.

How the DCTS works

Following Brexit, the British government introduced the DCTS to provide duty-free market access to 65 least developed and developing countries, including Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is due to graduate from LDC status in 2026. Changes made under the DCTS mean the country will retain duty-free access for 98 percent of its exports, including ready-made garments. The scheme is more generous than the European Union (EU) arrangement under which the UK previously operated.

The DCTS is expected to help developing countries integrate more deeply into the global economy, create stronger trade and investment partnerships, and strengthen supply chains.

The scheme also makes it easier for exporters to use components sourced from other countries without losing duty-free status.

Under the DCTS, Bangladesh can participate in global value chains involving raw materials from 95 countries, and export finished products to the UK duty-free, provided specified requirements are met.

The scheme promotes free and fair trade, human rights and good governance. Continued access to DCTS preferences is contingent on respect for human and labour rights and compliance with relevant international conventions, including those relating to civil and political rights, anti-corruption, climate change and environmental protection.

The Daily Star
25 JUN 2026

SME Foundation seeks preferential tax regime for small businesses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The SME Foundation has called for a unified tax regime for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), saying that several government policies providing tax exemptions and incentives for the sector are not being adequately implemented.

This call came at a discussion on proposed budgetary measures for FY27 organised by the SME Foundation with the support of the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) in Dhaka.

Khandakar Abdul Muktadir, minister for commerce, industries, textiles and jute, said that the government is prioritising the revitalisation of the SME sector to boost employment and accelerate economic growth.

To achieve this, the government aims to reduce the time required for business processes -- from starting a business to importing or exporting products -- from 355 days to just 14 days, while ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply to business establishments, he said.

In a presentation, Mohammad Jahangir Hossain, general manager of SME Foundation, said various government policies such as the National Industrial Policy 2022, National SME Policy 2026 (draft), National Tariff Policy 2023, and Export Policy 2024–2027 mention tax incentives to promote SMEs sector.

However, in practice, these policy benefits are not being properly implemented by the National Board of Revenue (NBR). Therefore, it is essential to ensure the effective provision of tax and duty benefits in line with these policies, he said.

He urged the NBR to consolidate tax incentives for SMEs mentioned in the policies along with the existing benefits under an integrated framework titled 'Preferential Tax Regime for MSMEs' under a rule.

"This would enable genuine small entrepreneurs to operate under a transparent, simple and long-term tax regime," he said.

To support the development of the MSME sector, the foundation proposed increasing the Tk 2,000 crore allocation earmarked for fiscal year 2026-27 under a refinance scheme through which concessional loans are disbursed by three government agencies, including the SME Foundation.

READ MORE ON B2

SME Foundation

FROM PAGE B1

As part of the government's "One Village, One Product" initiative, an initial allocation of Tk 300 crore has been proposed for the development of the creative economy sector in fiscal year 2026-27.

The SME Foundation recommended that at least Tk 100 crore from this allocation be earmarked for the foundation.

It also suggested allocating at least Tk 5,000 crore specifically for the foundation.

The Daily Star
25 JUN 2026

Weaving a new future with jute

MD MOHIUDDIN RUBEL

As global fashion turns away from fossil-fuel-based fibres, Bangladesh has a rare chance to stitch its past and future together through jute. That opportunity will not last forever.

For decades, jute was far more than just another crop. It was the backbone of export earnings and a powerful emblem of national pride. Revenue from jute helped finance roads, ports, and basic infrastructure, while the crop shaped rural livelihoods across large parts of the country. For farmers, traders, and mill workers, jute was not just a commodity; it was a lifeline.

Then, synthetic fibres and plastics swept through global trade. Cheaper, mass-produced materials took over packaging, textiles, and everyday products. Step by step, jute was pushed to the margins of policy, investment, and even the national imagination. Mills closed, fields shifted to other crops, and the "golden fibre" faded from the centre of Bangladesh's development story.

Today, the global mood is changing again. Fashion brands are under increasing pressure from regulators, investors, and climate-conscious consumers to clean up their supply chains. The EU Green Deal and new due-diligence rules are already forcing companies to rethink what their clothes are made of, how fibres are sourced, and what happens to products at the end of their life. In this shifting landscape, materials that are natural, traceable, and biodegradable are gaining new importance.

This is where jute returns to the conversation. Long known for sacks, ropes, and carpets, jute now has the potential to move into higher-value segments such as apparel, accessories, home textiles, and innovative packaging. Instead of relying almost entirely on imported cotton and synthetic fibres, Bangladesh can link its world-class ready-made garment (RMG) industry with a regenerative raw material grown in its own soil.

Such a shift would do more than create a new product line. It could redefine Bangladesh's brand in the global fashion market -- from a low-cost manufacturing hub to a leader in sustainable, nature-based textiles. Garments blended with jute, jute-based denim alternatives, and stylish jute-rich fabrics could appeal to brands looking for authentic, climate-friendly stories to share with their customers.

The benefits at home would be wide-ranging. Stronger demand for jute could improve farm incomes, support rural employment, and encourage more resilient cropping systems. Because jute grows well in Bangladesh's climate and requires relatively few chemical inputs, it fits naturally into a more sustainable agricultural model. Linking farmers, spinners, weavers, designers, and exporters around a modern jute value chain could spread opportunity across both rural and urban areas.

Of course, this transformation is not automatic. Jute fibre needs innovation in processing, blending, and finishing to meet the comfort, softness, and performance standards of infrastructure, while the crop shaped rural livelihoods across large parts of the country. For farmers, traders, and mill workers, jute was not just a commodity; it was a lifeline.

Then, synthetic fibres and plastics swept through global trade. Cheaper, mass-produced materials took over packaging, textiles, and everyday products. Step by step, jute was pushed to the margins of policy, investment, and even the national imagination. Mills closed, fields shifted to other crops, and the "golden fibre" faded from the centre of Bangladesh's development story.

Today, the global mood is changing again. Fashion brands are under increasing pressure from regulators, investors, and climate-conscious consumers to clean up their supply chains. The EU Green Deal and new due-diligence rules are already forcing companies to rethink what their clothes are made of, how fibres are sourced, and what happens to products at the end of their life. In this shifting landscape, materials that are natural, traceable, and biodegradable are gaining new importance.

This is where jute returns to the conversation. Long known for sacks, ropes, and carpets, jute now has the potential to move into higher-value segments such as apparel, accessories, home textiles, and innovative packaging. Instead of relying almost entirely on imported cotton and synthetic fibres, Bangladesh can link its world-class ready-made garment (RMG) industry with a regenerative raw material grown in its own soil.

Such a shift would do more than create a new product line. It could redefine Bangladesh's brand in the global fashion market -- from a low-cost manufacturing hub to a leader in sustainable, nature-based textiles. Garments blended with jute, jute-based denim alternatives, and stylish jute-rich fabrics could appeal to brands looking for authentic, climate-friendly stories to share with their customers.

The benefits at home would be wide-ranging. Stronger demand for jute could improve farm incomes, support rural employment, and encourage more resilient cropping systems. Because jute grows well in Bangladesh's climate and requires relatively few chemical inputs, it fits naturally into a more sustainable agricultural model. Linking farmers, spinners, weavers, designers, and exporters around a modern jute value chain could spread opportunity across both rural and urban areas.

Of course, this transformation is not automatic. Jute fibre needs innovation in processing, blending, and finishing to meet the comfort, softness, and performance standards of global fashion. Designers and product developers must experiment with new textures, colours, and applications. Investors and policymakers will have to support research, technology upgrades, and market development so that jute textiles can compete at scale.

Yet the direction of travel is clear. As the world searches for credible alternatives to fossil-fuel-based fibres, Bangladesh holds a natural advantage that few countries can match. By reconnecting its RMG sector with its historic golden fibre, the country can revive a proud legacy while opening a new chapter of sustainable growth.

The choice now is whether to treat jute as a relic of the past or embrace it as a strategic material for the future. If Bangladesh chooses the second path, jute can once again become a symbol of creativity, resilience, and national confidence -- this time woven into the very fabric of global fashion. The moment to act is now.

The author is a former director of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

The Daily Star

25 JUN 2026

Big duty cuts to power up API supply chain: pharma leaders

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh's pharmaceutical manufacturers are hoping for a more stable supply of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and improved production efficiency under the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026-27, which expands duty-free access to a wide range of raw materials used in medicine production.

Industry leaders say the inclusion of 77 raw materials under new or expanded duty concessions will help reduce procurement uncertainties, support the production of new molecules and strengthen local manufacturing capacity.

Presenting the budget proposals on June 11, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the incentives are designed to support local API production, lower dependence on imported finished products and enhance the competitiveness of Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector.

To further support medicine production in high-cost therapeutic segments, the minister proposed adding nine new raw materials used in cancer drug manufacturing to the existing concessionary facility, with import duty and VAT on these items reduced to zero.

materials under duty exemptions would help manufacturers secure a more reliable supply chain for newly introduced

export potential, saying that reducing production costs through duty support could help Bangladeshi manufacturers

"Whenever a company starts producing a new API, it informs the authorities and the required raw materials are added to raw materials under new or expanded duty concessions will help reduce procurement uncertainties, support the production of new molecules and strengthen local manufacturing capacity.

Presenting the budget proposals on June 11, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the incentives are designed to support local API production, lower dependence on imported finished products and enhance the competitiveness of Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector.

To further support medicine production in high-cost therapeutic segments, the minister proposed adding nine new raw materials used in cancer drug manufacturing to the existing concessionary facility, with import duty and VAT on these items reduced to zero.

Another 17 pharmaceutical raw materials have also been added to the existing concessionary list under the proposals, with import duty on these items reduced to zero, specifically to sustain the country's pharmaceutical export growth in international markets.

Industry insiders say the measure will help companies maintain uninterrupted production and improve overall cost management.

The budget further proposes reducing the existing 25 percent import duty on Biological Safety Cabinets to 1 percent, and the duty on Sandwich Panel Rooms from the existing 5 percent to 1 percent -- both critical components of modern pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities.

Zahangir Alam, chief financial officer of Square Pharmaceuticals, said the inclusion of additional APIs and raw materials under duty exemptions would help manufacturers secure a more reliable supply chain for newly introduced molecules.

» More stable raw materials supply expected

» Production cost efficiency will improve

» Availability of cancer medicines will increase

HOWEVER Export barriers remain · Cheaper medicines unlikely in short term

"Many new molecules are not specifically covered under the existing duty structure, which creates complications for manufacturers. Updating the list and extending duty benefits is a positive move," he said.

According to Alam, the measures will help pharmaceutical companies maintain a stable supply of inputs, reduce procurement uncertainties and improve cost efficiency across production operations.

He noted that Bangladesh's healthcare sector has expanded significantly over the years, increasing demand for a wider range of medicines and therapeutic products. Ensuring timely access to raw materials, he said, has become increasingly important for sustaining growth.

Alam also highlighted the industry's export potential, saying that reducing production costs through duty support could help Bangladeshi manufacturers compete more effectively in international markets.

However, he noted that regulatory requirements and market-entry costs continue to pose challenges for exporters.

"Export growth requires long-term investment. Additional policy support could help the industry expand its global footprint more rapidly," he added.

According to him, the duty benefits are expected to improve the availability of medicines for patients suffering from chronic illnesses, particularly cancer and kidney diseases.

Abdul Muktadir, chairman and managing director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals Ltd and president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), said the inclusion of additional raw materials reflects the industry's evolving manufacturing needs.

"Whenever a company starts producing a new API, it informs the authorities and the required raw materials are added to the duty-free list," he said.

According to him, the addition of 51 API raw materials and 17 other essential inputs will support manufacturers as they continue to develop new medicines and expand local production.

Md Abu Zafor Sadek, pharmacist and deputy general manager of UniMed UniHealth Pharmaceuticals, said the duty relief measures would help ease pressure from rising input costs and strengthen the availability of medicines used to treat cancer and other chronic diseases.

"These measures will help ease some cost pressures, but medicine prices are influenced by a range of factors beyond raw material costs," Sadek said.

However, he said, despite these positive steps, a significant reduction in the prices of medicines in general may remain challenging in the short term.

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS
THURSDAY • 25 JUNE 2026

Bangladesh seeks greater use of UK trade preferences ahead of LDC graduation

Bangladesh and the United Kingdom (UK) have agreed to strengthen awareness and capacity-building efforts to help local exporters make greater use of the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), as the country prepares for its graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

The commitment came at a round-table discussion jointly organised by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the British High Commission in the city on Wednesday, bringing together representatives of leading export associations, chambers and trade bodies.

The discussion focused on strategies to enhance the utilisation of DCTS preferences, address market access challenges and prepare Bangladeshi exporters for the changing trade landscape following LDC graduation.

The event was inaugurated by EPB Vice Chairman and Chief Executive (Additional Secretary) Mohammad Hasan Arif, while British Deputy High Commissioner James Goldman delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the UK government.

Ellie Parker, regional trade for development adviser for South Asia, Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the British High Commission, presented the key features of the DCTS, highlighting opportunities for Bangladeshi exporters, recent improvements to the scheme and possible areas of cooperation to improve its utilisation.

Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that exporters can fully benefit from the preferential market access offered under the DCTS and discussed ways to overcome existing barriers in the UK market.

The EPB announced that it will publish a comprehensive DCTS booklet containing practical guidance on eligibility requirements, rules of origin, documentation procedures and the effective use of trade preferences.

A series of awareness and sensitisation workshops will also be organised in Dhaka and Chattogram in collaboration with the British High Commission and relevant industry associations to improve exporters' understanding of the scheme.

The event was attended by representatives of major business organisations, including BGMEA, BKMEA, FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI, BCMEA, BPGMEA, BAPA, BAPI and other sectoral associations.

Participants welcomed the initiative and emphasised continued collaboration among the Bangladesh government, the British High Commission and the private sector to maximise DCTS benefits, diversify exports and enhance Bangladesh's competitiveness in the UK market after LDC graduation.

The Financial Express
25 JUN 2026

BD to seek diplomatic support for delay in LDC graduation

Govt to brief foreign missions on its case early next month

FHM HUMAYAN KABIR

The government will begin lobbying foreign diplomats in Dhaka next month to build support for its request to defer Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by three years, as the issue moves towards consideration at the UNGA.

"We will sit with all the foreign missions in Bangladesh in the first week of July. We will explain Bangladesh's reasons for seeking an additional three years before graduating from LDC status," a senior Economic Relations Division (ERD) official said on Wednesday.

As Bangladesh's request for a deferral will ultimately require approval through the UN system and endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), securing broad international support is considered crucial, he added.

Officials said Bangladesh's fate regarding the proposed deferment is likely to be decided at the UNGA session in September this year.

Although Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate to developing-country status in November 2026, Dhaka has sought an additional three years to prepare for the transition amid a series of domestic and external challenges.

More than two months ago, Bangladesh formally requested the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP), the body responsible for reviewing graduation criteria, to grant an extension in light of emerging economic and geopolitical pressures, including global shocks, energy supply constraints, domestic political transition and other external uncertainties.

The UNCDP has since responded to Bangladesh's request, outlining a number of conditions linked to the proposed deferment.

The committee emphasised the importance of domestic reforms, including measures to stabilise the financial sector, strengthen domestic resource mobilisation through higher tax revenues, and prioritise expenditures that enhance resilience and support economic transformation.

According to ERD officials, policy recommendations on LDC graduation are first considered by the executive bodies of the UN system, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), before being forwarded to the UN General Assembly for final approval.

"Almost all foreign missions in Bangladesh represent UN member states. Therefore, we need to clearly explain the rationale behind our request for a graduation deferment," another ERD official said.

He noted that while an ECOSOC meeting is scheduled soon, Bangladesh's request may not be discussed immediately and could instead be taken up at a later meeting, possibly in late July.

"Once the matter is discussed at ECOSOC, we will have a clearer idea about the timeline for consideration of the graduation deferment request," the official said.

He added that although greater clarity on the process is expected after the ECOSOC discussions, the final decision will rest with the UNGA.

Bangladesh is not alone in seeking additional time. Nepal, another country scheduled for graduation in 2026, has also requested a three-year deferment.

"Since Nepal has submitted a similar request, the UN may adopt a common approach for both countries," the official said.

In a letter sent to the ERD Secretary on June 1, the UNCDP gave what officials described as a positive response to Bangladesh's request, although it did not specify any timeframe for a possible extension.

The committee stated: "Without significantly advancing on such reforms, it is difficult to see how an extension of the preparatory period requested by Bangladesh would contribute to a more sustainable graduation and a smooth transition. Hence, the extension should not be viewed as a pause or justification for delaying reforms."

The committee further advised that any extension should serve as a catalyst for accelerating reforms and implementing smooth transition measures, particularly those aimed at strengthening productive capacities, promoting economic diversification and preparing the private sector for graduation.

kabirhumayan10@gmail.com

The Business Standard
25 JUN 2026

EPB, British High Commission step up efforts to boost Bangladesh's use of UK trade preferences

Government officials, export associations, chambers and trade bodies discussed ways to improve utilisation of DCTS benefits, address market access barriers and strengthen Bangladesh's competitiveness in the UK market after LDC graduation

A roundtable discussion held at the EPB conference room today, where government officials, export associations, chambers and trade bodies discussed ways to improve utilisation of DCTS benefits, address market access barriers and strengthen Bangladesh's competitiveness in the UK market after LDC graduation. Photo: Courtesy

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the British High Commission in Dhaka have agreed to launch a series of awareness and capacity-building initiatives to help Bangladeshi exporters make greater use of the United Kingdom's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) and prepare for the country's graduation from least developed country (LDC) status.

The commitment came at a roundtable discussion held at the EPB conference room today (24 June), where government officials, export associations, chambers and trade bodies discussed ways to improve utilisation of DCTS benefits, address market access barriers and strengthen Bangladesh's competitiveness in the UK market after LDC graduation, according to a press release.

Discussions centred on how exporters can better leverage the UK's preferential market access scheme, the challenges and opportunities arising from Bangladesh's transition from LDC status, and lessons from the ready-made garment sector that could support export diversification into other promising industries.

The event was inaugurated by Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice chairman and chief executive (additional secretary) of the EPB, while James Goldman, deputy high commissioner of the British High Commission in Dhaka, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the UK government.

Ellie Parker, regional trade for development adviser for South Asia, Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the British High Commission, presented the keynote paper on the UK's DCTS.

She outlined the implications of Bangladesh's upcoming LDC graduation, recent enhancements to the scheme, opportunities available to Bangladeshi exporters and potential areas of collaboration to improve awareness and utilisation of the preferences.

As part of the initiative, the EPB announced plans to publish a comprehensive DCTS booklet to provide exporters with practical guidance on eligibility requirements, rules of origin, documentation procedures and preference utilisation.

The bureau also plans to organise a series of sensitisation workshops in Dhaka and Chattogram in partnership with the British High Commission, sector associations and business chambers to improve exporters' understanding of the scheme and increase utilisation rates.

In addition, both organisations will undertake broader information dissemination activities through business associations and digital platforms to reach exporters across the country.

The roundtable was attended by leaders of several export-oriented trade bodies, including the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BCMEA), Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) and Banglacraft.

Representatives from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Footwear, Leather Goods and Accessories Exporters Association (FLAXA), Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association, Bangladesh Chamber of Industry (BCI), Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association (BAPA), Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) and Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), among others, also participated in the discussion.

The Business Standard

25 JUN 2026

Is Bangladesh's $23b textile sector edging towards collapse?

TEXTILE – BANGLADESH

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's textile industry, a $23 billion pillar of the country's export economy, is on the verge of collapse under a succession of shocks that millers say could push the sector into the hands of Indian and Chinese rivals.

After years of energy shortages, soaring gas prices, high interest rates, generous allowable wastage rates, and a sharp cut in cash incentives, many textile mills are shutting down or operating below capacity. Industry leaders say this month's proposed national budget has delivered another big blow by removing the value-addition requirement on raw material imports against bank guarantees.

"Many textile mills will be closed now," said frustrated Mohd Khorshed Alam, a director at the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), referring to a government order this month that scrapped a rule requiring at least 30% local value-addition for goods made from imported yarn.

The rule, introduced in September 2025, had applied to exporters across the garment, leather, food processing, steel, plastics, and light engineering sectors. Its removal is the latest in a string of setbacks for an energy-intensive industry that employs millions and underpins the country's position as the world's second-largest apparel exporter.

BTMA President Showkat Aziz Russell said scrapping the local value-addition rule could worsen misuse of the bonded warehouse system, making it harder for domestic mills to retain production capacity.

"This decision will push us towards ruin. It is the final nail in our coffin," Russell said.

According to him, a textile mill needs to operate at around SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

DOMESTIC SALES

2017: **$12b** sales, **16cr** population

2025: **$8b** sales, over **17cr** population

Yarn import from India: **$2b**

Fabrics import from China: over **$10b**

GAS PRICE ESCALATION TIMELINE

Tk16 → Tk30 (Jan 2023) **→ Tk40** (new/expanding factories) **per unit**

CLOSE

234 textile factories closed since 2019

TBS Insights by IPDC FINANCE

Is Bangladesh's $23b textile sector edging towards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

95% capacity to remain profitable and sustainable. But ongoing gas and electricity shortages have reduced utilisation rates to just 30%, putting many mills under severe financial strain.

Industry leaders warn that the backward linkage industries developed over decades to support Bangladesh's RMG sector are gradually losing ground to imported yarn from India and fabrics from China. Consequently, the sector's local value addition has been eroding. It dropped to 61% in the January-March quarter, from over 64% in the preceding quarter and nearly 68% in the October-December quarter of FY23.

"If garment makers buy our fabrics, value addition would be over 70%," said Shahid Alam, a director of BTMA.

BTMA leaders also alleged discriminatory tax treatment, noting that readymade garment manufacturers pay a 12% corporate tax rate while textile mills are subject to a 27.5% rate.

Energy crisis, then gas price shocks

The sector's troubles began roughly five years ago with acute energy shortages that forced mills to shut for hours or days at a time, millers said.

Gas prices for industry then rose from Tk16 per unit to Tk30 in January 2023. The interim government subsequently raised gas tariffs further, to Tk40 per unit, for new factories and existing ones seeking to expand. Mill owners say they often cannot get gas even at that price, forcing them to switch to costlier diesel or furnace oil.

Around 150 textile factories have closed in the past five years due to the gas crisis alone, said Saleudh Zaman Khan, managing director of NZ Tex Group and a former BTMA vice president.

BTMA President Russell, at a post-budget press conference this week, said 234 textile factories have been closed since 2019, including five of his own.

"The situation is getting aggravated every day. We are going to a position from where we will never be able to come back," Khan said.

Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Shahjalal Islami Bank, said if the government wants to save the textile sector, it must first ensure an uninterrupted energy supply.

Interest rates and wastage rate for imported yarn

Interest rates jumped to 14-15% from mid-2024, pushing mills with term loans into financial distress, according to industry insiders and bankers. Many millers defaulted on bank loans, cutting off access to working capital needed to keep operations running.

"Factories with term loans are suffering the most due to interest rates of 12-14%. Many mills are also facing a shortage of working capital," Ahmed said.

Explaining the banks' reluctance to provide working capital, he said many mill owners had failed to settle payments against their letters of credit (LCs), prompting banks to tighten lending to those borrowers.

A separate policy shift in 2022 raised the allowable wastage rate used to calculate duty-free yarn imports for garment production to 32% from 16%. In effect, garment makers can import nearly a third more yarn than they need without paying duty, under what is known as the bonded warehouse facility. Spinners said the wastage rate should be a maximum of 12-14%.

Textile millers say that provision has allowed importers to bring in yarn, much of it from India, and sell the surplus in the domestic market, undercutting local spinners.

Shahid Alam said the allowable wastage rate should be reduced as modern and efficient machinery has become widely available in the industry. "The wastage rate should be between 5% and 12%, not 32%."

He alleged that some unscrupulous businesses exploit the excessive wastage allowance by diverting surplus fabrics into the local market, earning as much as Tk20 lakh from a single truckload of fabric.

Khorshed Alam said textile mills sold $12 billion worth of goods domestically in 2017, when Bangladesh's population was 16 crore. Last year, despite a larger population, domestic sales had fallen to $8 billion. But it should be at least $13 billion, he said.

"Our local market sales are down by $5 billion now because of duty-free imports on yarn and fabrics being sold in the local market," Alam said.

'India dumping yarn'

Khan said Indian and Bangladeshi yarn are priced similarly at around $3 per kg, but government subsidies in India, including power subsidies and a 2% VAT rebate worth roughly Rs15-20, allow Indian mills to sell yarn to Bangladesh at about $2.90 per kg.

"India has been dumping its yarn for the last four to five years. As a result, many local spinners either could not sell their yarn or did so at a loss," Khan said.

He noted that Bangladesh has become the largest export market for Indian cotton yarn, with the neighbouring country selling over 40% of its yarn production, worth around $2 billion, to Bangladesh.

From exporter to importer

Bangladesh once exported fabrics to Turkey, but now imports more than $10 billion worth of fabrics annually, said AK Azad, a consultant to the textile sector.

He noted that leading business groups, including Beximco, Monno and Sinha, had invested in state-of-the-art fabric manufacturing facilities over the years, many of which have since shut down.

"When Turkey saw fabric imports from Bangladesh rising, it increased import duties to protect its domestic industry. In contrast, Bangladesh has allowed duty-free imports of yarn and fabrics for decades," Azad said.

Why foreign investment not flowing into textile sector

Khorshed Alam, who is also the president of the Bangladesh-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said many Chinese investors had shown interest in investing in Bangladesh's textile sector, given the country's large volume of fabric imports from China.

"After conducting market assessments, many prospective Chinese investors stepped back. They told us that the bonded warehouse facility is being widely misused in Bangladesh," he said.

Khorshed added that Chinese investors are also aware of the large volume of fabrics and garments entering Bangladesh illegally through various border points, reducing the market potential for legally imported fabrics.

"As a result, they fear their products would struggle to compete and find buyers in the local market," he said.

There are 1,780 mills under BTMA members. Of which, 519 spinning mills manufacture yarn and 938 are weaving mills that make fabrics. Also, there are 323 dyeing, printing and finishing mills. These backward and forward linkage industries provide employment to around 45 lakh people, out of which 60% is female, according to the BTMA.

Textile Today Bangladesh
An Innovation Hub

Trade & Business

Exporters call for stronger awareness of UK market access scheme

BTT Desk

24 June, 2026 10:11PM Last Updated: 25 June, 2026 9:58AM Share:

As Bangladesh moves closer to graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, exporters are looking to maximize the benefits of the United Kingdom's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) to maintain competitiveness and expand market opportunities.

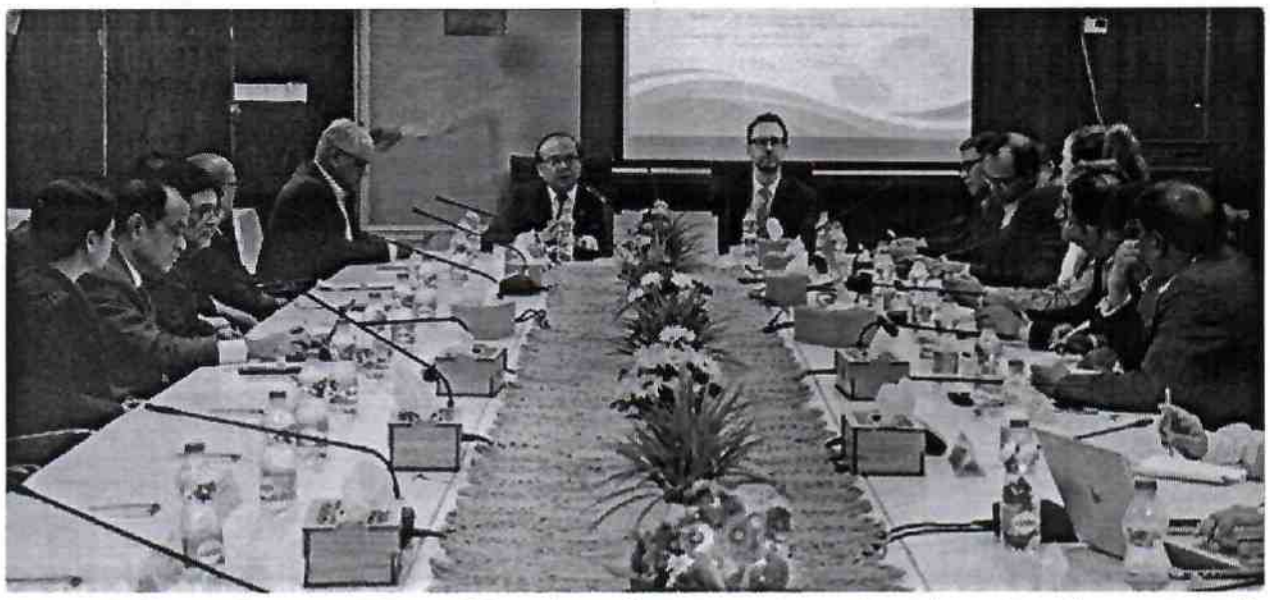


Figure: Roundtable on enhancing utilization of the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Courtesy: Collected

The issue took center stage at a roundtable organized by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the British High Commission in Dhaka on June 24. The discussion focused on increasing awareness and utilization of the DCTS, addressing market access challenges, and preparing exporters for the post-LDC trade environment.

Representatives from Bangladesh's leading textile and apparel organizations, including BGMEA, BKMEA, and FLAXA, participated in the discussion alongside representatives from FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI, BCMEA, BPGMEA, Banglacraft, BCI, BAPA, BAPI, and other trade bodies.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive (Additional Secretary) of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), inaugurated the event. James Goldman, Deputy High Commissioner of the British High Commission in Dhaka, delivered the opening remarks.

Ellie Parker, Regional Trade for Development Adviser for South Asia, Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the British High Commission, presented the keynote paper. She outlined the implications of Bangladesh's LDC graduation, recent improvements under the DCTS, and opportunities available for Bangladeshi exporters in the UK market.

A key focus of the discussion was how Bangladesh can increase utilization of DCTS preferences and diversify exports beyond ready-made garments. Participants also explored how lessons from the apparel sector could support growth in other export-oriented industries.

Participants emphasized that wider use of the DCTS will be critical for sustaining export growth after LDC graduation. They also called for stronger collaboration between the government, the British High Commission, and the private sector to help exporters take full advantage of the scheme.

As Bangladesh moves closer to graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, exporters are looking to maximize the benefits of the United Kingdom's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) to maintain competitiveness and expand market opportunities.

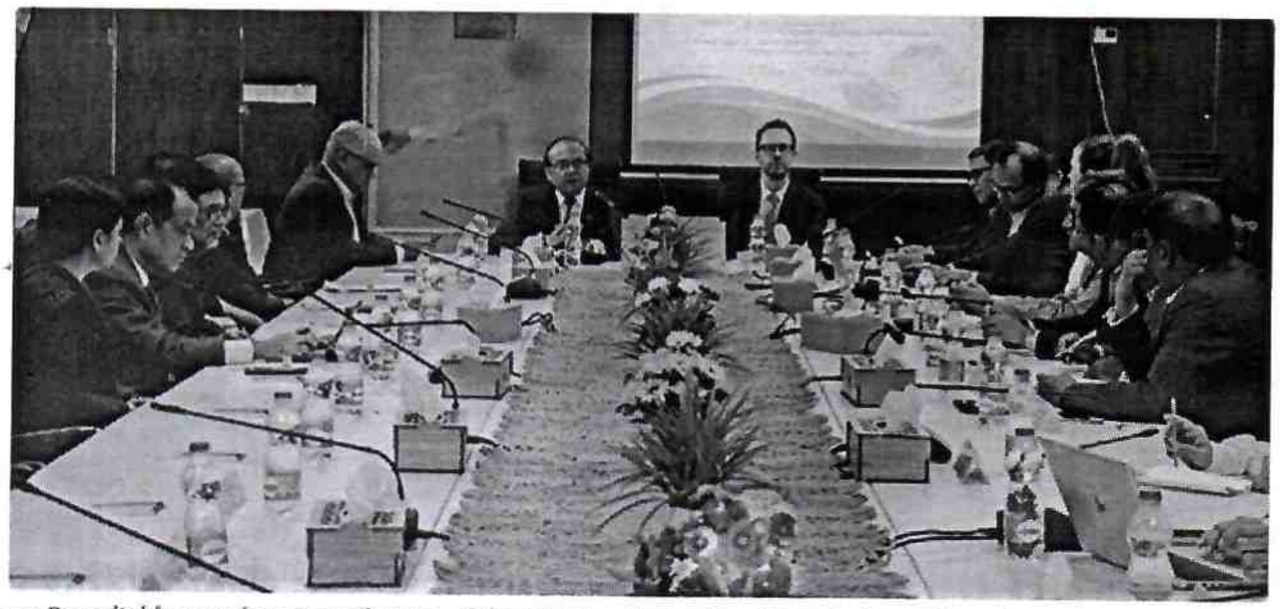


Figure: Roundtable on enhancing utilization of the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Courtesy: Collected

The issue took center stage at a roundtable organized by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the British High Commission in Dhaka on June 24. The discussion focused on increasing awareness and utilization of the DCTS, addressing market access challenges, and preparing exporters for the post-LDC trade environment.

Representatives from Bangladesh's leading textile and apparel organizations, including BGMEA, BKMEA, and FLAXA, participated in the discussion alongside representatives from FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI, BCMEA, BPGMEA, Banglacraft, BCI, BAPA, BAPI, and other trade bodies.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive (Additional Secretary) of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), inaugurated the event. James Goldman, Deputy High Commissioner of the British High Commission in Dhaka, delivered the opening remarks.

Ellie Parker, Regional Trade for Development Adviser for South Asia, Central Asia and the South Caucasus at the British High Commission, presented the keynote paper. She outlined the implications of Bangladesh's LDC graduation, recent improvements under the DCTS, and opportunities available for Bangladeshi exporters in the UK market.

A key focus of the discussion was how Bangladesh can increase utilization of DCTS preferences and diversify exports beyond ready-made garments. Participants also explored how lessons from the apparel sector could support growth in other export-oriented industries.

Participants emphasized that wider use of the DCTS will be critical for sustaining export growth after LDC graduation. They also called for stronger collaboration between the government, the British High Commission, and the private sector to help exporters take full advantage of the scheme.

To support these efforts, EPB and the British High Commission agreed to launch a series of awareness and capacity-building initiatives. EPB will publish a comprehensive DCTS handbook covering eligibility requirements, rules of origin, documentation procedures, and preference utilization.

Introduced after Brexit, the DCTS provides preferential market access to 65 developing and least developed countries. Under the scheme, Bangladesh will continue to enjoy duty-free access for 98% of its exports to the UK after LDC graduation, including ready-made garments.

The scheme also offers more flexible rules of origin, allowing Bangladeshi exporters to source materials from a wider range of countries while retaining duty-free access to the UK market.

বিএসএস নিউজ
বাংলাদেশ সংবাদ সংস্থার অনলাইন পোর্টাল

ডিসিটিএসের সুবিধা বাড়াতে ইপিবি-ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশনের গোলটেবিল বৈঠক

২৪ জুন ২০২৬, ২১:৪৫ | বাসস

Export Promotion Bureau
Bangladesh

ফাইল ছবি

ঢাকা, ২৪ জুন, ২০২৬ (বাসস) : রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো (ইপিবি) ও ঢাকায় ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশনের (বিএইচসি) যৌথ উদ্যোগে যুক্তরাজ্যের ডেভেলপিং কান্ট্রিজ ট্রেডিং স্কিম (ডিসিটিএস) বিষয়ে একটি গোলটেবিল বৈঠক অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে।

আজ বুধবার ইপিবির সম্মেলন কক্ষে আয়োজিত এ বৈঠকে দেশের শীর্ষস্থানীয় রপ্তানিকারক সমিতি, চেম্বার ও বাণিজ্য সংগঠনের প্রতিনিধিরা অংশ নেন। তারা ডিসিটিএসের সুবিধা ব্যবহারের হার বৃদ্ধি, বাজারে প্রবেশের প্রতিবন্ধকতা দূর করা এবং স্বল্পোন্নত দেশ (এলডিসি) থেকে বাংলাদেশের উত্তরণের প্রস্তুতি নিয়ে মতবিনিময় করেন।

বুধবার এক সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে এ তথ্য জানানো হয়েছে।

অনুষ্ঠানের উদ্বোধন করেন ইপিবির ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান ও প্রধান নির্বাহী (অতিরিক্ত সচিব) মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ। যুক্তরাজ্য সরকারের পক্ষে উদ্বোধনী বক্তব্য দেন ঢাকায় ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশনের ডেপুটি হাইকমিশনার জেমস গোল্ডম্যান।

ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশনের দক্ষিণ এশিয়া, মধ্য এশিয়া ও দক্ষিণ ককেশাস অঞ্চলের রিজিওনাল ট্রেড ফর ডেভেলপমেন্ট অ্যাডভাইজর এলি পার্কার ডিসিটিএসের ওপর মূল প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপন করেন। তিনি বাংলাদেশের এলডিসি উত্তরণের প্রভাব, ডিসিটিএসের সাম্প্রতিক উন্নয়ন, বাংলাদেশি রপ্তানিকারকদের জন্য বিদ্যমান সুযোগ এবং স্কিমটির ব্যবহার বাড়াতে সম্ভাব্য যৌথ উদ্যোগ তুলে ধরেন।

বৈঠকে ডিসিটিএস সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা ও ব্যবহার বৃদ্ধি, এলডিসি উত্তরণ-পরবর্তী সুযোগ ও চ্যালেঞ্জ, যুক্তরাজ্যের বাজারে প্রবেশের প্রতিবন্ধকতা এবং তৈরি পোশাক খাতের অভিজ্ঞতা কাজে লাগিয়ে অন্যান্য সম্ভাবনাময় খাতে রপ্তানি বহুমুখীকরণের বিষয় নিয়ে আলোচনা হয়।

অংশগ্রহণকারীরা বলেন, ডিসিটিএসের আওতায় প্রাপ্ত অগ্রাধিকারমূলক বাজার সুবিধা বাংলাদেশি রপ্তানিকারকদের সর্বোচ্চ মাত্রায় কাজে লাগানো প্রয়োজন। এ লক্ষ্যে ইপিবি ও ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশন আগামী মাসগুলোতে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি ও সক্ষমতা উন্নয়নমূলক বিভিন্ন কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়নে সম্মত হয়েছে।

ইপিবির ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান ও প্রধান নির্বাহী জানান, ডিসিটিএস বিষয়ে রপ্তানিকারকদের জন্য একটি বিস্তারিত তথ্যপুস্তিকা প্রকাশ করা হবে। এতে যোগ্যতার শর্ত, উৎপত্তি বিধি, প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র এবং অগ্রাধিকারমূলক সুবিধা ব্যবহারের নির্দেশনা অন্তর্ভুক্ত থাকবে।

এছাড়া ব্রিটিশ হাইকমিশন, সংশ্লিষ্ট খাতভিত্তিক সমিতি ও চেম্বারগুলোর সহযোগিতায় ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রামে ধারাবাহিক সচেতনতামূলক কর্মশালার আয়োজন করা হবে। একই সঙ্গে ব্যবসায়ী সংগঠন ও ডিজিটাল প্ল্যাটফর্মের মাধ্যমে দেশব্যাপী তথ্য প্রচার কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করা হবে।

গোলটেবিল বৈঠকে বাংলাদেশ সিরামিক ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বাংলাদেশ প্লাস্টিক গুডস ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন এবং বাংলাক্রাফটের সভাপতিরা অংশ নেন।

এ ছাড়া বাংলাদেশ গার্মেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বাংলাদেশ নিটওয়্যার ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, ফেডারেশন অব বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার্স অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি, ঢাকা চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি, মেট্রোপলিটন চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি, ফুটওয়্যার, লেদার গুডস অ্যান্ড অ্যাকসেসরিজ এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বাংলাদেশ ফ্রোজেন ফুড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রি, বাংলাদেশ অ্যাগ্রো-প্রসেসরস অ্যাসোসিয়েশন, বাংলাদেশ ল্যান্ড পোর্ট অথরিটি এবং বাংলাদেশ অ্যাসোসিয়েশন অব ফার্মাসিউটিক্যাল ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজসহ বিভিন্ন সংগঠনের প্রতিনিধিরা উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

বণিক বার্তা

25 JUN 2026

যুক্তরাজ্যের বাজারে বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের রফতানি বাড়াতে গোলটেবিল বৈঠক

বণিক বার্তা ডেস্ক ■

যুক্তরাজ্যের ডেভেলপিং কান্ট্রিজ ট্রেডিং স্কিম (ডিসিটিএস) সুবিধার আওতায় দেশটির বাজারে বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের রফতানি বাড়াতে একটি গোলটেবিল বৈঠক অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। রাজধানীর রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো (ইপিবি) কার্যালয়ে গতকাল এ বৈঠকের আয়োজন করা হয়। দুই দেশের মধ্যে বাণিজ্য ঘাটতি হ্রাস এবং বাংলাদেশী পণ্য রফতানির প্রতিবন্ধকতাগুলো দূরীকরণের উপায় খোঁজা ছিল এ আয়োজনের মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

বৈঠকে বিশেষ অতিথি হিসেবে ছিলেন ঢাকায় নিযুক্ত ব্রিটিশ ডেপুটি হাইকমিশনার জেমস গোল্ডম্যান। সভাপতিত্ব করেন ইপিবি ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ। এতে বিভিন্ন বাণিজ্যিক সংগঠনের সভাপতি ও মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিরা অংশ নেন।

বৈঠকে দেশের ওষুধ শিল্প খাতকে বিশেষভাবে প্রাধান্য দেয়া হয়। এ সময় বাংলাদেশ ওষুধ শিল্প সমিতির (বিএপিআই) নির্বাহী কমিটির সদস্য এবং ওয়ান ফার্মার ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক কেএসএম মোস্তাফিজুর রহমান উপস্থিত ছিলেন। তিনি জানান, এরই মধ্যে বেশকিছু বাংলাদেশী ওষুধ কোম্পানির পণ্য যুক্তরাজ্যের রেগুলেটরি প্রয়োজনীয়তা পূরণ করে সেখানে নিবন্ধিত হয়েছে এবং বাজারে প্রবেশের অধিকার পেয়েছে। তবে অন্যান্য সাধারণ কোম্পানির জন্য এ বাজারে প্রবেশ সহজ করতে রেগুলেটরি জটিলতা এবং বিশেষ করে 'বায়ো-এফিকেসি সার্টিফিকেট' নেয়ার ক্ষেত্রে বিশাল অংকের ব্যয় হয়, যা বাংলাদেশের জন্য সহজ করার প্রস্তাব দেন তিনি।

বৈঠকে ব্রিটিশ ডেপুটি হাইকমিশনার আশ্বস্ত করেন যে ভবিষ্যতে তারা বিভিন্ন খাতের সমস্যাগুলো নিয়ে আলাদাভাবে আলোচনায় বসবেন।

বণিক বার্তা
25 JUN 2026

মতবিনিময় সভায় বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী

অর্থনীতি গতিশীল করতে এসএমই খাতকে আরো চাঙ্গা করতে হবে

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

শিল্প, বাণিজ্য, বস্ত্র ও পাটমন্ত্রী খন্দকার আব্দুল মুক্তাদির বলেছেন, 'কর্মসংস্থান বৃদ্ধি এবং অর্থনীতিতে গতি আনতে এসএমই খাতকে চাঙ্গা করা সরকারের অগ্রাধিকার। এজন্য ব্যবসার শুরু থেকে পণ্য আমদানি বা রফতানি পর্যন্ত সময়কে ৩৫৫ দিন থেকে ১৪ দিনে নামিয়ে আনার পাশাপাশি ব্যবসাপ্রতিষ্ঠানগুলোয় বিরতিহীন জ্বালানি নিশ্চিত করতে চায় সরকার।' রাজধানীর পল্টনে গতকাল 'জাতীয় বাজেট ২০২৬-২৭: এসএমই খাতের প্রত্যাশা ও প্রাপ্তি' শীর্ষক মতবিনিময় সভায় তিনি এ কথা বলেন। ইকোনমিক রিপোর্টার্স ফোরামের (ইআরএফ) সহযোগিতায় এসএমই ফাউন্ডেশন এ সভার আয়োজন করে।

ইআরএফ সভাপতি দৌলত আক্তার মালার সভাপতিত্বে কর্মশালায় বিশেষ অতিথি ছিলেন জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ডের সদস্য (কর নীতি) ব্যারিস্টার মুতাসিম বিল্লাহ ফারুকী এবং এসএমই ফাউন্ডেশনের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক আনোয়ার হোসেন চৌধুরী। মূল প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপন করেন এসএমই ফাউন্ডেশনের মহাব্যবস্থাপক মোহাম্মদ জাহাঙ্গীর হোসেন।

শিল্পমন্ত্রী বলেন, 'দেশের জিডিপিতে এসএমই খাতের অবদান মাত্র ৩৪ শতাংশ। ভারতে এটি ৪৫ এবং জাপানে ৬০-৭০ শতাংশ। আমরা দায়িত্ব নিয়ে বাজেটে এসএমই খাতকে গুরুত্ব দিয়েছি। আগের তুলনায় বরাদ্দও বাড়ানো হয়েছে।

তিনি বলেন, 'অর্থনীতিতে গতিশীলতা আনতে এসএমই খাতকে আরো চাঙ্গা করতে হবে। অতীতে শুধু বাজেটের আকার বাড়ানো হলেও তা বিনিয়োগ ও কর্মসংস্থান বৃদ্ধিতে কার্যকর ভূমিকা রাখতে পারেনি। এ কারণে এসএমই খাতকে কেন্দ্র করে বাস্তবমুখী উদ্যোগ গ্রহণের প্রয়োজন রয়েছে।'

মূল প্রবন্ধে এসএমই ফাউন্ডেশনের মহাব্যবস্থাপক মোহাম্মদ জাহাঙ্গীর হোসেন জানান, ২০২৬-২৭ অর্থবছরের বাজেটে এসএমই খাতের উন্নয়নে এসএমই ফাউন্ডেশনের পক্ষ থেকে উপস্থাপিত ১১৩টি প্রস্তাবের মধ্যে ৩৬টি সম্পূর্ণ বা আংশিকভাবে গৃহীত হয়েছে। এর মধ্যে আয়কর-সংক্রান্ত ১২টি, ভ্যাট-সংক্রান্ত পাঁচটি এবং শুল্ক-সংক্রান্ত ১৯টি প্রস্তাব বাজেটে গৃহীত হয়েছে। প্রথমবারের মতো বাজেটের বিভিন্ন প্রস্তাবে সিএমএসএমই খাতের জন্য প্রায় ৭ হাজার ৮০০ কোটি টাকা বরাদ্দ রাখা হয়েছে।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্র দূতাবাসের প্রতিনিধি দলকে বিটিএমএ

চুক্তির পরও শুল্কমুক্ত সুবিধা বাস্তবায়নে অগ্রগতি না হওয়ায় উদ্বিগ্ন শিল্পোদ্যোক্তারা

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে স্বাক্ষরিত বাণিজ্য চুক্তির আওতায় মার্কিন তুলা ও ম্যান-মেড ফাইবার (এমএমএফ) ব্যবহারকারী পোশাকের জন্য শুল্কমুক্ত বাজার সুবিধা বাস্তবায়নে দৃশ্যমান অগ্রগতি না থাকায় 'দেশের টেক্সটাইল ও তৈরি পোশাক খাতের উদ্যোক্তাদের মধ্যে অনিশ্চয়তা ও উদ্বেগ দেখা দিয়েছে। বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের (বিটিএমএ) এক সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে গতকাল জানানো হয়, এ বিষয়ে সংগঠনটির গুলশান কার্যালয়ে ঢাকার মার্কিন দূতাবাসের একটি প্রতিনিধি দলের সঙ্গে সৌহার্দ্যপূর্ণ ও ফলপ্রসূ বৈঠক অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে।

বিটিএমএ জানায়, বৈঠকে সংগঠনের সভাপতি শওকত আজিজ রাসেলের নেতৃত্বে প্রতিনিধি দল বাংলাদেশের প্রাইমারি টেক্সটাইল শিল্পের টেকসই উন্নয়ন, বৈশ্বিক প্রতিযোগিতামূলক সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি এবং স্বল্পোন্নত দেশ (এলডিসি) উত্তরণ-পরবর্তী রফতানি সক্ষমতা জোরদারের প্রেক্ষাপট তুলে ধরে। সংগঠনটি উল্লেখ করে, দেশের টেক্সটাইল ও তৈরি পোশাক (আরএমজি) খাতের প্রধান ব্যাকওয়ার্ড লিংকেজ শিল্প হিসেবে বিটিএমএ দীর্ঘদিন ধরে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রেখে আসছে।

বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বলা হয়, বৈঠকে বাংলাদেশ ও যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের মধ্যে স্বাক্ষরিত বাণিজ্য চুক্তির ধারা ৫.৩ দ্রুত বাস্তবায়নের ওপর বিশেষ গুরুত্বারোপ করা হয়। ওই ধারার আওতায় যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে আমদানীকৃত তুলা ও ম্যান-মেড ফাইবার ব্যবহার করে বাংলাদেশে উৎপাদিত তৈরি পোশাক যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রফতানির ক্ষেত্রে শুল্কমুক্ত সুবিধা পাওয়ার কথা রয়েছে।

বিটিএমএর মতে, এ সুবিধা কার্যকর হলে বাংলাদেশী রফতানিকারকরা বৈশ্বিক বাজারে আরো প্রতিযোগিতামূলক অবস্থান অর্জন করতে পারবে। একই সঙ্গে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের তুলা ও এমএমএফ রফতানিও উল্লেখযোগ্যভাবে বাড়বে, যা উভয় দেশের জন্য পারস্পরিকভাবে লাভজনক হবে। তবে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের পরও এ বিষয়ে দৃশ্যমান অগ্রগতি না থাকায় শিল্পোদ্যোক্তাদের মধ্যে অনিশ্চয়তা তৈরি হয়েছে বলে বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখ করা হয়।

বৈঠকে ধারা ৫.৩ দ্রুত বাস্তবায়ন, রুলস অব অরিজিন চূড়ান্তকরণ এবং কার্যকর অগ্রগতি নিশ্চিত করতে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সহযোগিতা কামনা করেন বিটিএমএ সভাপতি। এছাড়া সেন্ট্রাল বন্ডেড ওয়্যারহাউজ দ্রুত বাস্তবায়ন এবং মার্কিন তুলা ও এমএমএফ ব্যবহার করে উৎপাদিত টেক্সটাইল ও পোশাক পণ্যের জন্য যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে অধিকতর সুবিধা নিশ্চিত করার বিষয়েও আলোচনা হয়।

প্রতিনিধি দলের সদস্যদের মধ্যে উপস্থিত ছিলেন ঢাকার মার্কিন দূতাবাসের পলিটিক্যাল-ইকোনমিক কাউন্সেলর এরিক গিলান, এগ্রিকালচারাল অ্যাটাচে এরিন কভার্ট এবং পলিটিক্যাল-ইকোনমিক কর্মকর্তা চার্লস বেসনার্ড।

বৈঠকে উভয়পক্ষ দুই দেশের মধ্যে বাণিজ্য ও বিনিয়োগ সহযোগিতা সম্প্রসারণ, টেক্সটাইল ও সংশ্লিষ্ট শিল্প খাতে অংশীদারত্ব জোরদার, মার্কিন তুলার ব্যবহার বৃদ্ধি এবং পারস্পরিক স্বার্থসংশ্লিষ্ট বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে মতবিনিময় করেন। পাশাপাশি কেন্দ্রীয় বন্ডেড ওয়্যারহাউজ দ্রুত বাস্তবায়ন এবং মার্কিন তুলা ও এমএমএফ ব্যবহার করে উৎপাদিত পণ্যের জন্য যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে অধিকতর বাজার সুবিধা নিশ্চিতকরণ নিয়েও উন্মুক্ত ও গঠনমূলক আলোচনা হয়।

বিটিএমএর পরিচালক চৌধুরী মো. হানিফ সোয়েব, প্রকৌশলী সৈয়দ ইশতিয়াক আহমেদ, মির্জা আহমেদ ইস্পাহানী ও রুবায়েত হায়দার বৈঠকে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। এছাড়া সংগঠনের সাবেক পরিচালক মো. মাসুদ রানা ও প্রকৌশলী রাজীব হায়দারও অংশ নেন।