

১৯ জুলাই - ৬মালো
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ঘুষের অভিযোগ ব্যবসায়ীদের, অস্বীকার করল বিএসটিআই

হালাল পণ্যের সনদ

গতকাল বিসিআই আয়োজিত কর্মশালায় একাধিক ব্যবসায়ী এই অভিযোগ করেন।

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক, ঢাকা

বাংলাদেশ স্ট্যান্ডার্ডস অ্যান্ড টেস্টিং ইনস্টিটিউশন (বিএসটিআই) থেকে পণ্যের হালাল সনদ নিতে টাকা ঘুষ চাওয়া হয় বলে অভিযোগ করেছেন ব্যবসায়ীরা। তাই এসব সনদ বিনা খরচে দেওয়ার দাবি জানিয়েছেন তাঁরা।

গতকাল শনিবার রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ (বিসিআই) আয়োজিত কর্মশালায় এই অভিযোগ করা হয়।

ঘুষ চাওয়ার অভিযোগের বিষয়ে জানতে চাইলে বিএসটিআইয়ের উপপরিচালক (হালাল সার্টিফিকেশন) এস এম আবু সাঈদ প্রথম আলোকে বলেন, 'এটা সম্পূর্ণ মিথ্যা ও বানোয়াট অভিযোগ। যারা এসব অভিযোগ করেছেন, তাঁরা হালাল সনদের আবেদনও করেননি। চ্যালেঞ্জ দিয়ে বলছি, সরকারি মাশুলের বাইরে এ ধরনের সনদ দেওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে আর কোনো টাকাপয়সার লেনদেন হয় না।'

'রপ্তানি বহুমুখীকরণে হালাল' শীর্ষক কর্মশালায় সভাপতিত্ব করেন সংগঠনটির সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী। এতে সম্মানিত অতিথি ছিলেন রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর (ইপিবি) ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান ও প্রধান নির্বাহী মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ।

সভায় বিসিআইয়ের পরিচালক ও ইজি ফুডের চেয়ারম্যান জিয়া হায়দার বলেন, 'বিসিআই থেকে হালাল সনদ আনতে গেলে তারা বলে গাড়ি দাও, টাকা দাও। কত টন রপ্তানি হবে, সেই অনুপাতে টাকা দাও। এসব কথা শুনে বিদেশি ক্রেতারা শুধু প্যাকেটের গায়ে হালাল লিখে দিতে বলেন।'

একই অভিযোগ করে বোম্বে সুইটসের মহাব্যবস্থাপক খুরশীদ আহমাদ ফরহাদ বলেন, 'সনদ নিতে মাশুল দিতে হয় ১৬ থেকে ১৮ লাখ টাকা। তবে এখন টাকার পরিমাণ কিছুটা কমানো হয়েছে। কিন্তু এসব সনদ সৌদি আরবে টেকে না। তাই বাধ্য হয়ে আমাদের ভারত, থাইল্যান্ড ও সিঙ্গাপুর থেকে হালাল সনদ নিতে হয়।'

কর্মশালায় সভাপতির বক্তব্যে আনোয়ার-উল

▶ ২০২৫ সালে হালাল পণ্যের বৈশ্বিক বাজার ছিল ৩ লাখ ৩০ হাজার কোটি ডলারের।

▶ ২০৩৪ সালে এই বাজারের আকার বেড়ে হবে ৯ লাখ ৪৫ হাজার কোটি ডলার।

▶ বাংলাদেশের হালাল পণ্য রপ্তানির পরিমাণ মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি ডলারের।

আলম চৌধুরী পারভেজ বলেন, 'বর্তমানে আমাদের হালাল পণ্য রপ্তানির পরিমাণ মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি মার্কিন ডলার। কিন্তু ২০২৫ সালে হালাল পণ্যের বৈশ্বিক চাহিদা ছিল ৩ লাখ ৩০ হাজার কোটি ডলারের। ২০৩৪ সালে তা বেড়ে হবে ৯ লাখ ৪৫ হাজার কোটি ডলারে দাঁড়াবে। প্রতিবছর হালাল পণ্যের বিশ্ববাজারের গড় প্রবৃদ্ধি ১২ শতাংশের বেশি।' এ বাস্তবতায় বাংলাদেশের হালাল পণ্যের ব্র্যান্ডিং দরকার বলে মত দেন আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী।

অনুষ্ঠানের আমন্ত্রিত অতিথির বক্তব্যে ইপিবির ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ বলেন, 'হালাল পণ্যের ধারণা এখন একটি লাইফস্টাইল। আমাদের হালাল পণ্য শুধু খাদ্যপণ্যের। কিন্তু কসমেটিক পণ্য একটা বড় জায়গা দখল করে আছে, এখানে নজর দেওয়া যায়।'

সভায় বক্তারা বিএসটিআই ও ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন থেকে হালাল সার্টিফিকেট নেওয়ার প্রক্রিয়া একক কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানের অধীনে নিয়ে আসার দাবি জানানো হয়। বর্তমানে দুটি সংস্থা আলাদা আলাদাভাবে সনদ দিচ্ছে।

কর্মশালায় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক মো. দ্বীন ইসলাম বলেন, অষ্টম জনবহুল মুসলিম দেশ হয়েও বাংলাদেশের হালাল পণ্য রপ্তানি ১০০ কোটি ডলারের কম। ৬০০ প্রতিষ্ঠান সনদ নিলেও রপ্তানি করে ৭০টির মতো প্রতিষ্ঠান। তাই এই ধরনের পণ্য রপ্তানির ক্ষেত্রে একমাত্র সমস্যা সনদ নয়।

বাংলাদেশ-মালয়েশিয়া চেম্বারের সাবেক সভাপতি সাকিবর এ খান বলেন, 'হালাল ধারণাটি পাঠ্যপুস্তকে থাকা উচিত। মালয়েশিয়ায় হালাল সায়েন্স নামে আলাদা বিষয় আছে। আমাদেরও এ বিষয়ে নতুন করে ভাবতে হবে।'



হালাল পণ্যের ৫ ট্রিলিয়ন ডলারের বাজারে বাংলাদেশের রফতানি এখনো ১ বিলিয়নের নিচে



নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

বিশ্বজুড়ে হালাল অর্থনীতির আকার ৫ ট্রিলিয়ন ডলার ছাড়িয়েছে। বিশাল এ বাজারে বাংলাদেশ বছরে মাত্র ৮৫০ মিলিয়ন ডলার মূল্যের পণ্য রফতানি করে। এ প্রেক্ষাপটে দেশের রফতানি বহুমুখীকরণ, কর্মসংস্থান বৃদ্ধি এবং বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার আয় বাড়াতে এ বাজারকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়ার আহ্বান জানিয়েছেন খাতসংগঠিতরা। তাদের মতে, প্রয়োজনীয় নীতিগত সংস্কার ও আন্তর্জাতিক মানের সার্টিফিকেশন ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তুলতে পারলে হালাল পণ্যের বাজারে বাংলাদেশ দ্রুত উল্লেখযোগ্য অগ্রগতি অর্জন করতে পারবে।

বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের (বিসিআই) উদ্যোগে গতকাল রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বিসিআই বোর্ড রুমে এক কর্মশালায় ব্যবসায়ী, গবেষক ও রফতানিকারকদের আলোচনায় এ তথ্য উঠে আসে। 'হালাল ফর এক্সপোর্ট ডাইভার্সিফিকেশন' শীর্ষক এ কর্মশালায় বক্তারা একক সার্টিফিকেশন কর্তৃপক্ষ, আন্তর্জাতিক স্বীকৃতি, আধুনিক পরীক্ষাগার, ট্রেসেবিলিটি এবং দক্ষ মানবসম্পদ গড়ে তোলার আহ্বান জানান।

বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী পারভেজের সভাপতিত্বে অনুষ্ঠানে সম্মানিত অতিথি ছিলেন রণুনি উম্ময়ন ব্যুরোর (ইপিবি) ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান ও প্রধান নির্বাহী (অতিরিক্ত সচিব) মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ। মূল প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপন করেন ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বিজনেস

এগ্রিকালচার অ্যান্ড টেকনোলজির (আইইউবিএটি) বিজনেস স্কুলের সহকারী অধ্যাপক ড. মো. মোমিনুল ইসলাম। এছাড়া আলোচক হিসেবে ছিলেন বাংলাদেশ-মালয়েশিয়া চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রির (বিএমসিসিআই) সাবেক সভাপতি শাব্বির এ খান এবং ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অর্থনীতি বিভাগের অধ্যাপক ড. মো. দীন ইসলাম।

ইপিবি'র ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ বলেন, 'বৈশ্বিক হালাল অর্থনীতির বাজার বর্তমানে ৫ দশমিক ২ ট্রিলিয়ন ডলারে পৌঁছেছে। তবে বাংলাদেশ এখনো মূলত খাদ্য ও কৃষিভিত্তিক হালাল পণ্য রফতানিতেই সীমাবদ্ধ। অথচ কসমেটিকস, ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস, ফ্যাশন, পর্যটন, ম্যানুফ্যাকচারিং সাপ্লাই চেইন, ফিনটেক, শিক্ষা ও গবেষণাসহ আরো বহু খাতে বড় সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে।' তিনি বলেন, 'বাংলাদেশের হালাল খাতের প্রধান সমস্যা সমন্বয়হীনতা। আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে গ্রহণযোগ্য একক সার্টিফিকেশন কর্তৃপক্ষ না থাকায় রফতানিকারকরা সমস্যায় পড়ছেন।' এ প্রেক্ষাপটে দেশে মালয়েশিয়া বা তুরস্কের মতো একটি স্বীকৃত কর্তৃপক্ষ গঠনের পাশাপাশি প্রয়োজনীয় নীতিগত সহায়তার ওপর গুরুত্বারোপ করেন তিনি।

বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী পারভেজ বলেন, 'বাংলাদেশের হালাল পণ্যের বিপুল সম্ভাবনা থাকলেও হালাল সার্টিফিকেশন ও এ খাতের সুযোগ সম্পর্কে পর্যাপ্ত সচেতনতা নেই। দ্রুত এ খাতে গুরুত্ব দিলে রফতানি, কর্মসংস্থান ও দেশীয় শিল্পে ইতিবাচক প্রভাব পড়বে।'

তিনি আরো বলেন, '২০৩৪ সালে বৈশ্বিক হালাল বাজার প্রায় ৯ দশমিক ৪৫ ট্রিলিয়ন ডলারে পৌঁছাবে। এ সুযোগ কাজে লাগাতে পারলে বাংলাদেশের ওষুধ, টেক্সটাইল ও কৃষিপণ্যসহ বিভিন্ন খাতের রফতানি উল্লেখযোগ্যভাবে বাড়বে।' মূল প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপনায় ড. মো. মোমিনুল ইসলাম বলেন, 'বিশ্বজুড়ে হালাল পণ্যের বাজার ক্রমাগত বড় হলেও বাংলাদেশ এখনো এ বিশাল খাতের সুফল পুরোপুরি ঘরে তুলতে পারেনি। রফতানি পরিসংখ্যান বিশ্লেষণে দেখা গেছে, দেশ থেকে রফতানীকৃত হালাল বা হালাল হিসেবে চিহ্নিত পণ্যের বার্ষিক আর্থিক মূল্য মাত্র ৮৫০ মিলিয়ন ডলার। অর্থাৎ সম্ভাবনাময় এ খাতটি এখনো ১ বিলিয়ন ডলারের মাইলফলক স্পর্শ করতে পারেনি, যা বৈশ্বিক বাজারের তুলনায় বেশ কম।' তিনি বলেন, 'হালাল শুধু খাদ্য নয়; প্রসাধনী, ওষুধ, ফ্যাশন, পর্যটন ও আর্থিক সেবাসহ বিভিন্ন খাতের সঙ্গে যুক্ত। বাংলাদেশের কৃষিভিত্তিক অর্থনীতি, বিদ্যমান শিল্পভিত্তি ও মূল্য সংযোজন সক্ষমতাকে কাজে লাগিয়ে এ বাজারে উল্লেখযোগ্য অবস্থান তৈরি করা সম্ভব।'

আলোচনায় বিএমসিসিআইয়ের সাবেক সভাপতি শাব্বির এ খান বলেন, 'হালাল পণ্যের রফতানি বাড়াতে সবচেয়ে আগে প্রয়োজন ভোক্তা সচেতনতা ও টেকসই কমপ্লায়েন্স ব্যবস্থা।' এজন্য স্কুল থেকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পর্যন্ত হালাল বিষয়ে শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ ও দক্ষ মানবসম্পদ গড়ে তোলার ওপর গুরুত্বারোপ করেন তিনি।

অধ্যাপক ড. মো. দীন ইসলাম বলেন, 'বর্তমানে বিশ্বে প্রায় ২৫ হাজার উৎপাদনকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের ২০ লাখ হালাল পণ্য রয়েছে। অথচ বাংলাদেশে হালাল সনদপ্রাপ্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রায় ৩০০টি এবং রফতানিযোগ্য পণ্য ৬০০-৭০০-এর মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ।' এজন্য শুধু হালাল সনদই যথেষ্ট নয়; আন্তর্জাতিক বাজারে গ্রহণযোগ্যতা নিশ্চিত করতে ডিজিটাল ট্রেসেবিলিটি, প্রয়োজনীয় টেস্টিং সুবিধা ও আন্তর্জাতিক মান পূরণ করতে হবে বলে মন্তব্য করেন তিনি।

উন্মুক্ত আলোচনায় ইজি প্রসেস ফুডের চেয়ারম্যান জিয়া হায়দার মিঠু বলেন, 'বাংলাদেশ স্ট্যান্ডার্ডস অ্যান্ড টেস্টিং ইনস্টিটিউশন (বিএসটিআই) ও ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন থেকে হালাল সনদ নিতে উদ্যোক্তাদের পরিদর্শন-সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন ব্যয় ও রফতানির ওপর পরিমাণভিত্তিক ফি দিতে হয়, যা অনেক প্রতিষ্ঠানের জন্য বড় প্রতিবন্ধকতা।' এজন্য সহজ শর্তে, বিনা ফিতে বা স্বল্প ব্যয়ে হালাল সনদ, প্রশিক্ষণ ও কারিগরি সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করার দাবি জানান এ উদ্যোক্তা।

আলোচনায় অংশ নিয়ে বম্বে সুইটস অ্যান্ড কোম্পানি লিমিটেডের মহাব্যবস্থাপক খুরশিদ আহমেদ ফরহাদ অভিযোগ করে বলেন, 'বাংলাদেশের ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন ও বিএসটিআই—কোনোটাই সৌদি অ্যাক্রেডিটেশন সেন্টারের স্বীকৃতি নেই। ফলে দেশটিতে রফতানির ক্ষেত্রে ভারত, সিঙ্গাপুর বা থাইল্যান্ডের স্বীকৃত সংস্থার সনদ নিতে হচ্ছে। এজন্য আমাদের দুই শতাধিক পণ্যের মধ্যে প্রায় ৫০টির মাত্র থেকে হালাল লোগো সরাতে হয়েছে।'





গতকাল শনিবার রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বিসিআই কার্যালয়ে হালাল পণ্যের বাজার নিয়ে কর্মশালায় একবিসিসিআইর সাবেক সভাপতি মীর নাসির হোসেন, বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী, ইপিবির ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ প্রমুখ বক্তব্য দেন

ফটো রিলিজ

হালাল পণ্যের বিশাল বাজারে বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি নগণ্য

■ সমকাল প্রতিবেদক

বিশ্বের সাড়ে তিন লাখ কোটি ডলারের হালাল পণ্যের বাজারে বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি ডলার। মুসলিম সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ দেশের সুবিধা কাজে লাগিয়ে বাংলাদেশ হালাল অর্থনীতিকে রপ্তানির নতুন চালিকাশক্তিতে পরিণত করতে পারে। এজন্য একক হালাল অথরিটি, আন্তর্জাতিক মানের সার্টিফিকেশন ব্যবস্থা, আধুনিক পরীক্ষাগার ও সমন্বিত নীতিগত উদ্যোগ গড়ে তুলতে হবে।

গতকাল শনিবার রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ (বিসিআই) আয়োজিত 'হালাল ফর এক্সপোর্ট ডাইভার্সিফিকেশন' শীর্ষক কর্মশালায় এমন মত উঠে আসে। বিসিআই বোর্ডরুমে অনুষ্ঠিত কর্মশালায় প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর (ইপিবি) ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ। বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরীর সভাপতিত্বে একবিসিসিআইর সাবেক সভাপতি মীর নাসির হোসেন ও প্রাণ-আরএফএল, প্যারাগন, বেঙ্গল মিট, বোম্বে সুইটস, বিডি ফুডসহ এ খাতের বিভিন্ন কোম্পানির প্রতিনিধিরা বক্তব্য দেন।

কর্মশালায় মূল প্রবন্ধে আইইউবিএটির সহকারী অধ্যাপক ড. মোমিনুল ইসলাম বলেন, বাংলাদেশ এখন ৮৫ কোটি ডলারের হালাল পণ্য রপ্তানি করছে। এর মধ্যে রয়েছে প্রক্রিয়াজাত খাদ্য, বিস্কুট, জুস, মসলা, স্ন্যাকস, হালাল মাংস, ওষুধ ও প্রসাধনী। এসব পণ্যের প্রধান বাজার মধ্যপ্রাচ্য, ইউরোপ ও যুক্তরাষ্ট্র। একই সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের অভ্যন্তরীণ হালাল পণ্যের বাজারের সম্ভাব্য আকার ১২৫ বিলিয়ন ডলারের বেশি, যা ইন্দোনেশিয়ার পর বিশ্বের দ্বিতীয় বৃহত্তম।

ড. মোমিনুল বলেন, বৈশ্বিক হালাল অর্থনীতির সবচেয়ে বড় অংশ হালাল খাদ্য, যার পরিমাণ ৬১ শতাংশ। এছাড়া ইসলামিক ফাইন্যান্স, মুসলিমবান্ধব পর্যটন, পোশাক, ওষুধ ও প্রসাধনী খাতেও দ্রুত সম্প্রসারণ হচ্ছে। ফলে বাংলাদেশের জন্য শুধু কৃষি ও খাদ্যপণ্য নয়, ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস, কসমেটিকস, পর্যটনসহ বিভিন্ন খাতে নতুন রপ্তানি বাজার তৈরির সুযোগ রয়েছে। তবে এ সম্ভাবনা কাজে লাগাতে বেশ কিছু চ্যালেঞ্জ আছে। বর্তমানে দেশে ইসলামিক ফাইন্যান্সিং ও বিএসটিআই পৃথকভাবে হালাল সনদ

বিসিআইর কর্মশালা

- বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি ডলার
- একক হালাল কর্তৃপক্ষ, বিশ্বমানের সনদ ও পরীক্ষাগারের দাবি
- খাদ্য, ওষুধ, প্রসাধনীসহ বিভিন্ন পণ্যে জোর দেওয়ার সুপারিশ

বিসিআইয়ের পরিচালক ও ইজি ফুডের চেয়ারম্যান জিয়া হায়দার মিঠু বলেন, 'বিএসটিআই থেকে হালাল সনদ আনতে গেলে তারা টন অনুপাতে কমিশন চায়।' মহাব্যবস্থাপক খুরশীদ আহমাদ ফরহাদ বলেন, 'প্রতিটি সনদের জন্য ১৬ থেকে ১৮ লাখ টাকা মাশুল দিতে হয়। এসব সনদ সৌদি আরবে টেকে না। কারণ, তাদের সঙ্গে চুক্তি নেই। বাধ্য হয়ে ভারত, থাইল্যান্ড ও সিঙ্গাপুর থেকে সনদ নিতে হয়।'

বিভিন্ন কোম্পানির প্রতিনিধিরা বলেন, বর্তমানে ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন ও বিএসটিআই পৃথকভাবে হালাল সনদ দিচ্ছে। কিন্তু বৈশ্বিকভাবে এই দুটি সংস্থা অনুমোদিত নয়। এতে ব্যবসার খরচ ও জটিলতা বাড়ছে, যা আন্তর্জাতিক বাজারে প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতাকে দুর্বল করছে। তাই রপ্তানি বাড়াতে এসব সনদ বিনা মূল্যে দিতে হবে।

ইপিবি ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান বলেন, রপ্তানি বহুমুখীকরণ এখন সময়ের দাবি। হালাল খাত এ ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখবে। ইপিবি ব্যবসায়ীদের প্রয়োজনীয় সহযোগিতা দেবে। শুধু কৃষিভিত্তিক ও খাদ্যপণ্য নয়, হালাল অর্থনীতির আওতায় আরও বহু ধরনের পণ্য ও সেবার সুযোগ রয়েছে। তারা সরকারি সিদ্ধির সংস্কার মাধ্যমে সমন্বিত



গতকাল শনিবার রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বিসিআই কার্যালয়ে হালাল পণ্যের বাজার নিয়ে কর্মশালায় এফবিসিসিআইর সাবেক সভাপতি মীর নাসির হোসেন, বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরী, ইপিবি ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ প্রমুখ বক্তব্য দেন

ফটো রিলিজ

হালাল পণ্যের বিশাল বাজারে বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি নগণ্য

■ সমকাল প্রতিবেদক

বিশ্বের সাড়ে তিন লাখ কোটি ডলারের হালাল পণ্যের বাজারে বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি ডলার। মুসলিম সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ দেশের সুবিধা কাজে লাগিয়ে বাংলাদেশ হালাল অর্থনীতিকে রপ্তানির নতুন চালিকাশক্তিতে পরিণত করতে পারে। এজন্য একক হালাল অথরিটি, আন্তর্জাতিক মানের সার্টিফিকেশন ব্যবস্থা, আধুনিক পরীক্ষাগার ও সমন্বিত নীতিগত উদ্যোগ গড়ে তুলতে হবে।

গতকাল শনিবার রাজধানীর তেজগাঁওয়ে বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ (বিসিআই) আয়োজিত 'হালাল ফর এক্সপোর্ট ডাইভার্সিফিকেশন' শীর্ষক কর্মশালায় এমন মত উঠে আসে। বিসিআই বোর্ডরুমে অনুষ্ঠিত কর্মশালায় প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর (ইপিবি) ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান মোহাম্মদ হাসান আরিফ। বিসিআই সভাপতি আনোয়ার-উল আলম চৌধুরীর সভাপতিত্বে এফবিসিসিআইর সাবেক সভাপতি মীর নাসির হোসেন ও প্রাণ-আরএফএল, প্যারাগন, বেঙ্গল মিট, বোম্বে সুইটস, বিডি ফুডসহ এ খাতের বিভিন্ন কোম্পানির প্রতিনিধিরা বক্তব্য দেন।

কর্মশালায় মূল প্রবন্ধে আইইউবিএটির সহকারী অধ্যাপক ড. মোমিনুল ইসলাম বলেন, বাংলাদেশ এখন ৮৫ কোটি ডলারের হালাল পণ্য রপ্তানি করছে। এর মধ্যে রয়েছে প্রক্রিয়াজাত খাদ্য, বিস্কুট, জুস, মসলা, স্ন্যাকস, হালাল মাংস, ওষুধ ও প্রসাধনী। এসব পণ্যের প্রধান বাজার মধ্যপ্রাচ্য, ইউরোপ ও যুক্তরাষ্ট্র। একই সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের অভ্যন্তরীণ হালাল পণ্যের বাজারের সম্ভাব্য আকার ১২৫ বিলিয়ন ডলারের বেশি, যা ইন্দোনেশিয়ার পর বিশ্বের দ্বিতীয় বৃহত্তম।

ড. মোমিনুল বলেন, বৈশ্বিক হালাল অর্থনীতির সবচেয়ে বড় অংশ হালাল খাদ্য, যার পরিমাণ ৬১ শতাংশ। এছাড়া ইসলামিক ফাইন্যান্স, মুসলিমবান্ধব পর্যটন, পোশাক, ওষুধ ও প্রসাধনী খাতেও দ্রুত সম্প্রসারণ হচ্ছে। ফলে বাংলাদেশের জন্য শুধু কৃষি ও খাদ্যপণ্য নয়, ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস, কসমেটিকস, পর্যটনসহ বিভিন্ন খাতে নতুন রপ্তানি বাজার তৈরির সুযোগ রয়েছে। তবে এ সম্ভাবনা কাজে লাগাতে বেশ কিছু চ্যালেঞ্জ আছে। বর্তমানে দেশে ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন ও বিএসটিআই পৃথকভাবে হালাল সনদ দিচ্ছে। এতে আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে স্বীকৃত একক সার্টিফিকেশন ব্যবস্থা গড়ে ওঠেনি। এ অবস্থায় আন্তর্জাতিক মানসম্পন্ন একটি জাতীয় হালাল অথরিটি গঠন, সার্টিফিকেশন প্রক্রিয়া একীভূত করা, আন্তর্জাতিক মানের পরীক্ষাগার গড়ে তোলা, মালয়েশিয়াসহ সফল দেশগুলোর সঙ্গে পারস্পরিক স্বীকৃতি চুক্তি এবং মধ্যপ্রাচ্য ও দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ার বাজারকে অগ্রাধিকার দিতে হবে।

বিসিআই সভাপতি বলেন, হালাল পণ্যের রপ্তানি কম হলেও এ খাতের সম্ভাবনা অত্যন্ত উজ্জ্বল। কারণ বিশ্বজুড়ে শুধু মুসলিম নয়, অন্যান্য ধর্মাবলম্বীরাও স্বাস্থ্য, গুণগত মান ও নৈতিক মানদণ্ডের কারণে হালাল পণ্যে আগ্রহী হচ্ছেন। বাংলাদেশের জন্য এ খাতে বড় সুযোগ রয়েছে।

বিসিআইর কর্মশালা

- বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি মাত্র ৮৫ কোটি ডলার
- একক হালাল কর্তৃপক্ষ, বিশ্বমানের সনদ ও পরীক্ষাগারের দাবি
- খাদ্য, ওষুধ, প্রসাধনীসহ বিভিন্ন পণ্যে জোর দেওয়ার সুপারিশ

বিসিআইয়ের পরিচালক ও ইজি ফুডের চেয়ারম্যান জিয়া হায়দার মিঠু বলেন, 'বিএসটিআই থেকে হালাল সনদ আনতে গেলে তারা টন অনুপাতে কমিশন চায়।' মহাব্যবস্থাপক খুরশীদ আহমাদ ফরহাদ বলেন, 'প্রতিটি সনদের জন্য ১৬ থেকে ১৮ লাখ টাকা মাশুল দিতে হয়। এসব সনদ সৌদি আরবে টেকে না। কারণ, তাদের সঙ্গে চুক্তি নেই। বাধ্য হয়ে ভারত, থাইল্যান্ড ও সিঙ্গাপুর থেকে সনদ নিতে হয়।'

বিভিন্ন কোম্পানির প্রতিনিধিরা বলেন, বর্তমানে ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন ও বিএসটিআই পৃথকভাবে হালাল সনদ দিচ্ছে। কিন্তু বৈশ্বিকভাবে এই দুটি সংস্থা অনুমোদিত নয়। এতে ব্যবসার খরচ ও জটিলতা বাড়ছে, যা আন্তর্জাতিক বাজারে প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতাকে দুর্বল করছে। তাই রপ্তানি বাড়াতে এসব সনদ বিনা মূল্যে দিতে হবে।

ইপিবি ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান বলেন, রপ্তানি বহুমুখীকরণ এখন সময়ের দাবি। হালাল খাত এ ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখবে। ইপিবি ব্যবসায়ীদের প্রয়োজনীয় সহযোগিতা দেবে। শুধু কৃষিভিত্তিক ও খাদ্যপণ্য নয়, হালাল অর্থনীতির আওতায় আরও বহু ধরনের পণ্য ও সেবার সুযোগ রয়েছে। তবে সরকারি বিভিন্ন সংস্থার মধ্যে সমন্বয়ের অভাব বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ।

কর্মশালায় কিছু সুপারিশ করা হয়। এর মধ্যে রয়েছে—বাংলাদেশকে একটি হালাল হাব হিসেবে আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে প্রাতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে। এছাড়া উৎপাদন থেকে ভোক্তা পর্যন্ত পুরো সরবরাহ ব্যবস্থায় শরিয়াহ, স্বাস্থ্যবিধি ও নৈতিক মানদণ্ড নিশ্চিত করতে হবে। আন্তর্জাতিক মানের পরীক্ষাগার সুবিধা সম্প্রসারণ, প্রয়োজন হলে বেসরকারি খাতে ল্যাব স্থাপনের সুযোগ দেওয়া, মালয়েশিয়া, ইন্দোনেশিয়া, থাইল্যান্ড, দক্ষিণ কোরিয়া, সিঙ্গাপুরসহ সফল দেশগুলোর অভিজ্ঞতা কাজে লাগানো এবং গবেষণা ও উন্নয়নে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলোকে সম্পৃক্ত করার ওপরও গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা হয়।



Halal export potential trapped in regulatory maze

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's halal industry has grown in recent years, but weak regulations, institutional gaps and costly certification processes are preventing exporters from benefiting from the rapidly expanding global halal market, businesses said at an event yesterday.

They said companies have invested heavily to obtain halal certification, but the process remains expensive and time-consuming due to separate certification fees for each product, repeated inspections and additional testing requirements.

Exporters also pointed out that some required laboratory tests are not available in Bangladesh, adding further costs for manufacturers.

The remarks came at a discussion titled "Halal for Export Diversification", organised by the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) at its office in the capital to explore ways to boost halal exports.

Khurshid Ahmad Farhad, general manager for international business and corporate affairs at Bombay Sweets and Company Limited, said the biggest challenge is the lack of international recognition for Bangladesh's halal certification.

Many importing countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, require halal certificates from internationally accredited certification bodies. Since Bangladeshi certification bodies are not recognised by some of these countries, exporters often have to obtain additional certification from foreign organisations.

"This increases costs, duplicates the certification process and makes Bangladeshi products less competitive in global markets," he said.

KEY POINTS



- Costly certification, repeated tests burden exporters
- Weak global recognition hurts competitiveness
- Extra certification charge claims denied by BSTI
- Halal exports remain below \$1b despite potential
- Global halal market to hit \$9.45tn by 2040

Khurshid added that the lack of internationally recognised accreditation has also affected exports. In some cases, companies had to remove halal logos from product packaging because importing countries did not accept Bangladesh's certification.

This resulted in costly repackaging and delays in entering those markets, he said. Zia Hayder Mithu, chairman of Easy Cook Food Processing Limited, alleged that exporters are asked to make additional payments when applying for halal certificates from the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

"When you go to get a halal certificate from BSTI, they ask for extra money. They ask for a contribution based on how many tonnes will be exported," he said. He said many foreign buyers, after learning about the additional charges, simply ask exporters to print "Halal" on product packaging instead of obtaining a certificate.

"There's no need for such a certificate. Rather, these certificates should be issued free of charge," he said.

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Ahmad Asif, chief executive officer of Bengal Meat Processing Industries Limited, and two other business representatives raised similar concerns. Responding to the allegations, SM Abu Sayed, deputy director of the Halal Certification Wing at BSTI, denied any wrongdoing.

"Their allegation that bribery took place is entirely false, fabricated, and without any basis. We categorically reject this allegation," he told The Daily Star.

NEED FOR A COMPLETE HALAL ECOSYSTEM

Md Mominul Islam, assistant professor of marketing at the College of Business Administration of the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, said the global halal market is currently worth around \$3.5 trillion and is expected to reach \$9.45 trillion by 2040.

He said Bangladesh needs a complete halal ecosystem covering supply chains, education, certification and industry collaboration to develop the sector.

Malaysia has built a successful Shariah-compliant, knowledge-based halal economy, and Bangladesh can learn from its experience, he added.

Bangladesh has several advantages, including a strong agricultural base, competitive labour costs, industrial capacity and a Muslim-majority population, Mominul said.

However, policy gaps, limited academic preparedness and a lack of specialised education in halal science, supply chain management and marketing are preventing the country from fully using these strengths, he added.

Md Deen Islam, professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said the halal economy should not be viewed only as a religious concept but also as an economic opportunity based on quality, safety and consumer confidence.

Although the global halal market is worth around \$3.3 trillion, Bangladesh's presence remains limited despite having one of the world's largest Muslim populations, he said. Bangladesh has around 300 halal-certified manufacturers and 600-700 certified export products, while halal exports remain below \$1 billion, he said.

As a result, the country's share of the global halal market is still very small, he added. Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury, president of BCI, said the ready-made

garment (RMG) sector alone accounts for nearly 82 percent of Bangladesh's exports, earning \$38.28 billion, while halal exports stand at only \$850 million.

However, Bangladesh has significant potential in the halal market as it has the world's third-largest Muslim population, with around 91 percent of its population being Muslim, he said.

"Bangladesh needs its own halal branding. If we look closely, after Indonesia, Bangladesh could have a domestic halal market worth \$125 billion. Indonesia has created huge local demand by making halal certification mandatory in its domestic market," he said.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice-chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau, said export diversification is crucial in the current situation, and halal products are among the key sectors with strong potential.

He said halal is not limited to agro-based and food products but covers a wide range of products and opportunities that Bangladesh can explore.

Shabbir A Khan, former president of the Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also spoke at the event.

19 JUL 2026

Experts push for single halal

FROM PAGE 8 COL 8

Speaking at the event, Hasan Arif said export diversification had become increasingly important for Bangladesh and that halal products offered one of the country's most promising opportunities.

He said halal economy extends well beyond food and agricultural products, encompassing a wide range of sectors where Bangladesh could build a competitive edge.

However, he identified weak coordination among government agencies as a major obstacle and assured participants of the EPB's support to expand exports.

BCI President Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury said Bangladesh must accelerate industrial development and diversify exports to prepare for its graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category and achieve the government's target of becoming a \$1 trillion economy with 10 million jobs by 2034.

He noted that ready-made garments account for about 82 per cent of the country's exports, while halal exports stand at only about \$850 million. In contrast, the global halal market is projected to reach \$9.45 trillion by 2034,

driven by growing demand for products that meet health and ethical standards.

"With only 20 per cent of current global demand being met, this sector offers Bangladesh immense untapped potential," he said, adding that a unified national halal brand and better coordination among government agencies would be critical to capturing a larger share of the market.

During the discussion, several business representatives alleged that companies seeking halal certification from the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) and the Islamic Foundation were often asked to make unofficial payments, including payments linked to export volumes.

They also claimed that obtaining halal certification in Bangladesh was costly and that BSTI-issued certificates are not recognised in Saudi Arabia because of the absence of a mutual recognition agreement. As a result, many exporters are forced to obtain certification from India, Thailand or Singapore to access the Saudi market, they said.

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FE REPORT

Business leaders on Saturday called for establishing a single national halal authority to oversee certification and build Bangladesh's image as a trusted halal production hub, saying stronger institutional support is essential to tap the fast-growing global halal market.

They also stressed the need to ensure Shariah compliance, food safety and ethical standards across the supply chain, while prioritising export markets where Bangladesh enjoys a competitive advantage.

The recommendations came at a workshop titled 'Halal for export diversification', organised by the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) at its office in Dhaka, says a press statement.

The participants also called for upgrading laboratory testing to international standards, encouraging private investment in testing facilities and strengthening cooperation with

leading halal economies such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore and China.

They said closer public-private collaboration, university-led research and investment in skilled manpower and infrastructure would be key to developing a robust halal ecosystem.

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (Additional Secretary) Mohammad Hasan Arif attended the event as the guest of honour, while BCI President Anwar-Ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez) chaired the workshop. The keynote paper was presented by Dr Md Mominul Islam, Assistant Professor at IUBAT Business School. Former president of Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry Shabbir A. Khan and Dhaka University Economics Professor Dr Md Deen Islam joined the discussion as designated discussants.

I SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



19 JUL 2026

Businesses seek single halal authority as certification hurdles impede export growth

EXPORT - BANGLADESH

TBS REPORT

Bribery, high fees and lack of int'l recognition undermine Bangladesh's halal export potential, exporters allege

Bangladesh's exporters and government officials have identified the country's fragmented halal certification system as one of the biggest obstacles to tapping the rapidly expanding global halal economy, calling for the establishment of a single national halal authority to boost competitiveness.

The global halal economy is now valued at \$5.2 trillion, yet Bangladesh exported halal products worth only \$943 million in the last fiscal year, according to industry leaders.

They pointed out that the country's export potential is being hampered by

► Global halal economy valued at \$5.2 trillion



Bangladesh exported halal products worth \$943m last fiscal

► Islamic Foundation, BSTI issue halal certificates independently

Businesses say dual certification system weakens the industry

Bribery, high fees, lack of global recognition major impediments



Bangladesh has around 300 halal-certified manufacturers



The country has 600-700 certified export products

allegations of bribery, high certification fees, lengthy approval processes and the lack of international recognition for locally issued halal certificates.

Currently, both the Islamic Foundation and the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) issue halal certificates independently. Businesses argue that the dual certification system weakens Bangladesh's halal branding and creates unnecessary costs and delays.

The concerns were raised yesterday

at a workshop titled "Halal for Export Diversification," organised by the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) in Dhaka.

Speakers said Bangladesh has made progress in developing its halal industry in recent years, but institutional weaknesses and the absence of an effective regulatory framework have prevented the country from fully capitalising on the growing global market.

Exporters also said obtaining

halal certification is expensive and time-consuming. Manufacturers are required to pay separate fees for individual products, undergo repeated factory inspections and submit multiple laboratory test reports, creating a significant financial burden.

Some of the required tests, including those for heavy metals and pesticide residues, cannot even be conducted domestically, they said.

Exporters allege bribery and lack of global recognition

Khurshid Ahmad Farhad, general manager for International Business and Corporate Affairs at Bombay Sweets and Company Limited, said companies face high fees and repeated inspections when seeking halal certification from the Islamic Foundation and BSTI.

He said the company initially paid Tk16-18 lakh in certification fees for several products. Although the fees were later reduced by half, the company has still not received its certificates despite paying around Tk14.5 lakh.

Farhad also alleged that companies are forced to pay bribes during the certification process.

"When applying for halal certificates, there are non-halal activities involved - you have to pay bribes," he alleged.

He further claimed that neither the Islamic Foundation nor BSTI is recognised by the Saudi Accreditation Center, forcing exporters shipping to Saudi Arabia to obtain halal certificates from accredited bodies in countries such as India, Singapore or Thailand.

As a result, Bombay Sweets removed halal logos from about 50 of its more than 200 products, spending approximately Tk62 lakh solely on redesigning packaging.

Calls for a single halal authority

During an open discussion, Zia Hayder Mithu, a BCI director and chairman of Easy Process Food, alleged that officials conducting halal certification inspections demand transportation and hospitality.

"They ask

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

us to provide vehicles because a large inspection team will visit, and we have to arrange meals for them. After that, they charge Tk2 lakh annually for exports of 200 tonnes. If I have to pay these fees for thousands

Delivering the keynote presentation, Md Mominul Islam, assistant professor of marketing at IUBAT, said the global halal market is projected to reach \$9.45 trillion by 2040.

He said Bangladesh needs to develop a complete halal ecosystem

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EXPORT - BANGLADESH

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Exporters also said obtaining

desks with \$60.85 million for garments, and Tai Ma Shoes (BD) \$55.05 million for footwear production.

South Korea is another major investor, led by Park Handbag BD, which plans to invest \$80 million in handbags, backpacks and garments.

Hong Kong (China) has also committed significant investment, with Campvalley Chittagong proposing \$54 million for camping equipment and garments, while Nova Intima Limited, a Hong Kong-British Virgin Islands joint venture, plans \$28.05 million for women's apparel.

Sri Lanka's Univogue Garments has proposed \$36.49 million for large-scale ready-made garment production.

Arrival of high technology

Four enterprises in high-tech and non-traditional sectors are investing in the zone, Bepza said.

Chinese-owned AeroSynth Limited has proposed a \$3.50 million investment to manufacture drones, including toy drones for entertainment, specialised fishing drones, and lightweight delivery drones.

The project is expected to diversify Bangladesh's export basket and strengthen technology-driven manufacturing.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

us to provide vehicles because a large inspection team will visit, and we have to arrange meals for them. After that, they charge Tk2 lakh annually for exports of 200 tonnes. If I have to pay these fees for thousands of products, I don't need such certificates," he said.

He called for halal certification to be provided free of charge.

Representatives from leading halal exporters, including Pran, Paragon, Akij, Meghna and Bengal Meat, also attended the workshop and expressed support for the exporters' concerns.

Huge untapped market

Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), said Bangladesh exported halal products worth \$943 million last year, most of which were agricultural and processed food products.

However, he noted that major opportunities also exist in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, fashion, tourism, manufacturing, Islamic finance, technology and education.

"The global halal economy is now worth \$5.2 trillion. It presents a significant opportunity for Bangladesh to diversify its exports, products and export destinations," he said.

Delivering the keynote presentation, Md Mominul Islam, assistant professor of marketing at IUBAT, said the global halal market is projected to reach \$9.45 trillion by 2040.

He said Bangladesh needs to develop a complete halal ecosystem encompassing supply chains, education, certification and industry collaboration, citing Malaysia as a successful model.

Although Bangladesh benefits from a strong agricultural base, competitive labour costs, industrial capacity and a Muslim-majority population, policy gaps, limited academic preparedness and a lack of specialised education in halal science and supply chain management continue to hold the sector back, he added.

Prof Md Deen Islam of the University of Dhaka said the halal economy should be viewed not only from a religious perspective but also as a business opportunity centred on quality, safety and consumer confidence.

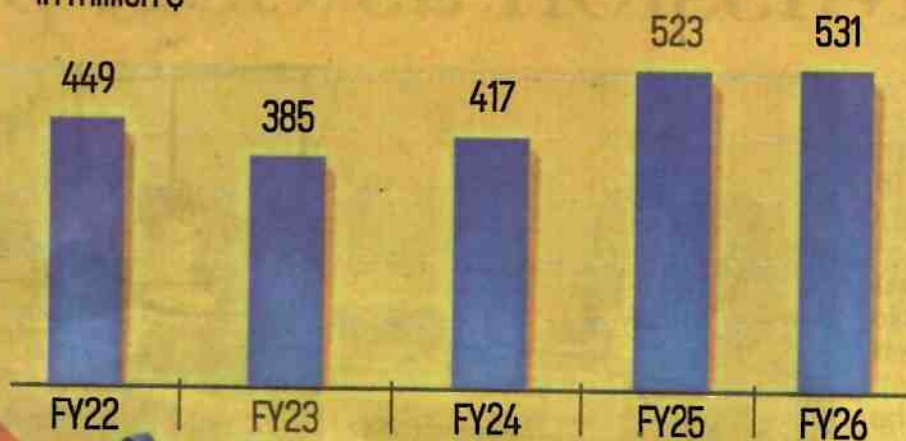
"Despite being one of the world's largest Muslim-majority countries, Bangladesh has only around 300 halal-certified manufacturers, 600-700 certified export products, and halal exports of less than \$1 billion, leaving its share of the global market negligible," he said.



Non-leather footwear exports stall, miss global boom

Exports of non-leather shoes

In million \$



SOURCE: EPB



Performance

- Non-leather footwear exports stuck at around \$530m



Investment and capacity

- High borrowing costs, banking crisis stall expansion
- Healthy orders, but factories lack capacity to grow



Competitiveness

- Bangladesh misses 'China Plus One' opportunity
- Vietnam pulls ahead as Bangladesh loses ground

AI-ASSISTED INFOGRAPHIC

JAGARAN CHAKMA

After rebounding strongly over two years, the non-leather footwear exports lost momentum in the last fiscal year, logging only 1.6 percent growth as manufacturers grappled with high borrowing costs, capacity constraints and lingering political uncertainty.

Exports under the "Other Footwear" category -- covering synthetic, rubber, plastic and textile footwear -- rose to \$531 million in FY2025-26 from \$522 million a year earlier, according to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

The five-year trend reflects both recovery and stagnation. Exports fell from \$449 million in FY22 to \$385 million in FY23 amid weak demand in the US and Europe, before rebounding to \$417 million in FY24.

The slowdown in FY26 comes despite the "China Plus One" strategy, under which global brands are diversifying production beyond China.

Combined with leather footwear exports of \$691 million, Bangladesh's footwear exports totalled only \$1.22 billion in FY26, far lower than regional

competitors. For instance, Vietnam exports more than \$25 billion worth of footwear annually and Indonesia more than \$6 billion.

The sector's modest export growth reflects weak investment rather than weak demand, said Riad Mahmud, managing director of Shoeniverse Footwear.

"Most manufacturers are already operating at or near full capacity. Without new factories or capacity expansion, export growth will inevitably remain limited," he said.

Mahmud blamed the prolonged banking sector liquidity crunch, saying manufacturers are struggling to secure financing for expansion.

"Our factory is running at full capacity and orders remain healthy. The question is why we are not expanding," he said. "The simple answer is that bank financing is no longer available."

He said Shoeniverse now plans to raise funds through the capital market by listing its footwear unit, Sunipun Footwear Ltd, and is preparing its prospectus.

"We have already announced our

intention to go public. If the regulatory process becomes faster, as the authorities have indicated, it could provide an alternative source of financing for manufacturers," he said.

He added that the stagnation in capital machinery imports also reflects slowing industrial investment. "The orders are there, but production capacity is not increasing because investment has slowed. That is the real bottleneck."

Hasanuzzaman Hassan, chairman of BLING Leather Products Ltd, said inadequate banking support cost his company a major export opportunity last year.

He said the company spent nearly two months trying to open a letter of credit (LC) for a \$2.2 million export order from buyers in the United States and Europe. However, the process stalled because the bank did not provide the required support, prompting the buyers to cancel the order.

"As the LC issue remained unresolved, the buyers had already moved elsewhere," Hassan said.

FROM PAGE B1

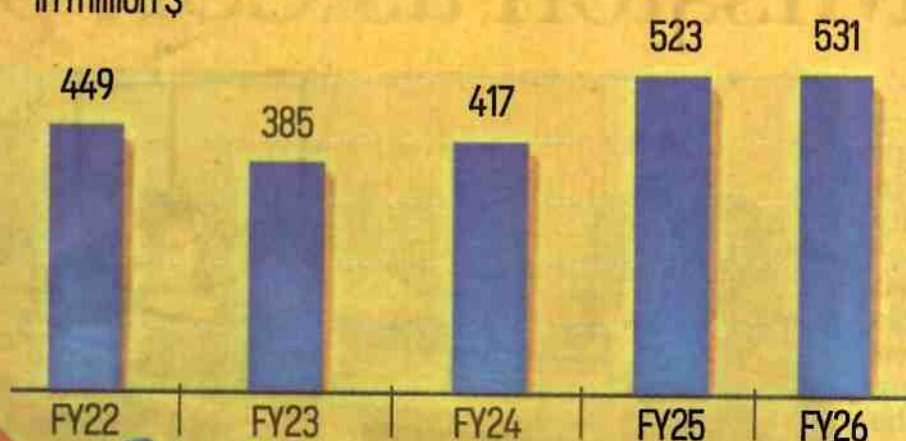
He also linked the sector's slow growth in the last FY to economic and political uncertainty during the interim government's tenure, which

Md Nasrullah, general manager and head of international business at Apex Footwear, attributed the slowdown to rising production costs, political uncertainty and weaker

"The industry has brought in machinery worth billions of dollars and built the capacity to grow. But many factories are producing only a fraction of what they are capable of."

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FROM PAGE B1

He also linked the sector's slow growth in the last FY to economic and political uncertainty during the interim government's tenure, which disrupted business operations and weakened buyers' confidence.

"When buyers see uncertainty, they become cautious. Some delayed orders, while others shifted sourcing to competing countries," he said.

Hassan expects conditions to improve under the elected government as a more stable political atmosphere is likely to boost buyers' confidence. "If the policy environment remains stable and banks become more supportive, many of those buyers are likely to return."

Md Nasrullah, general manager and head of international business at Apex Footwear, attributed the slowdown to rising production costs, political uncertainty and weaker buyer confidence, particularly in the European market.

"Running a factory has become much more expensive," he said, citing higher gas and electricity tariffs, annual wage increases and lending rates of 12-13 percent. He estimated gas-related production costs alone have risen by more than 40 percent.

Md Nasir Khan, chairman of Jennys Shoes, said the industry has already invested heavily in expanding capacity but cannot fully utilise it because of supply-side bottlenecks.

"The industry has brought in machinery worth billions of dollars and built the capacity to grow. But many factories are producing only a fraction of what they are capable of because raw materials are not reaching them on time," he said.

Delays in importing raw materials, unreliable electricity supply and cumbersome regulations are disrupting production and raising costs, Khan said. Frequent power outages also make it harder to meet delivery schedules.

"When shipments are delayed, buyers lose confidence. Instead of expanding by 20 to 30 percent a year, the industry risks slipping into negative growth," he warned.





Bepza Member for Investment Promotion Md Tanvir Hossain and Huarun Tex Co Ltd Managing Director Bin Wang sign a land lease agreement at the Bepza Complex in Dhaka on Thursday. PHOTO: COURTESY

Chinese firm to invest \$30m in Bepza Economic Zone textile plant

INVESTMENT - CHATTOGRAM

TBS REPORT

Chinese textile manufacturer Huarun Tex Co Ltd will invest \$30 million to set up a production facility at the Bepza Economic Zone in Mirsarai, Chattogram.

The factory, to be built on 36,000 square metres of land, is expected to create employment for 580 Bangladeshi nationals.

Once operational, the plant will have an annual production capacity of 24,000 tonnes of yarn and 20 million metres of grey woven fabric.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority and Huarun Tex signed a land lease agreement at the Bepza Complex in Dhaka on Thursday.

Bepza Member for Investment Promotion Md Tanvir Hossain and Huarun Tex Managing Director Bin Wang signed the agreement on

behalf of their respective organisations.

Bepza Executive Chairman Major General Mohammad Moazzem Hossain witnessed the signing.

Thanking Huarun Tex for choosing Bangladesh, particularly the Bepza Economic Zone, for its investment, the executive chairman said Bepza remained committed to providing investors with a safe, modern and business-friendly environment.

He also assured the company of

full support in establishing and operating the factory.

Bepza Member for Engineering Abdullah Al Mamun, Member for Finance ANM Foyzul Haque, Executive Director for Enterprise Services Md Khorshid Alam, Executive Director for Administration Samir Biswas, Bepza Economic Zone Project Director Mohammad Anamul Haque, and Executive Director for Public Relations ASM Anwar Parvez attended the ceremony.



19 JUL 2026

Bangladesh explains to UN why 3 more years needed for LDC transition

LDC - UNITED NATIONS

TBS REPORT

Bangladesh has urged the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) to grant a three-year extension to its preparatory period for graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, saying the additional time would help ensure a smooth, sustainable and stable transition amid mounting global economic challenges.

Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktedir requested separate bilateral meetings with Ecosoc President Ambassador Lok Bahadur Thapa, Nepal's permanent representative to the UN, and Ecosoc Vice-President Ambassador Amar Bendjama, Algeria's permanent representative to the UN, at the organisation's headquarters in New York.

The minister said Bangladesh had been unable to fully utilise the original preparation period due to prolonged economic and political transitions, global economic uncertainty, the energy crisis, supply chain disruptions, the multidimensional impacts of climate change and other external shocks.

He stressed that the government was not seeking to delay graduation but rather to complete key structural reforms, strengthen governance,

Despite global shocks, govt remain committed to protecting vulnerable people and advancing a democratic human welfare state.

RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR
PRIME MINISTER'S FINANCE
AND PLANNING ADVISER

restore macroeconomic stability, reinforce the financial sector, improve the investment climate and implement its Smooth Transition Strategy to ensure a resilient graduation.

LDCs need debt solutions to meet SDGs: Finance adviser

In a related engagement in New York, the prime minister's Finance and Planning Adviser, Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, called on the UN system to establish an international mechanism for debt restructuring, debt relief, debt suspension and sustainable

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debt solutions to help developing countries cope with mounting fiscal pressures caused by the Middle East crisis and other global shocks.

Speaking at a meeting with Unicef Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations Ted Chaiban on Friday, Titumir said rising energy prices, supply chain disruptions and growing debt burdens had significantly narrowed Bangladesh's fiscal space.

He said sustainable debt solutions were essential to enable developing countries to continue investing in children, women, education, health and social protection while keeping progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals on track.

The adviser said the government remains committed to protecting vulnerable groups and advancing its vision of a

under the "Bangladesh First" philosophy.

He also highlighted plans for a universal life-cycle-based social security system centred on women, with the proposed Family Card initiative supporting women-led households throughout different stages of life.

The Ecosoc president and vice-president acknowledged the challenges facing countries graduating from LDC status and expressed their commitment to supporting Bangladesh's smooth, sustainable and stable transition.

Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate from the LDC category on 24 November this year. Earlier, the Committee for Development Policy, a subsidiary body of Ecosoc, concluded that extending Bangladesh's preparatory period would be appropriate, provided the country makes significant progress in addressing its structural vulnerabilities

19 JUL 2026

Early FTA deal with EU could forestall export plummeting

Experts, trade leaders ring alarm over feared duty-free market access forfeiture after LDC graduation

MONIRA MUNNI

A free-trade agreement (FTA) between Bangladesh and the European Union could limit deep garment-export drop due to loss of duty-free facility after the country's LDC graduation, according to a latest research.

As post-LDC tariff cliff collides with zero-duty market access secured by chief regional rivals India and Vietnam through aggressive free-trade pacts, Bangladesh's garment export to the EU market might contract up to 44 per cent. According to trade analysts and recent impact modeling, the convergence of duty-facility losses stemming from the upcoming least-developed country (LDC) graduation with the competitive asymmetry

created by India and Vietnam's newly weaponised FTAs is a matter of concern that has sparked urgent calls for a radical re-engineering of the country's economic diplomacy and product mix.

With both the EU-India and EU-Vietnam FTAs in force, Bangladesh's overall exports to the bloc could fall by up to 36 per cent and the rate is 44 per cent for garments, according to the research paper prepared by RAPID.

A Bangladesh-EU FTA could limit the overall export decline to around 16 per cent and garments to 19 per cent, it shows.

"EU FTAs with Vietnam and India will intensify competitive pressure on Bangladesh as FTAs can divert trade towards partner countries by narrowing or eliminating tariff



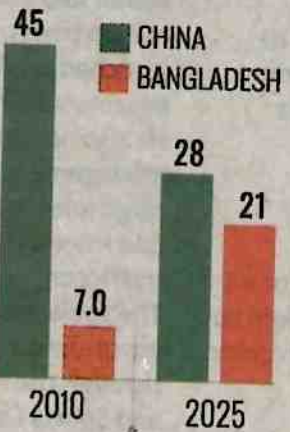
BD risks post-LDC overall export fall of 36pc to EU market, deeper contraction yet for RMG at 44pc

Already, Vietnam and India grabbing bigger pies of EU trade banking on FTAs

Buyers also already switching to alternative sourcing: BKMEA leader

APPAREL EXPORT TO EU MARKET

In percentage



TURNOVER

(In billion euros)



differences," Dr MA Razzaque, says chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID). Under the EVFTA, the EU tariffs on Vietnamese exports are being progressively reduced to reach zero by 2027.

Once implemented, the EU-India FTA will give India preferential access in sectors that overlap closely with Bangladesh's, including apparel, textiles, leather and footwear. Bangladesh, meanwhile, risks losing its duty-free market access currently enjoyed as an LDC that will continue for three years

after graduation and facing MFN tariffs. Even if, after graduation, Bangladesh qualifies for GSP-plus window, its garments will not get duty-free access due to the safeguard clauses of the scheme, he has noted. "Bangladesh could face a double preference erosion: competitors gain duty-free access while its own tariff advantage disappears," Mr Razzaque has said.

| SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



UNITED FINANCE

AAA

The Highest Credit Rating. 16354



About 90 per cent of Bangladesh's exports to the European Union are heavily concentrated in knitwear and woven garments, according to the RAPID findings.

Both India and Vietnam export a diverse range of products to the EU, with garments accounting for only about 6.0 per cent to 8.0 per cent of their exports.

Bangladesh's top 15 apparel exports to the EU, all cotton-based, account for more than one-third of extra-EU imports in those product categories. The corresponding shares are about 3.0 per cent for Vietnam and 6.0 per cent for India.

Bangladesh may face strong competition from Vietnam in MMF-based apparel exports to the EU. The research has also shown strict rules-of-origin requirement as a

constraint facing Vietnam's export expansion under the EVFTA. Vietnam's dependence on China's low-cost fabrics makes it challenging to meet the requisite value addition for exported products under EVFTA. Asked about the emergent trade situation, Mohammad Hatem, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said Vietnam and India are the biggest challenge for local garment export to the EU due to their FTAs with the bloc which allows them duty-free facility.

"As Bangladesh is yet to take any tangible measures in signing such trade pact, buyers have already started developing alternative sourcing bases well before Bangladesh's preferential trade benefits expire," he noted. Moreover, the Indian government has

taken measures aggressively to draw foreign direct investment and help local exporters to remain competitive through a number of packages. Talking to The Financial Express, BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan has said global buyers are also increasing their sourcing from India due to its increasing competitiveness mostly because of its integrated supply chain, cost advantages while it has diversified products with strong presence in hometex, technical textile and synthetic fibres.

Both the apparel-sector leaders have said Bangladesh must respond through market-access diplomacy and domestic-competitiveness reforms and start preparation for a Bangladesh-EU FTA to secure post-LDC market access. Commerce ministry sources have said to retain the duty benefit, Bangladesh

has made a proposal to the EU for signing free-trade deal.

The EU also wanted to know about the details of negotiation team, the country's policy in this regard, they added.

The EU Ambassador in Bangladesh, Michael Miller, recently said Bangladesh should accelerate reforms, including removal of non-tariff barriers and improvements in the business environment to pave the way for advancing talks on an FTA with the EU, adding that the EU is ready to begin exploratory discussions on an FTA.

The RAPID paper has also suggested seeking workable rules of origin and transitional safeguards for apparel and diversifying exports beyond cotton garments and expanding MMF- and higher-value products. It has also recommended attracting

export-oriented FDI to support technology, skills-and new-product development, reducing trade costs through tariff reform, better logistics, reliable energy and faster customs clearance and strengthening compliance with EU labour, environmental, traceability and supply-chain requirements. "Preferential access alone will not be enough. Bangladesh must combine an EU trade agreement with sustained improvements in productivity, diversification and compliance," it reads.

Nazma Akter, a labour leader, has said thousands of workers lost jobs due to factory closure during last six months and export fall due to post-graduation challenges would further worsen the job market, especially for women. The government should take timely measures to sustain market

competitiveness and also safeguard employment.

By leveraging LDC duty-free access, Bangladesh has been able to expand its share of the EU apparel market at a remarkable pace.

China's share in EU apparel imports declined from 45 per cent in 2010 to 28 per cent in 2025, while Bangladesh's share rose sharply from about 7.0 percent to 21 per cent.

According to Eurostat data, Bangladesh garment exports to the EU stood at 19.41 billion euros in 2025 which was 14.29 billion euros in 2021.

On the other hand, India's apparel exports to the EU increased to 4.52 billion euros in 2025 from 3.39 billion euros in 2021.

Vietnam earned 4.37 billion euros in 2025 which was 2.86 billion euros in 2021.

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Does export target matter?

For policymakers, the target serves as a performance benchmark for the external sector. For exporters, it is a yardstick for measuring their overall success

writes
Asjadul Kibria

Though earnings from exports of goods and services are critical to the country's balance of payments (BoP), it is not possible to increase them significantly within a few years. The growth of exports depends on factors including the strength of export-oriented sectors, global demand, barriers to market access, the domestic business environment, and the country's trade policy. If global demand slows, a strong industry may not realise its full capacity. Also, due to supply-side constraints, higher international demand is unlikely to boost export earnings. Nevertheless, there is a tradition in Bangladesh and other countries of setting an annual target for export earnings. For the current fiscal year (FY27), the government has set targets of US\$57 billion in earnings from exports of goods and US\$ 9 billion from exports of commercial services. Thus, the total export earnings target for the current fiscal year is set at \$66 billion. Statistics from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) revealed that actual export earnings did not meet targets in the last couple of years. For instance, the government set a target of \$58 billion for FY23, but actual earnings from goods exports stood at \$46.43 billion. In FY24, the target was \$62 billion, while actual export earnings reached \$44.46 billion. The autocratic regime of the now-ousted Hasina government set overambitious targets to secure political applause. In a bid to set a rational target, the government set it at \$50 billion for FY25, and final earnings from merchandise exports were \$48.28 billion. The target for FY26 was \$55 billion, and actual earnings in 11 months reached \$43.79 billion, according to EPB. Even if export earnings in June were \$5 billion, total annual exports would still fall short of the FY26 target. There is, however, a persistent decline in exports to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio over the last couple of years. The ratio of exports of goods and services to GDP was 13.16 per cent in FY23, which fell to 10.46 per cent in FY24 and improved modestly to 11.12 per cent in FY25. It then again dropped to 10.18 per cent in FY26, according to an estimate by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This means the contribution to GDP is slowly declining, as real export growth does not keep pace with the economic growth. It also indicates vulnerability of the export sector. Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, in his budget speech last month, said: "Our export sector remains highly vulnerable due to an overdependence on a narrow

oriented industries, though sector-wise targets provide a better indication. For policymakers, the target serves as a performance benchmark for the external sector. For exporters, it is a yardstick for measuring their overall success. For many years, the Ministry of Commerce has been setting annual export targets for goods. Setting the target for services started in FY22. Commercial services account for the majority of total services, while the remaining services are divided into government and other services. Commercial services are usually divided into four broad sectors: (i) transport, (ii) travel, (iii) goods-related services, and (iv) other commercial services. The trade in commercial services refers to intangible transactions involving services or related activities across nations. Setting the target for exports of goods is easier than for services. This is because the nature of services trade is more complicated and harder to estimate. Physical movement of goods is visible and can be counted by volume and value, whereas services are largely intangible, making them difficult to quantify. Measuring

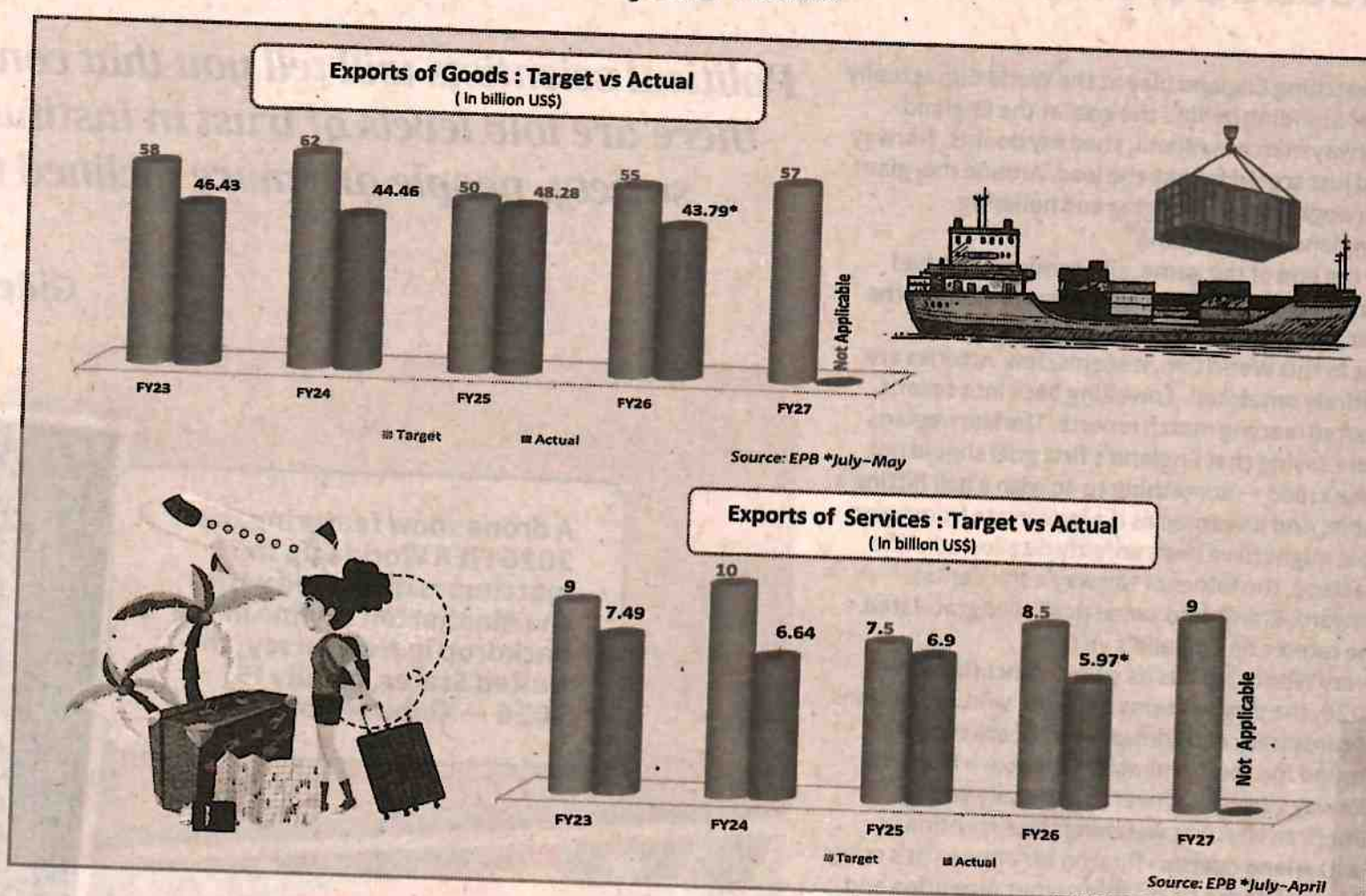
trillion. Thus, the total value of goods and services trade last year stood at \$34.65 trillion.

In Bangladesh, trade in services is also growing gradually, and at present it accounts for 14 per cent of total trade on average. Exports of services stood at around \$7 billion in FY25 and \$6 billion in the first 10 months of FY26, as per statistics furnished by EPB. The BoP data on services trade, estimated by Bangladesh Bank, is slightly lower than the EPB data due to some adjustments.

In the coming days, trade in services will be more critical as rapid digitalisation and the expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the landscape of global trade. That's why the WTO, in its Global Trade Outlook and Statistics released four months ago, pointed out that the growth of AI-related investment, as a larger share of investment, could boost the trade intensity of growth in the near future.

The outlook report, however, projected that world trade is set to slow this year after a strong surge last year. Merchandise trade volume growth may slide from 4.6 per cent in 2025 to 1.0 per cent in 2026.

due to the US-Israel's joint attack on Iran. Taking the negative impact of the war into consideration, the report said: "Given that the Gulf region is a major exporter of both energy and fertilizers, a prolonged interruption in supply could ripple across food systems, exacerbating the effect of pre-existing export restrictions." Meanwhile, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its Global Trade Update (April 2026), also cautioned that global trade growth is expected to slow later in 2026 due to persistent trade tensions and rising trade costs. The report also cautioned that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz would intensify inflationary pressures. "Rising energy prices, together with higher trade costs linked to tariffs, regulatory changes and the erosion of trade rules, further cloud the outlook," it added. The Middle East has intensified further, after a brief pause, as the United States (US) resumed attacks on Iran last week. Iran has also started to retaliate by attacking US bases and infrastructure in the region. As a



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Nevertheless, there is a tradition in Bangladesh and other countries of setting an annual target for export earnings. For the current fiscal year (FY27), the government has set targets of US\$57 billion in earnings from exports of goods and US\$ 9 billion from exports of commercial services. Thus, the total export earnings target for the current fiscal year is set at \$66 billion.

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Nevertheless, it is important to set an annual target for earnings from exports, as the target reflects the country's ambition to widen the international market for its various products. It also indicates the productivity of the country's export-

oriented industries, though sector-wise targets provide a better indication. For policymakers, the target serves as a performance benchmark for the external sector. For exporters, it is a yardstick for measuring their overall success.

For many years, the Ministry of Commerce has been setting annual export targets for goods. Setting the target for services started in FY22. Commercial services account for the majority of total services, while the remaining services are divided into government and other services. Commercial services are usually divided into four broad sectors: (i) transport, (ii) travel, (iii) goods-related services, and (iv) other commercial services. The trade in commercial services refers to intangible transactions involving services or related activities across nations.

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At present, one-fourth of the global trade is trade in services. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), last year, the value of world merchandise trade, as measured by exports, was US\$26.26 trillion, while trade in services reached US\$9.56

trillion. Thus, the total value of goods and services trade last year stood at \$34.65 trillion.

In Bangladesh, trade in services is also growing gradually, and at present it accounts for 14 per cent of total trade on average. Exports of services stood at around \$7 billion in FY25 and \$6 billion in the first 10 months of FY26, as per statistics furnished by EPB. The BoP data on services trade, estimated by Bangladesh Bank, is slightly lower than the EPB data due to some adjustments.

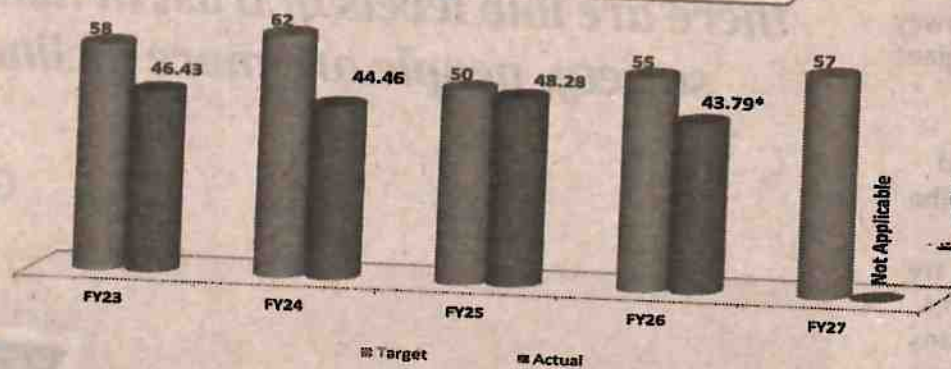
In the coming days, trade in services will be more critical as rapid digitalisation and the expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the landscape of global trade. That's why the WTO, in its Global Trade Outlook and Statistics released four months ago, pointed out that the growth of AI-related investment, as a larger share of investment, could boost the trade intensity of growth in the near future.

The outlook report, however, projected that world trade is set to slow this year after a strong surge last year. Merchandise trade volume growth may slide from 4.6 per cent in 2025 to 1.9 per cent in 2026, but is likely to increase up to 2.6 per cent in 2027, according to the WTO's primary forecast. The volume of trade in services is also expected to grow by 4.8 per cent in the current year, from 5.3 per cent last year, though it may rise by 5.1 per cent next year. The forecast was released when the Middle-East conflict had intensified

due to the US-Israel's joint attack on Iran. Taking the negative impact of the war into consideration, the report said: "Given that the Gulf region is a major exporter of both energy and fertilizers, a prolonged interruption in supply could ripple across food systems, exacerbating the effect of pre-existing export restrictions." Meanwhile, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its Global Trade Update (April 2026), also cautioned that global trade growth is expected to slow later in 2026 due to persistent trade tensions and rising trade costs. The report also cautioned that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz would intensify inflationary pressures. "Rising energy prices, together with higher trade costs linked to tariffs, regulatory changes and the erosion of trade rules, further cloud the outlook," it added.

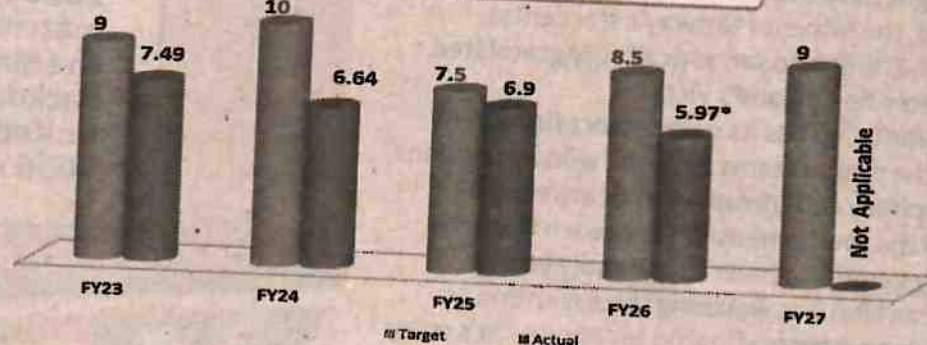
The Middle East has intensified further, after a brief pause, as the United States (US) resumed attacks on Iran last week. Iran has also started to retaliate by attacking US bases and infrastructure in the region. As a result, global trade growth has come under serious threat, which may prompt many countries to adopt protectionist trade policies. This will also shrink exports from countries like Bangladesh, making the attainment of export targets more difficult in the coming days.

Exports of Goods : Target vs Actual
(In billion US\$)

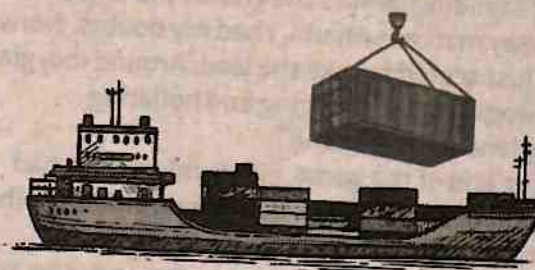


Source: EPB *July-May

Exports of Services : Target vs Actual
(In billion US\$)



Source: EPB *July-April



Chinese co to invest \$30m in BEPZA Economic Zone

Huarun Tex Co. Ltd., a Chinese company, is set to invest US\$ 30 million to establish a textile manufacturing industry in BEPZA Economic Zone (BEPZA EZ) in Mirsharai, Chattogram.

The factory will be built on 36,000 square meters of land. Once fully operational, the company will produce 24,000 tonnes of yarn and 20 million meters of gray woven fabric annually. The project will also create jobs for 580 Bangladeshi nationals.

A land lease agreement was signed recently between the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and Huarun Tex Co. Ltd. at the BEPZA Complex in Dhaka.

Md. Tanvir Hossain, Member (Investment Promotion) of BEPZA, and Bin Wang, Managing Director of Huarun Tex Co., Ltd. signed the agreement. BEPZA Executive Chairman Major General Mohammad Moazzem Hossain witnessed the signing ceremony.

BEPZA Executive Chairman thanked Huarun Tex Co., Ltd. for choosing Bangladesh specially the BEPZA Economic Zone for their investment.

The signing ceremony was attended by Abdullah Al Mamun, Member (Engineering); A N M Foyzul Haque, Member (Finance); Md. Khorshid Alam, Executive Director (Enterprise Services); Samir Biswas, Executive Director (Administration); Mohammad Anamul Haque, Project Director of BEPZA Economic Zone; and A.S.M. Anwar Parvez, Executive Director (Public Relations).

