The Daily Star 05 AUG 20

RMG, textile millers launch

FROM PAGE B1

To substantially increase value addition, we need a strong backward linkage industry, particularly spinning and textiles," he said.

He acknowledged that there are differences of opinion between the two organisations, but said that they were committed to resolving disputes through dialogue.

The two associations said the initiative is intended to help modernise Bangladesh's textile and garment industry by promoting advanced machinery, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, sustainable manufacturing technologies and innovation.

They said the exhibition would serve as a platform for global machinery manufacturers, technology providers, investors and fashion industry stakeholders to connect with Bangladeshi manufacturers, facilitating technology transfer, business networking, skills development and international trade partnerships.

According to the MoU, a 10-member joint organising committee, with five representatives each from BTMA and BGMEA, will oversee the planning and management of the exhibition to ensure joint decision-making and financial transparency.

The chairmanship will rotate annually between the two organisations. In the inaugural year, the committee will be chaired by a BTMA representative, with the co-chair nominated by BGMEA.

FROM PAGE B1

capabilities of public and private organisations.

Mahbub Anam also stressed the need for responsible use of social media and greater public awareness to prevent online harassment, misinformation and misuse of digital platforms.

Government agencies, businesses and citizens must work together to build a secure and trustworthy digital ecosystem, he added.

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) will jointly organise an annual international exhibition in Dhaka, showcasing the latest technologies in the textile and apparel sector.

BTMA President Showkat Aziz Russell and BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to that end yesterday at Gulshan Club in Dhaka.

The planned event, termed the Bangladesh International Textile and Apparel Machinery Exhibition (BITMA), will be held in Dhaka every year under the joint management of the two industry bodies, with support from internationally reputed exhibition organisers.

"The textile and garment sectors are two sides of the same coin. This is not just an exhibition, but a permanent platform for technological transformation, attracting foreign investment and developing skills," Showkat said.

"By bringing international top technology suppliers directly to Dhaka, we will give our local manufacturers a few steps ahead in the global competition," he added.

Organisers also expect the initiative to support the country's ambition of achieving $100 billion in exports.

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Speaking on this, Mahmud said achieving $100 billion in apparel exports would require a stronger domestic textile industry.

"We do not want to reach $100 billion in exports with only a small amount of value addition.

READ MORE ON B2

The Daily Star
05 AUG 2025

BGMEA, BTMA join hands to support $100b apparel export goal

RMG - BANGLADESH

TBS REPORT

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) have signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation aimed at achieving the country's $100 billion apparel export target.

The MoU was signed yesterday at the Gulshan Club in Dhaka by BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu and BTMA President Showkat Aziz Russell on behalf of their respective organisations.

As part of the agreement, the two trade bodies will jointly organise the Bangladesh International Textile and Apparel Machinery Exhibition in December.

The organisers said the partnership would help build a more innovative, sustainable and technologically advanced textile and ready-made garment (RMG) industry.

They said the exhibition aims to position Bangladesh as a global hub for sustainable textile and apparel manufacturing by showcasing advanced machinery, artificial intelligence (AI), fashion trends, technology transfer, skills I SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

BGMEA, BTMA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

development, sustainability initiatives, investment opportunities and international collaboration.

Speaking at the event, Mahmud Hasan Khan said while differences occasionally arise between garment manufacturers and textile millers, both sectors share the common goal of strengthening the industry.

He proposed forming a joint arbitration committee to resolve disputes over pro forma invoices (PIs) and letters of credit (LCs) to ensure commitments are honoured by both parties.

Showkat Aziz Russell said BTMA's biennial textile machinery exhibition, previously known as DTG, would become a larger and more globally recognised event through the partnership with the BGMEA.

The Business Standard
5 AUG 2026

Buyers seek clarity on gas crisis; BGMEA assures supply to improve soon

APPAREL – BANGLADESH

REYAD HOSSAIN

BGMEA requests Buyers Forum to allow shipment delay of 1-2 weeks if necessary

International buyers have sought assurances over Bangladesh's gas supply situation and the timely shipment of export consignments, while the ready-made garment exporters have said industrial gas supplies are expected to improve after 8 August and return to normal by around 14 August.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association met representatives of Buyers Forum Bangladesh in Dhaka yesterday to address growing concerns among international brands over whether export orders can be produced and shipped on schedule amid the country's ongoing gas shortage.

Speaking to The Business Standard, people present at the meeting said the BGMEA requested that buyers' representatives in Dhaka support factories facing production disruptions by allowing shipment delays of one to two weeks on a case-by-case basis where necessary.

Buyers seek updates on energy security

Representatives of international brands also sought details of the government's broader plans to strengthen Bangladesh's energy security and the timeframe required to implement those measures, according to a representative of a foreign brand who attended the meeting and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Moyeen Hyder Chowdhury, Bangladesh country manager of Puma, said buyers primarily wanted to know when the existing gas supply SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

situation would return to normal.

"The buyers' representatives wanted to know when the current gas supply situation would normalise," he said.

He said the BGMEA informed the meeting that one floating storage and regasification unit that had gone out of operation is expected to be repaired by 6-7 August, after which gas supplies would begin to improve.

Moyeen said buyers were also informed that another floating storage and regasification unit would be installed within the next 18 to 24 months. In addition, the business community had urged the government to establish a land-based liquefied natural gas storage facility to strengthen long-term energy security.

He said buyers had also requested regular updates on the progress of gas supply restoration.

During the meeting, the BGMEA said the gas shortage had not affected all industrial regions equally. According to meeting participants, the association said factories in Chatto-

Buyers also sought further clarification on the government's long-term strategy for ensuring energy security.

Attempts by TBS to contact BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu for comment were unsuccessful.

Earlier in the day, speaking to journalists after an event in Dhaka's Gulshan, Babu said the government had informed the industry that the country's energy situation would improve significantly over the next two years, allowing businesses to proceed with investment plans.

"The government has said the situation will become comfortable within two years. As an association, we will not wait two years before engaging with the government. We will monitor progress every month and continue to follow developments," he said.

He added that the gas shortage had reduced production at garment factories by 30% to 40%. "The gas crisis is causing financial losses, but our biggest concern is maintaining buyers' confidence," he said.

"That is why we are meeting Buyers Forum [illegible] to explain the current energy

become increasingly concerned about whether Bangladesh will be able to meet agreed shipment schedules under the current gas supply conditions.

Three exporters told TBS that buyers had contacted them to ask whether export orders could be shipped on time.

Shovon Islam, managing director of Sparrow Group, which exports garments worth about $350 million annually, said almost all of the company's buyers had emailed seeking updates on the situation.

"They are very concerned, particularly those with large orders," he said.

"No matter how much we try to reassure them, they will not rely solely on our assurances. They are verifying the situation independently."

Shovon said buyers are collecting operational data, while some compliance teams had visited factories to examine generator operating records.

"If the gas supply situation does not improve, some buyers may shift orders to

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He said buyers had also requested regular updates on the progress of gas supply restoration.

During the meeting, the BGMEA said the gas shortage had not affected all industrial regions equally. According to meeting participants, the association said factories in Chattogram and Sylhet were facing relatively fewer disruptions, while shortages remained severe in Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar and Mymensingh.

A representative of the Dhaka office of a leading European brand who attended the meeting shared a summary of the discussions with TBS. According to the summary, the BGMEA said reports claiming that factories owned by DBL Group had shut down because of the gas crisis were incorrect.

Buyers also sought further clarification on the government's long-term strategy for ensuring energy security.

Attempts by TBS to contact BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu for comment were unsuccessful.

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He added that the gas shortage had reduced production at garment factories by 30% to 40%. "The gas crisis is causing financial losses, but our biggest concern is maintaining buyers' confidence," he said.

"That is why we are meeting Buyers Forum representatives to explain the current energy situation, discuss what we expect from them and explore how we can jointly manage the impact." BGMEA sources said representatives of leading international buyers attended the meeting in person, while others joined virtually.

Exporters say buyers are increasingly concerned

Garment exporters said overseas buyers have become increasingly concerned about whether Bangladesh will be able to meet agreed shipment schedules under the current gas supply conditions.

Three exporters told TBS that buyers had contacted them to ask whether export orders could be shipped on time.

Shovon Islam, managing director of Sparrow Group, which exports garments worth about $350 million annually, said almost all of the company's buyers had emailed seeking updates on the situation.

"They are very concerned, particularly those with large orders," he said.

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Shovon said buyers are collecting operational data, while some compliance teams had visited factories to examine generator operating records.

"If the gas supply situation does not improve, some buyers may shift orders to other countries," he said.

More than 3,000 international buyers, brands and retailers source apparel products from Bangladesh. These include H&M, Marks & Spencer, Inditex, Primark, C&A, Lidl, KiK, Mango, Next, LPP, Matalan, Walmart, Gap Inc., Target, PVH, Levi Strauss & Co., VF Corporation, Nike, Under Armour and American Eagle Outfitters.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unlocking leather export potential

Bangladesh's leather industry has long been one of the country's strongest export sectors, yet it often receives far less attention than the readymade garment (RMG) industry. As Bangladesh's second-largest export-oriented sector, leather and leather goods generate more than US$1.0 billion in export earnings while providing employment to hundreds of thousands of people.

With abundant raw materials, skilled craftsmanship and decades of manufacturing experience, the industry already has a strong foundation for global success. Even so, much of its potential remains untapped. With the right strategies and long-term planning, the leather sector can play an even greater role in export diversification, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. Bangladesh has a lot of things going for it but it still has not made the most of the opportunities in its leather industry.

Despite its strengths, Bangladesh has yet to fully realise the opportunities its leather industry can create. The question is no longer whether Bangladesh can succeed, but why it has not yet reached its full potential. Bangladesh already has what it needs to compete globally, including abundant resources, skilled workers and manufacturing capabilities. The big problem now is not if Bangladesh can make leather products but if it can keep up with the demanding global market. Today buyers from importing countries do not just look for good prices and quality products. They also want to know that they can rely on the people they buy from and that they are honest and responsible. Bangladesh should see this as a chance to make its leather industry stronger than it is now.

Perhaps the biggest opportunity now lies in creating greater value from its products. Instead of relying heavily on raw and semi-processed leather exports, the country should continue expanding the production of finished leather goods such as footwear, handbags, wallets, belts, and other premium products. Greater value addition would not only increase export earnings but also create more skilled employment opportunities, strengthen domestic supply chains and generate higher foreign exchange earnings.

Bangladesh already possesses many of the advantages needed to become a leading player in the global leather industry. The challenge now is to build on those strengths through greater innovation, stronger international branding, value-added manufacturing and continued improvements in sustainability and industrial standards.

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The Financial Express
05 AUG 2026

Can semiconductors become the country's next growth engine?

With vision, complemented by patience and perseverance, the silicon chip may one day stand beside the stitched fabric as another enduring symbol of the nation's economic transformation,

writes

Wasi Ahmed

Bangladesh's ambition to enter the global semiconductor industry marks one of the boldest economic visions the country has embraced in recent years. For decades, the readymade garment (RMG) sector has served as the principal engine of export growth, employment generation and industrialisation. Yet no growth model remains sufficient forever. As the global economy shifts towards knowledge-intensive industries, Bangladesh too must search for its next frontier.

The government's declaration that semiconductors could become the country's next major growth driver therefore deserves careful attention-not merely as an announcement of policy but as a statement of national aspiration.

The semiconductor chip has become the invisible heart of modern civilisation. From smartphones and laptops to medical devices, automobiles, renewable energy systems, satellites and artificial intelligence, virtually every technological innovation depends on these tiny electronic components. Unsurprisingly, the global semiconductor industry continues to expand rapidly, with market estimates suggesting that its value could approach one trillion US dollars by the end of this decade. The opportunities are immense, but so is the competition.

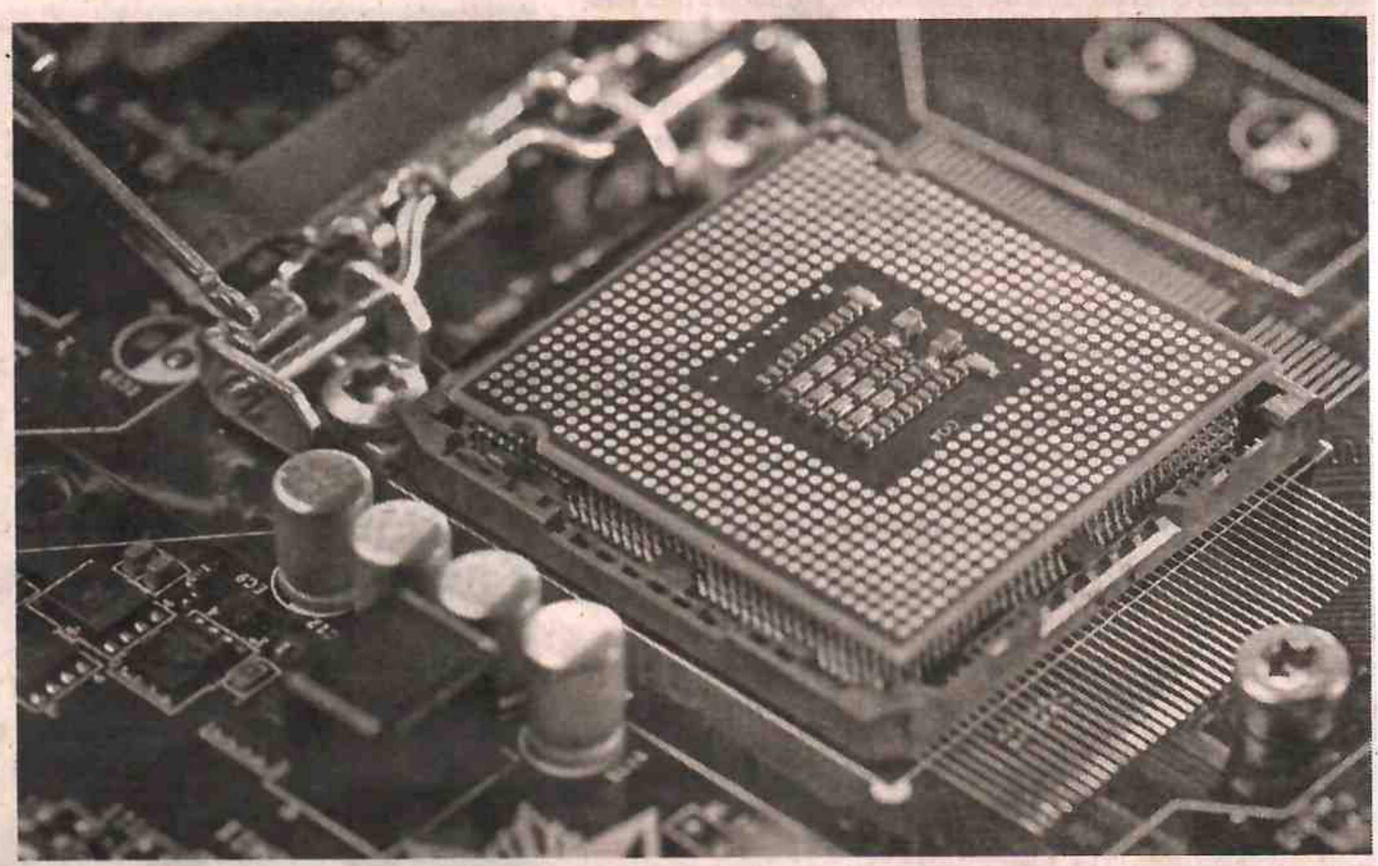
Against this backdrop, Bangladesh's desire to secure a place in this highly sophisticated value chain reflects a welcome change in development thinking. Rather than relying indefinitely on labour-intensive manufacturing, the country is beginning to recognise that future competitiveness will increasingly depend on innovation, engineering capability and advanced technological expertise.

The government's recent initiatives indicate an understanding of what such a transformation demands. Withdrawal of taxes and duties on raw materials used in semiconductor manufacturing, planned cash incentives for semiconductor design exports, startup grants for technology entrepreneurs, and commitments to modernise high-tech parks all point towards creating an enabling ecosystem. Equally encouraging is the proposal to establish biotechnology and deep-tech infrastructure alongside semiconductor development, signalling a broader vision of a knowledge-based economy.

However, building a semiconductor industry is far more complex than announcing incentives. Unlike conventional manufacturing, semiconductor production requires a highly skilled workforce, world-class research facilities, reliable electricity, ultra-clean manufacturing environments, sophisticated supply chains and enormous long-term investments. Even many developed nations continue to struggle to establish competitive semiconductor fabrication facilities despite possessing advanced industrial bases.

This reality suggests that Bangladesh should adopt a pragmatic rather than overly ambitious approach. Instead of attempting to compete immediately in capital-intensive chip fabrication, the country may find greater opportunities in semiconductor design, embedded systems, chip testing, advanced packaging and specialised engineering services. These segments demand considerably lower capital investment while allowing countries with strong human resources to integrate into global value chains.

Fortunately, Bangladesh possesses one valuable asset that cannot easily be replicated-its young



to national development. Building effective collaboration between universities, industry and the Bangladeshi technology diaspora could significantly accelerate knowledge transfer. Academic curricula must evolve rapidly to include semiconductor design, microelectronics, material science, integrated circuit engineering and related disciplines. Universities should also strengthen partnerships with international research institutions to expose students to cutting-edge technologies.

Private industries will likewise have to play a decisive role. Government policy can create incentives, but innovation ultimately flourishes where entrepreneurs are willing to invest, experiment and assume commercial risks. Local technology companies should be encouraged to collaborate with global semiconductor firms through joint ventures, research partnerships and specialised service contracts. Such collaborations would help domestic firms gradually acquire technical expertise while gaining access to international markets.

Infrastructure remains another indispensable requirement. Reliable electricity, uninterrupted digital connectivity, efficient logistics, intellectual property protection and transparent regulatory systems are prerequisites for attracting high-value technology investment. Investors in advanced manufacturing seek policy consistency above all else. Long-term confidence cannot be built on frequent regulatory shifts or administrative uncertainty.

There is also an important lesson from

design capabilities, research output, skilled employment and technology exports.

Moreover, Bangladesh should avoid viewing semiconductors simply as another export sector. Their importance extends far beyond foreign exchange earnings. A domestic semiconductor ecosystem would strengthen the country's broader digital transformation by supporting industries such as artificial intelligence, robotics, medical technology, telecommunications, renewable energy and smart manufacturing. In other words, investment in semiconductors has the potential to stimulate innovation across multiple sectors of the economy.

Ultimately, the aspiration to become a participant in the global semiconductor industry represents more than an industrial policy. It reflects Bangladesh's desire to redefine its economic identity in an era increasingly shaped by technology and innovation. Whether that aspiration becomes a reality will depend less on ambitious declarations than on sustained investment in education, research, institutional capacity and industrial competitiveness.

The journey will undoubtedly be long and demanding. Yet every successful technology-focused nation once stood where Bangladesh stands today-facing uncertainty but willing to invest in the future. If policymakers remain committed, universities become centres of innovation, industry embraces technological transformation and talented young engineers receive opportunities at home, the country's

(RMG) sector has served as the principal engine of export growth, employment generation and industrialisation. Yet no growth model remains sufficient forever. As the global economy shifts towards knowledge-intensive industries, Bangladesh too must search for its next frontier. The government's declaration that semiconductors could become the country's next major growth driver therefore deserves careful attention-not merely as an announcement of policy but as a statement of national aspiration.

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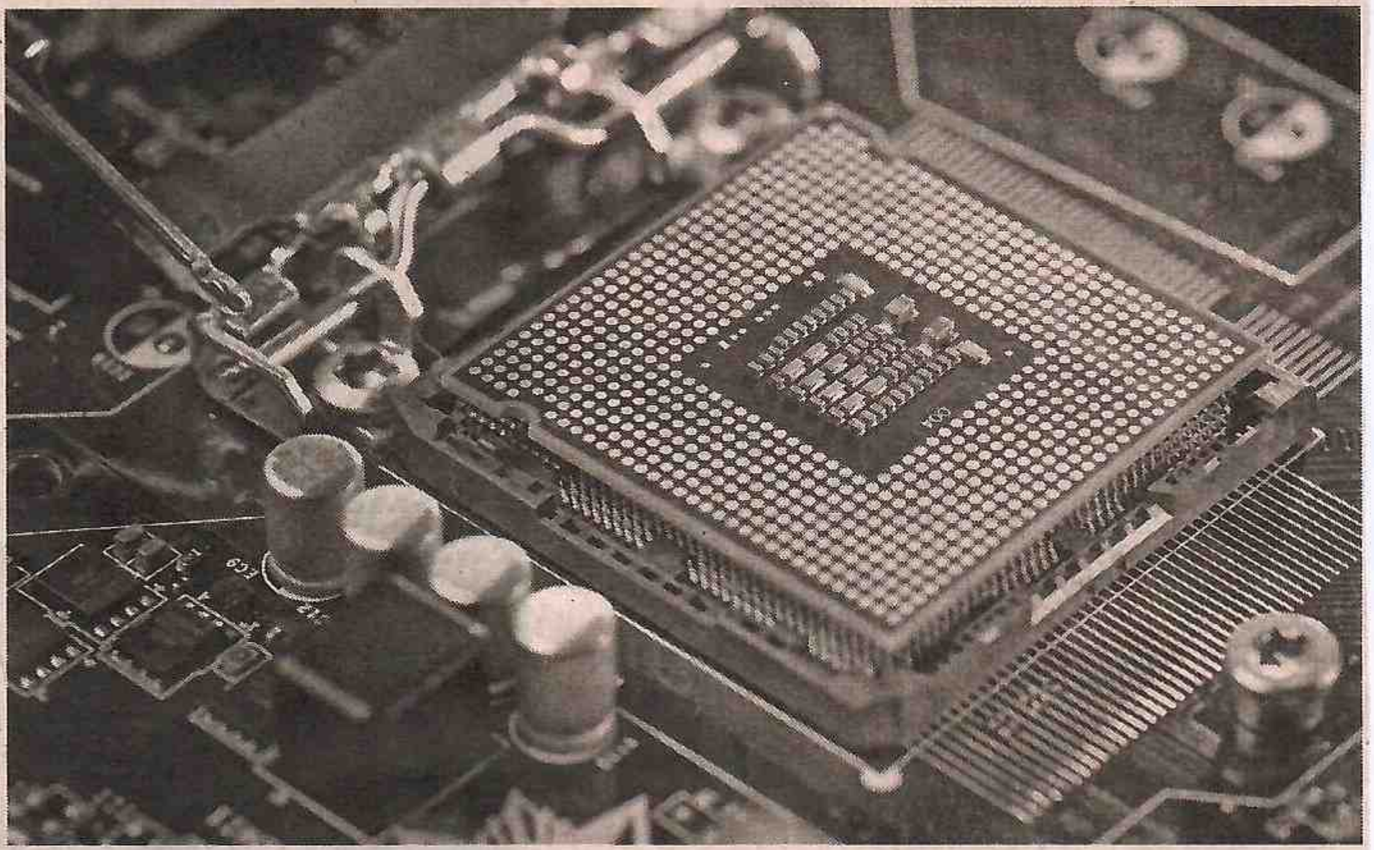

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However, building a semiconductor industry is far more complex than announcing incentives. Unlike conventional manufacturing, semiconductor production requires a highly skilled workforce, world-class research facilities, reliable electricity, ultra-clean manufacturing environments, sophisticated supply chains and enormous long-term investments. Even many developed nations continue to struggle to establish competitive semiconductor fabrication facilities despite possessing advanced industrial bases.

This reality suggests that Bangladesh should adopt a pragmatic rather than overly ambitious approach. Instead of attempting to compete immediately in capital-intensive chip fabrication, the country may find greater opportunities in semiconductor design, embedded systems, chip testing, advanced packaging and specialised engineering services. These segments demand considerably lower capital investment while allowing countries with strong human resources to integrate into global value chains.

Fortunately, Bangladesh possesses one valuable asset that cannot easily be replicated-its young population. Thousands of Bangladeshi engineers already work successfully in semiconductor companies, research laboratories and technology firms across the United States, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Europe. Their achievements demonstrate that the country's talent is internationally competitive when provided with the right education and opportunities.

The challenge lies in creating conditions that encourage this expertise to contribute meaningfully to national development. Building effective collaboration between universities, industry and the Bangladeshi technology diaspora could significantly accelerate knowledge transfer. Academic curricula must evolve rapidly to include semiconductor design, microelectronics, material science, integrated circuit engineering and related disciplines. Universities should also strengthen partnerships with international research institutions to expose students to cutting-edge technologies.

Private industries will likewise have to play a decisive role. Government policy can create incentives, but innovation ultimately flourishes where entrepreneurs are willing to invest, experiment and assume commercial risks. Local technology companies should be encouraged to collaborate with global semiconductor firms through joint ventures, research partnerships and specialised service contracts. Such collaborations would help domestic firms gradually acquire technical expertise while gaining access to international markets.

Infrastructure remains another indispensable requirement. Reliable electricity, uninterrupted digital connectivity, efficient logistics, intellectual property protection and transparent regulatory systems are prerequisites for attracting high-value technology investment. Investors in advanced manufacturing seek policy consistency above all else. Long-term confidence cannot be built on frequent regulatory shifts or administrative uncertainty.

There is also an important lesson from Bangladesh's own economic history. The garment industry did not emerge overnight. It evolved over decades through persistent entrepreneurship, international partnerships, policy support and continuous learning. The semiconductor sector, being vastly more sophisticated, will require even greater patience. Expectations should therefore remain realistic. Success should be measured not by immediate establishment of billion-dollar fabrication plants but by gradual expansion of design capabilities, research output, skilled employment and technology exports.

Moreover, Bangladesh should avoid viewing semiconductors simply as another export sector. Their importance extends far beyond foreign exchange earnings. A domestic semiconductor ecosystem would strengthen the country's broader digital transformation by supporting industries such as artificial intelligence, robotics, medical technology, telecommunications, renewable energy and smart manufacturing. In other words, investment in semiconductors has the potential to stimulate innovation across multiple sectors of the economy.

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The journey will undoubtedly be long and demanding. Yet every successful technology-focused nation once stood where Bangladesh stands today-facing uncertainty but willing to invest in the future. If policymakers remain committed, universities become centres of innovation, industry embraces technological transformation and talented young engineers receive opportunities at home, the country's semiconductor ambitions may eventually evolve from aspiration into achievement.

The future of Bangladesh's economy need not be confined to the remarkable success story of garments. With vision, complemented by patience and perseverance, the silicon chip may one day stand beside the stitched fabric as another enduring symbol of the nation's economic transformation.

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Exporters seek two more

FROM PAGE 8 COL 7

power and gas shortages to a combination of domestic supply constraints and disruptions in the global energy market.

Dr Rahman said Bangladesh was facing an acute gas shortage, particularly outside Dhaka, as domestic gas production had fallen far short of demand.

Years of inadequate investment in local gas exploration had increased the country's dependence on imported LNG, making the energy sector vulnerable to external shocks.

According to the adviser, the situation worsened after an accident forced the temporary shutdown of an LNG terminal, reducing gas supply to power plants and industries across the country.

To reduce the impact of load-shedding, the government has started generating electricity using diesel-fired power plants despite their significantly higher operating costs.

People in the capital city continued to suffer from the severe gas supply shortage on Tuesday also. The crisis left drivers of compressed natural gas (CNG)-run vehicles waiting for hours at refuelling stations, reducing their working hours and earnings.

Besides, households across different parts of the city were also facing acute hardship as low gas pressure disrupted cooking, forcing many families to rely on alternative fuels or purchased food.

Officials at the station said pressure remained around 100 psi in the morning before falling to nearly 70 psi later in the day. As a result, some drivers could refill gas worth only Tk 50 to Tk 70, while others managed a maximum of Tk 100 after waiting for hours in long queue.

A CNG-run three wheeler driver MD Sujon said he found many refuelling stations in the capital city closed due to supply shortage.

"Only a handful of the stations are open, yet we don't get adequate volume of gas causing serious trouble," he said and added that his earnings also almost halved to Tk 600- Tk 700 per day.

"When I get back home late in night I buy flat bread from restaurant since my household is also suffering due to the situation," he added.

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