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Published by:

Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP)
Economic Relation Division
Ministry of Finance

Hon'ble Chief Adviser Stresses Timely Implementation of the STS for Smooth LDC Graduation

Hon'ble Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus has called for timely implementation of the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) for ensuring a smooth and sustainable graduation of Bangladesh from LDC status.

Hon'ble Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus has called for timely implementation of the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) for ensuring a smooth and sustainable graduation of Bangladesh from LDC status.

Hon'ble Advisers, Special Assistants and Secretaries of various government ministries



Hon'ble Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus chaired the interministerial meeting on LDC Graduation held at the Chief Adviser's Office on 30 July 2025

and divisions participated in the meeting.

Bangladesh is expected to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status on 24 November 2026 after a preparatory period of five years.

The present government, led by the Hon'ble Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus, is actively overseeing and steering the preparatory process of LDC graduation.

It is recommended by the United Nations that a graduating LDC (Continued on Page 06)

Bangladesh's LDC Graduation Journey: Some Key Facts

- Identification as well as graduation from the LDC status is based on three criteria: (a) GNI per Capita, (b) Human Assets Index (HAI), and (c) Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI).
- The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) – a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is mandated to review the category of LDCs every three years.
- An LDC must meet any two of the three criteria in two consecutive triennial reviews to be recommended for graduation. Alternatively, the GNI per capita of an LDC should be at least twice the graduation threshold in two consecutive triennial reviews.
- Bangladesh met all the criteria for LDC graduation in two consecutive CDP triennial reviews in 2018 and 2021 respectively.
- Accordingly, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), as per the recommendation of the UNCDP and ECOSOC, took a decision in November 2021 that Bangladesh, after a preparatory period of five years, will graduate from LDC status on 24 November 2026.
- As per the UNGA resolution, formal graduation from LDC status takes place after a three years' preparatory period from the date of the decision of the UNGA. However, the UNGA took a decision to provide Bangladesh along with Nepal and Lao PDR, on an exceptional basis, a five-year preparatory period due to COVID-19.

Experts Call for Integrating All the Relevant Agencies into National Single Window

Stakeholders and policymakers at a recent meeting have called for full operationalization of the National Single Window (NSW) by integrating all the relevant agencies into this platform.

Full operationalization of NSW would be essential for increasing the competitiveness of local industries in light of the country's impending LDC graduation, they said.

Such recommendation came during a consultation meeting on the implementation of Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) held on 13 July 2025. Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

It was noted that the NSW is now functional, with only 19 agencies currently issuing certificates, licenses, and permits through the system. It was also recalled that, during the high-level meetings on LDC graduation with the Hon'ble Chief Adviser, a decision was taken to include more agencies and make the NSW fully operational by December 2025.



Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury chaired the consultation meeting on Implementation of STS held on 13 July 2025

In this context, the Hon'ble Special Assistant asked the NBR to take measures for integrating all relevant agencies, including the Department of Narcotics, into the NSW platform for ensuring seamless, single-point clearance for imports and exports.

During the meeting, NBR was urged to expedite implementation of the National Tariff Policy, with priority consideration for sectors like MMF-based garments, pharmaceuticals, and leather, etc. NBR was also requested to extend similar

policy support to other industries like bonded warehouse, import on FoC basis, partial bond facilities etc. to foster diversification and build globally competitive export sectors.

The meeting formed a committee under the Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) to streamline the process of importing essential chemicals for local pharmaceutical products.

It was also recalled that the Drug Control Committee (DCC), which approves the registration of new medicines, had not convened in over two years, resulting in a backlog of critical drug approvals, including those for cancer and other chronic diseases.

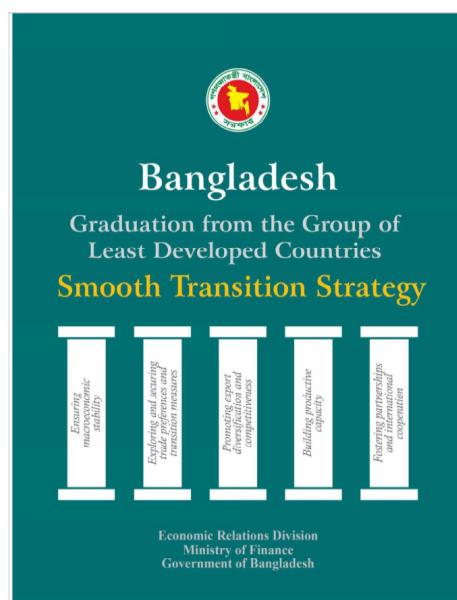
In this context, the Hon'ble Special Assistant urged Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) to immediately schedule DCC meetings and resume regular sessions in line with the 3–6 months statutory interval.

The DGDA was also advised to promptly finalize and **(Continued on Page 06)**

Govt Developing M&E Framework for Tracking Progress of STS

The United Nations recommends that graduating LDCs develop a national Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) during the preparatory period, engaging all stakeholders, including development and trading partners. In line with this guidance, Bangladesh has formulated its STS in collaboration with UN DESA, with technical support from the Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of ERD.

The STS incorporates a time-bound action plan-- prioritizing and expediting the implementation of necessary reforms to achieve sustainable graduation. Chapter five of the STS recommends the need for a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework based on this Action Matrix to track



and coordinate the necessary progress. SSGP consequently drafted Ministry/organization-wise M&E Frameworks which were shared with the relevant ministries, division and agencies.

The ERD with the Support of SSGP organized two training programmes on the STS. A series of cluster-wise Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also organized to refine and finalize the M&E Framework through interactive discussions and feedback. Consequently, a number of ministries and agencies have developed their draft STS framework. This framework is expected to play a highly instrumental role in ensuring timely, effective and coordinated implementation of the STS.

Uninterrupted Energy supply Crucial for Expansion and Diversification of Exports: Industry Leaders

Providing uninterrupted energy supply to industrial units would be crucial for further growth and diversification of export-oriented industries in Bangladesh, business leaders opined during a series of stakeholder consultations with the government held recently.

They reiterated this demand while holding several rounds of meetings with the Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury at his office during the month of July 2025.

Enhancing the competitiveness of the export-oriented sectors is critical for Bangladesh to address the challenges of LDC graduation. In this context, the Hon'ble Special Assistant met key industry leaders from major export-oriented sectors such as readymade garments, leather, and pharmaceuticals to discuss the key constraints affecting their growth and to explore potential solutions.

During the discussions, the business



leaders mentioned that Man-Made Fibre (MMF) based garments cannot be produced if energy supply is interrupted. Similarly, CETP (Central Effluent Treatment Plant) and API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) industry cannot be run without uninterrupted energy supply. Business leaders mentioned that despite substantial investments, several newly established API facilities remain non-operational due to the lack of gas connection and a reliable and adequately pressurized gas supply.

During the consultations, industry leaders brought the following issues

to the attention of the relevant policy makers and high officials:

- National Board of Revenue (NBR) should lead the integration of all relevant agencies (including the Department of Narcotics Control) into the Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) for seamless import clearance.
- Expedite implementation of the National Tariff Policy, prioritising sectors such as MMF-based garments, pharmaceuticals, and leather.
- Provide policy support (e.g., duty-free import of raw materials and capital machinery) for the MMF segment to encourage export diversification.
- Provide emerging export sectors with incentives similar to those offered to the RMG sector (e.g., bonded warehouse facilities, FOC imports, and partial bond facilities, etc.).
- Implement risk-based clearance procedures within the BSW, supported by clear Standard Operating Procedures

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Bangladesh Yet to Tap Central Asian Export and Investment Potential: Policymakers

Experts and policymakers at a recent meeting have opined that the Central Asian countries offer untapped opportunities for export and investment for Bangladesh.

Such views were expressed during an interministerial meeting on strengthening economic and business ties with Central Asia held in the capital on 21 August 2025. Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

High Officials participating in the meeting observed that the energy rich countries of Central Asia, with their fast-growing economy and strategic location between Europe and China can offer huge opportunities for Bangladesh to enhance trade and economic cooperation.



Overview of Central Asian Countries

- Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan
- Total population: 82.29 million
- Total GDP: USD 394.29 billion
- GDP per capita: USD 5,118.4
- Bangladesh's Exports: USD 118.9 billion
- Bangladesh's Imports: USD 119.44 billion

Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Mr. Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky said that there are untapped markets for traditional attires and leathergoods for the Bangladeshi exporters in the Central Asian countries. Reflecting on this, Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury said that the local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can be effectively linked up with the international supply chain to tap this largely unexplored market.

Additional Secretary of ERD and the Project Director of SSGP Mr. A.H.M. Jahangir delivered a keynote presentation during the meeting—highlighting the recent trade flow between Bangladesh and the (Continued on Page 06)

Make Agriculture Export-oriented and Ensure Good Governance for Overcoming Post-LDC Challenges: Home Adviser

Hon'ble Adviser of the Ministry of Home Affairs Lt. Gen. Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury has said that Bangladesh's agricultural industry should become more export-oriented to prepare this sector for post-LDC graduation challenges.

The Hon'ble Adviser, who also oversees the Ministry of Agriculture, made this remark while attending a workshop styled 'Local Level Stakeholders Consultation on Inclusive, Smooth and Sustainable LDC Graduation' held at the Munshiganj DC Office on 31 May 2025.

The Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) organized the workshop in collaboration with the Munshiganj district administration.

Hon'ble Adviser of the Ministry of Industries, Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan, Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury and ERD Secretary Md. Shahriar Kader Siddiky also attended the event as Guests of Honour. Deputy Commissioner of Munshiganj, Ms. Fatema Tul Jannat



Hon'ble Adviser of the Ministry of Home Affairs Lt. Gen. Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury speaks during the event

chaired the workshop.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Adviser of the Ministry of Industries, Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan said Munshiganj has all the potentials to become a major hub of small and medium enterprises.

Focusing on the development experience of East and Southeast Asian countries, Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury stressed on national unity and solidarity for achieving the long-term national goals.

ERD Secretary Mr. Md. Shahriar Kader

Siddiky emphasized on active initiatives from the private sector along with the government in meeting the challenges of LDC graduation. He also observed that there are scopes for setting up a biotechnology village in Munshiganj.

Deputy Commissioner of Munshiganj Ms. Fatema Tul Jannat hoped that the feedback received from the workshop would provide valuable inputs into the LDC graduation related policies and strategies of the government.

Additional Secretary of ERD and the Project Director of SSGP Mr. A. H. M. Jahangir delivered the welcome remarks of the event. Mr. Jahangir, in his welcome remarks, emphasized on sensitizing the local private sector representatives, especially the export-oriented industries about the opportunities to be created by LDC graduation of the country.

Former Additional Secretary to the government and Component Manager of SSGP Dr. Md. Rezaul Bashar delivered a presentation providing an overview of **(Continued on Page 05)**

Government Forms Committee for Speeding Up Pharma Ingredients

The government has recently formed a committee under the Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) to streamline the process of importing essential chemicals for local pharmaceutical products.

The move is expected to speed up the process of importing various raw materials including the components for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) for various pharmaceutical products in the country.

The committee has already sat for several rounds of meetings. Chaired by the Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control Mr. Md. Hasan Maruf, the meetings were also attended by the representatives from National Board of Revenue, Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI). Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of ERD is providing



Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control Mr. Md. Hasan Maruf chairing the first meeting of the committee secretarial support to the committee. During the meeting, the committee members reviewed the process of importing various chemical ingredients for pharmaceutical products in the country. They also suggested ways and means for streamlining and expediting the entire process.

The committee will soon submit a report containing specific recommendations on easing and streamlining the process of getting approvals from DNC and DGDA for importing various raw materials including chemicals for production of pharmaceuticals.

It is notable that Bangladesh's pharmaceutical sector has witnessed exponential growth over the last few decades. The TRIPS waiver offered to the LDCs under the WTO TRIPS Agreement is one of the key drivers of such impressive growth. However, the country would need to enhance its production capacity of API to prepare itself for post-TRIPS era in the aftermath of LDC graduation.

In this context, the pharmaceuticals sector has recently brought it to the government's attention that API production would require timely access to solvents, reagents, acids, alkalis, and other critical inputs-- which **(Continued on Page 06)**

Economic Self-reliance and National Unity Must for Sustainable LDC Graduation: Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury

Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury has said that Bangladesh must attain economic self-reliance to make LDC Graduation sustainable.

The Special Assistant made this remark while attending the 'Local Level Stakeholders Consultation on Inclusive, Smooth and Sustainable LDC Graduation' held in Mymensingh on 24 June 2025.

Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) organized the event in collaboration with the Mymensingh district administration.

Divisional Commissioner of Mymensingh Mr. Md. Mokhtar Ahmed attended the event as special guest. Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh Mr. Mofidul Alam chaired the workshop. The Special Assistant, in his speech, put emphasis on ensuring national unity and solidarity for enhancing the economic progress.

Divisional Commissioner of Mymensingh Mr. Md. Mokhtar Ahmed, recalled that the private sector of Bangladesh had gained adequate capacity and confidence by aptly dealing with



Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury speaks during the event

numerous challenges over the years. He was optimistic that Bangladesh would be able to cope with the LDC graduation related challenges by capitalizing that capacity and confidence.

Reflecting on the growth potentials of agriculture and other industries in Mymensingh, the Chair of the event Mr. Mofidul Alam put emphasis on technological upgradation, quality control, branding and integration with the supply chain.

Additional Secretary of ERD and the Project Director of SSGP Mr. A. H. M. Jahangir delivered the welcome remarks of the event. Mr. Jahangir, in his welcome remarks, emphasized on sensitizing

the local private sector representatives, especially the export-oriented industries about the opportunities to be created by LDC graduation of the country.

Former Additional Secretary to the government and Component Manager of SSGP Dr. Md. Rezaul Bashar Siddique delivered a presentation providing an overview of LDC Graduation process and its implications. Former Member of Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission and Component Manager of SSGP Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan delivered a presentation on 'Strategies for Smooth and Sustainable Graduation, and the Role of Local Level Stakeholders'.

Former Additional Secretary and International Trade Expert of SSGP Mr. Nesar Ahmed, Principal of Muminunnisa Govt. Mohila College Professor Dr. Maleka Bilkis, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) of Mymensingh Mr. Reza Md. Golam Masum Prodhan, General Secretary of Mymensingh Press Club Mr. Shaiful Islam and eminent business Leader Mr. AKM Mahbubul Alam spoke during the occasion as panelists.

Speakers at the workshop called for establishing high speed railway connectivity between Dhaka and Mymensingh, improving the quality of technical and vocational education as well as diversification of export items and destinations.

Highlighting the untapped potentials of agriculture in Mymensingh, discussants also put emphasis on ensuring fair prices for the farmers for their commodities, guaranteeing equitable access to proper preservation techniques, arranging training schemes for farmers and integrating them with the agricultural value chain.

Officials from ERD and SSGP, officials from the district administration as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations participated in the workshop.

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Make agriculture export-oriented: Home Adviser

LDC Graduation process and its implications. Former Member of Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission and Component Manager of SSGP Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan delivered a presentation on 'Strategies for Smooth and Sustainable Graduation, and the Role of Local Level Stakeholders'.

International Trade Expert of SSGP Mr. Nesar Ahmed, Principal of Govt. Haraganga College Professor Nazmun Nahar, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) of Munshiganj Mr. Md. Mahmudur Rahman Khondoker, founder of Yunus Khan Memorial

College Mr. Faridur Rahman Khan and the President of Munshiganj Press Club Mr. Bachiruddin Jewel spoke during the occasion as panelist.

Speakers at the workshop observed that there are huge potentials for developing agro-processing and tourism industry in Munshiganj. In this context, they called for infrastructure development, expansion of transportation networks, ensuring the supply of gas and electricity in factories and skill enhancement of the local youth.

Officials from ERD and SSGP, officials from the district administration as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations participated in the workshop.

Hon'ble Chief Adviser Stresses Timely

Implementation of the STS

should prepare a national Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) during the preparatory period involving all the stakeholders including development and trading partners. Accordingly, the STS has been formulated in collaboration with UN DESA and with technical support from the Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of ERD.

The STS incorporates a time-bound action plan- prioritising and expediting the implementation of necessary reforms to achieve sustainable graduation.

In this context, Hon'ble Chief Adviser put emphasis on regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the STS action plan.

Hon'ble Finance Adviser Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed stressed on sensitizing the private sector about the measures taken by the government for tackling the challenges of LDC graduation. He opined that such sensitization would generate confidence among the private sector.

Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury delivered the keynote presentation during the meeting.

During the meeting, Hon'ble Chief Adviser asked the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to identify a few more relevant agencies which should be included in the National Single Window and to take necessary measures for their inclusion in the platform.

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Experts call for integrating all the relevant agencies into National Single Window

adopt biosimilar registration guidelines in line with WHO standards, to facilitate timely access to affordable biologics and enhance pharmaceutical exports.

High level officials from the National Board of Revenue, Department of Narcotics and Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) participated in the meeting.

He also asked the NBR to prepare a timebound action plan for implementation of the National Tariff Policy.

The meeting reviewed the progress of the decisions taken during the earlier high-level meetings on LDC graduation chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Adviser.

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Uninterrupted Energy supply Crucial for Expansion and Diversification of Exports

(SOPs) and defined timelines for routine imports.

- Extend the NPL (non-performing loan) classification period from three to six months to encourage timely loan repayment and avoid sudden layoffs in RMG factories.
- Fully operationalize the CETP at Savar and ensure compliance with Leather Working Group (LWG) environmental standards within 12 months.
- Consider transferring CETP operations to a suitable public or private partner/entity for more efficient management.
- Hold regular meetings of the Drug Control Committee (DCC) and in compliance with the statutory 3-6 month interval.
- Finalize and adopt WHO-aligned biosimilar guidelines to ensure affordable biologics and promote pharma exports.

High level representatives from Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters

Dhaka, September 2025

Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB), and Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI) as well as officials from Economic Relations Division (ERD) participated in these meetings.

Major challenges identified during these consultations were later discussed during the interministerial meeting on the preparation of LDC Graduation chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Adviser on 30 July 2025. Subsequently, a number of policy initiatives have been taken to address those concerns.

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BD Yet to Tap Central Asian Export & Investment Potential

Central Asian countries as well as the potential areas of economic cooperation with the region.

Meeting participants opined that Bangladesh may explore the option of opening a few more diplomatic missions in the Central Asian countries. It is notable that currently Bangladesh has only one diplomatic mission in the entire region, located in Tashkent—the capital of Uzbekistan.

Policy makers also suggested to explore the option of establishing direct flight between Dhaka and Tashkent. Highlighting that the region is a major cotton producer, they suggested that local RMG owners could consider establishing overseas units there to secure easier access to Russia and neighboring markets.

It was informed during the meeting that an Intergovernmental Commission Meeting on Trade and Economic Cooperation between Bangladesh and Uzbekistan is expected to be held in October this year. High officials opined that a business delegation can visit Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries at that time to explore business potentials.

High level representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Energy and Mineral Resources Division and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) participated in the meeting.

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Government Forms Committee for Speeding Up Pharma Ingredients

are currently subject to lengthy approval processes involving multiple agencies. Against this backdrop, during an inter-ministerial meeting held on 13 July 2025 under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Special Assistant of the Ministry of Finance Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, it was decided to form a committee to provide specific recommendations for streamlining the process of importing certain ingredients which are crucial for pharmaceutical production.