

DCCI Business Delegation to UAE 2025

To further strengthen economic relations and bilateral trade between Bangladesh and the UAE, a 29-member business delegation from Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) recently visited UAE during 25-27 February, 2025. The delegation was led by Mr. Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI. The delegation represented 27 companies from different 18 sectors.

During the visit, the Abu Dhabi Chamber hosted a business networking forum titled “Strengthening Economic Ties between Abu Dhabi & Bangladesh” at the Abu Dhabi School of Management on 25 February, 2025. The Dubai Chambers also organized a business forum titled “Dubai-Bangladesh Business Briefing and B2B Matchmaking” on 26 February, 2025. And later, the Sharjah Chamber organized a business meeting titled “Bangladesh-UAE (Sharjah) Business Networking Forum” on 27 February, 2025. The delegation members have had productive business interactions with the business representatives from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah respectively.

It is worth mentioning that Professor Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy on International Affairs to the Honourable Chief Adviser, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, joined the DCCI business delegation and enlightened the visit with his presence and insightful remarks at the events organized by the Abu Dhabi Chamber and the Dubai Chambers. Tareq Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UAE was also present at these meetings hosted by both Chambers.

Leader of the delegation and DCCI President Taskeen Ahmed had also several private meetings with Shamis Ali Al Dhaheri Second Vice Chairman & Managing Director, Abu Dhabi Chamber, Mohammad Lootah, President and CEO, Dubai Chambers, Abdallah Sultan Al Owais, Chairman, Sharjah Chamber, Dr. Tayeb Kamali, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi School of Management’s Board of Trustees and Omar Al Hosani, Head of Investor Engagement, Abu Dhabi Investment Office.

Key Outcomes: Discussions during the Business Forum and Private Meetings

- The UAE investors showed interest to make investment in Bangladesh particularly in the fields of technology, healthcare, hospitality, tourism, infrastructure, logistics, skill development and renewable energy. The UAE’s investors lack information about investment ecosystem of Bangladesh particularly for technology sector (data center).
- Tech talent shortage in the UAE offers promising opportunity for Bangladeshi tech-savvy workforce to

cater the growing digital transformation services in the UAE which is valued more than US\$20 billion per year. This also offers opportunity for Bangladeshi tech-based startups to collaborate with the UAE companies.

- Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and the UAE recorded about USD 2 billion in FY 2024. Bangladesh’s exports to the UAE amounted to USD 402.63 million, while import stood at USD 1,352.9 million. The UAE imports only 0.10 % from Bangladesh out of its total global import volume. This trade relationship presents significantly untapped opportunities for further expansion. Moreover, Bangladesh can use the UAE as a gateway and distribution center to conduct international trade with greater African region and GCC region.
- Indian and Pakistani businesses have strong presence in the UAE market. In order to grab the opportunity, it is required to allow Bangladeshi businesses to open their branch office in the UAE.
- The UAE is considered as global leader due its extensive well-established free zone. The UAE can extend technical support and expertise to Bangladesh in developing economic zones.
- In order to increase trade and investment connectivity, activation of Bangladesh-UAE business council with sector-based approach is essential.
- Strengthening cooperation in the fields of trade finance, private equity and financial sector. The UAE may share its experience and knowledge to further expand Islamic securities including Sukuk bond in Bangladesh.
- The Bangladeshi expatriate community forms one of the largest foreign workforces in the UAE, accounting 17% of Bangladesh’s total overseas employment. Most of the Bangladeshi migrants in the UAE engaged in low skilled and low-paying jobs. Under G2G support, the private sector of both countries may focus on broadening collaboration to cater the UAE job market by providing trained workforce and professionals from Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh needs to focus on up-skilling its youth to enhance investors’ confidence and capitalize its demographic dividend. UAE can to set up skill development training centers in Bangladesh.
- Dr. Tayeb Kamali, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi School of Management’s (ADSM) Board of Trustees expressed interest to participate in the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025, organized by Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and sign a MoU with DCCI Business Institute (DBI) during any suitable timeslot of Bangladesh Investment Summit.

- Dubai Chambers also showed interest to inaugurate their representative office in Dhaka during the upcoming Bangladesh Investment Summit, following an invitation from BIDA.
- Demonstrated doing business reform initiatives in Bangladesh including introduction of authorized economic operator model, operationalization of national single window system, digital connectivity, optimization of port operations and ready economic zones.
- DCCI signed MoU with Dubai Chambers and Sharjah Chamber respectively. Under the MoU both Chambers set priority for broadening chamber-to-chamber collaboration to support interested member companies to facilitate their business matchmaking activities, promoting and facilitating economic cooperation, exchanging trade delegations, encouraging exports and economic discussion and exchanging trade information.

BUSINESS FORUM ON “STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN ABU DHABI & BANGLADESH”

Organized by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce

Date: 25th February 2025, Venue: Abu Dhabi School of Management

Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce hosted the business forum titled “Strengthening Economic Ties between Abu Dhabi and Bangladesh” on 25th February 2025 at Abu Dhabi School of Management. After the forum, a B2B networking session was also held, with participation from 27 DCCI member companies and around 30 Abu Dhabi based companies. Professor Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy on International Affairs to the Honourable Chief Adviser, Government of Bangladesh joined the forum and also spoke on the occasion.

Dr. Tayeb A Kamali, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Abu Dhabi School of Management delivered the welcome remarks. Taskeen Ahmed, President of DCCI, delivered inaugural remarks as the head of the delegation. Tareq Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UAE also delivered special remarks. Furthermore, Omar Al Hosani, Head of Investor Engagement at the Abu Dhabi Investment Office, delivered a key note presentation focusing on investment and business ecosystem of Abu Dhabi. On the other hand, Rizwan Rahman, Former President of DCCI delivered another key note presentation focusing on Investment and Business Opportunities in Bangladesh. Shamis Ali Al Dhaheri, Second Vice Chairman & Managing Director of the Abu Dhabi Chamber was also present during the program.

WELCOME REMARKS DELIVERED BY DR. TAYEB A KAMALI, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ABU DHABI SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT:

- Emphasized the longstanding and special bond between Bangladesh and the UAE, rooted in historical ties, mutual respect, and expanding economic cooperation.
- Showcased key initiatives and opportunities for collaboration, focusing on strengthening trade, investment, and cultural exchange.
- Highlighted priority sectors with significant potential for partnership, including energy transition, water resource management, training, logistics, and other emerging industries.
- Encouraged meaningful dialogue and productive engagements to foster deeper bilateral cooperation.
- Underscored success stories of the UAE in expanding its investment as well as attracting foreign investment through the development of skilled human resources. Bangladesh should also focus on its large pool of young generation to make them skilled enough so that foreign investors can get confidence to invest in Bangladesh utilizing this young and energetic demographic dividend.

INAUGURAL REMARKS DELIVERED BY TASKEEN AHMED, PRESIDENT, DCCI

- Emphasized the enduring partnership between Bangladesh and the UAE, with a total trade volume nearing USD 2 billion, including USD 402.63 million in exports from Bangladesh and USD 1,352.9 million in imports from the UAE.
- Highlighted the UAE as a key source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bangladesh, particularly in textiles, banking, power, trading, and construction, with an FDI stock of USD 321.67 million. In FY2024, the UAE contributed USD 26.65 million in FDI, ranking as the second-largest investor in Bangladesh after India.
- Underscored Bangladesh’s competitive and investor-friendly environment in South Asia, offering fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, a favorable regulatory framework, and targeted tax exemptions, creating substantial investment opportunities for UAE businesses, particularly in non-oil sectors.
- Invited the UAE investors to invest in renewable energy, infrastructure, logistics, information technology, tourism, hospitality, skill development and healthcare sector of Bangladesh. He also requested the UAE businessmen to hire manpower from Bangladesh who are skilled in information technology, textile and engineering industries.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY OMAR AL HOSANI, HEAD OF INVESTOR ENGAGEMENT, ABU DHABI INVESTMENT OFFICE (ADIO):

- Over the years, Abu Dhabi's economy has evolved through different phases, starting with infrastructure development in the early 2000s and advancing towards a focus on economic diversification, agility, and competitiveness today.
- The UAE's Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA) and bilateral agreements with neighboring countries play a key role in facilitating this process.
- Abu Dhabi offers foreign investors 100% ownership and zero income tax, fostering an environment where businesses can thrive. The city is recognized for its livability, offering a high quality of life, which is considered a key pillar of the economy. With over 200 nationalities living and working in harmony, Abu Dhabi promotes a strong, inclusive, and diverse community.
- Furthermore, Abu Dhabi is focused on developing economic clusters, with a particular emphasis on sustainable energy, advanced technology, and innovation. The city is positioning itself as a leader in these sectors, aiming to drive international exports of advanced technology and data. Livability continues to be a critical factor, with sectors such as life sciences, food, and water being prioritized for future growth. The economic strategy is built on agility, ensuring that the city can adapt to ongoing transformation while remaining competitive on the global stage.

KEY POINTS HIGHLIGHTED BY RIZWAN RAHMAN, FORMER PRESIDENT, DCCI:

- Demonstrated the strong growth of Bangladesh's economy in FY24 with a GDP of USD 459 billion and a 5.82% growth rate.
- The country maintained a robust trade performance, with exports reaching USD 45.64 billion and imports totaling USD 63.11 billion. Employment levels remained high, with 67.51 million people employed.
- Private investment contributed 23.51% to GDP, while per capita income stood at USD 2784. The labor force was recorded at 70.06 million, with one-third belonging to the youth demographic (ages 15-29).
- Bangladesh and the UAE maintain strong trade and investment relations, with the UAE ranking as Bangladesh's 18th largest trading partner. Bangladesh received US\$ 321.67 million FDI stock from the UAE. Moreover, the UAE remains a key remittance source for Bangladesh.

- A Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) or Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the UAE and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) needs to be discussed at the G2G level to enhance market access and trade benefits for both nations.
- UAE investments in Bangladesh are concentrated in key sectors such as banking (22.19%), trading (14.73%), and power (9.72%). Additional areas of investment include fertilizer, leather, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, construction, and machinery.

Day-2

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN DCCI AND DUBAI CHAMBERS

Date: 26th February 2025, Venue: Dubai Chambers

A MoU was signed between DCCI and Dubai Chambers. Dhaka Chamber President Taskeen Ahmed and Dubai Chambers President and CEO Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. The MoU underscored to collaborate for exploring the opportunities of strengthening bilateral economic and commercial relation; share information in the field of investment, business matching and networking activities; improve and expand international business relations between the UAE and Bangladesh; and foster the development and the diversification of commercial exchanges and economic cooperation on a mutually advantageous basis between the Parties respective members.

DUBAI- BANGLADESH BUSINESS BRIEFING

Organized by Dubai Chambers

Date: 26th February 2025, Venue: Conference Hall, Dubai Chambers

Dubai Chambers warmly welcomed the delegation by organizing a business forum titled "Dubai- Bangladesh Business Briefing and B2B Matchmaking Session". Approximately 120 member companies from Dubai Chambers and 27 companies from DCCI delegation participated in the event. Professor Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy on International Affairs to the Hon'ble Chief Adviser, Chief Adviser's Office, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh joined the forum and delivered special remarks.

Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers delivered welcome remarks during the business briefing session. Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI delivered inaugural remarks. Subsequently, H.E. Tareq Ahmed, Ambassador of the Embassy of Bangladesh in the UAE gave



A snapshot of B2B networking at the Dubai Chambers held on February 26.

his special speech. Omar Khan, Head of Research and Data at Dubai Chambers delivered key note presentation from Dubai side focusing on role of Dubai as investment destination. Rizwan Rahman, Former President, DCCI delivered key note presentation from DCCI side highlighting investment and business opportunities in Bangladesh. Summary of their speeches are noted down below.

WELCOME REMARKS DELIVERED BY MOHAMMAD ALI RASHED LOOTAH, PRESIDENT AND CEO, DUBAI CHAMBERS:

- Appreciated partnership with the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the anticipation for the exciting opportunities ahead. By collaborating, trade and investment levels between both markets can be further enhanced, contributing to a prosperous future.
- Underscored to strengthen cooperation between the business communities in Dubai and Bangladesh to foster partnerships and contribute to achieving shared developmental goals. He also assured of extending comprehensive support to Bangladeshi businesses and investors to help them grow their operations in Dubai.
- He also requested the Bangladeshi companies to establish their local offices in the UAE that would play an important role in helping Bangladeshi exporters to grab the Middle Eastern as well as African market.
- Urged Bangladeshi IT companies to invest in the UAE. He opined that establishing an effective data center in Bangladesh is crucial for the development of the information technology sector.

REMARKS DELIVERED BY TASKEEN AHMED, PRESIDENT, DCCI:

- Collaboration with the public sector and development organizations has been actively pursued to advance shared development agendas, strengthening private sector engagement and the overall business environment.
- The private sector, as the key driver of economic growth, has played a crucial role in fostering investment and employment generation. With a swift recovery, Bangladesh achieved significant GDP growth in 2024, marking notable progress across all sectors. The country is now set to transition into a developing economy.
- Dubai's strategic location serves as a vital gateway for Bangladeshi businesses to access the growing halal market, projected to reach \$9.7 trillion by 2025, further enhancing opportunities for trade and collaboration.
- Recognizing the significant impact that united efforts by chambers of commerce can bring, investors and traders from the UAE, especially esteemed members of the Dubai Chambers, are warmly invited to explore Bangladesh's promising investment opportunities across diverse sectors.
- Bangladesh's competitive investment framework, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, favorable regulatory environment for foreign investors, 100% foreign ownership, bonded warehouse facilities, strong intellectual property protection etc. make Bangladesh an attractive destination for UAE investment.
- Urged the entrepreneurs of Dubai to set up skill development training centers in Bangladesh and invest in the renewable energy, FINTECH, financial sector, healthcare, logistics, information technology and tourism sector.

PRESENTATION DELIVERED BY OMAR KHAN, HEAD OF RESEARCH AND DATA, DUBAI CHAMBERS:

- Emphasized Dubai's role as a global trade hub and investment destination offering immense opportunities for collaboration with Bangladesh.
- With Bangladesh's private sector contributing 80% to GDP, the country is poised for rapid economic growth. Dubai's strategic position as an investment hub allows it to act as a catalyst in supporting Bangladesh's economic resilience and connectivity. Investors from Dubai, familiar with both markets, can bridge gaps and unlock potential opportunities.
- Dubai provides 100% foreign ownership in 27 economic zones and benefits from multiple free trade agreements, including CEPA, to attract green fuel investment and manufacturing expansion. The government offers numerous incentives to promote industrial and service sector growth, reinforcing Dubai's role as a gateway for global trade.
- As a top-ranked FDI destination, Dubai continues to attract high-value investments, particularly in IT, textiles, consumer goods, and food security. The logistics and re-export sector further strengthening its global position, connecting over 200 destinations via Emirates Airlines and handling significant cargo movements.

PRESENTATION DELIVERED BY RIZWAN RAHMAN, FORMER PRESIDENT, DCCI:

- Bangladesh and the UAE share strong trade and investment ties, with growing bilateral trade and investment volume.

- UAE investments in Bangladesh span banking (22.19%), trading (14.73%), and power (9.72%), alongside sectors like fertilizer, leather, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, construction, and machinery. Bangladesh offers attractive investment opportunities with its strategic location, a consumer market of 170+ million, and developed infrastructure, including ports, airports, and regional road networks.
- Underscored the growing interest of flagship UAE based companies to expand their footprint in Bangladesh in the area of Port, logistics, healthcare and renewable energy.
- Mapped the possible areas of collaboration focusing in energy, establishing direct shipping line, exploring Dubai as re-exporting hub, facilitating movement of skilled workforce and expediting the process of signing PTA or FTA.

Day-3

MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDNET, DCCI AND CHAIRMAN, SHARJAH CHAMBER

Date: 27th February 2025, Venue: Sharjah Chamber

On 27th February 2025 another high-level meeting between Taskeen Ahmed, President, DCCI and Abdallah Sultan Al Owais, Chairman, Sharjah Chamber was held at the Sharjah Chamber. The summary of the meeting discussion is noted below:

- The growing commercial linkage between Sharjah and Bangladesh present substantial opportunities for bilateral collaboration, with Sharjah benefiting from Bangladesh's skilled workforce, competitive manufacturing sector, and expanding export industries.



A snapshot of B2B networking at the Sharjah Chamber held on February 27.

- The UAE can explore investment opportunities in Bangladesh, leveraging its lower export costs and strategic geographic location to facilitate market entry into South Asian and Southeast Asian countries.
- Urged entrepreneurs of Sharjah to explore investment opportunities in Bangladesh's infrastructure sector and collaborate in the logistics sector by exchanging expertise, experience, and knowledge to enhance bilateral trade and commerce.
- Investors were also encouraged to consider Bangladesh's IT sector, capitalizing on the country's large and dynamic youth population. The ongoing growth in Bangladesh's youth population, skilled workforce, and technological advancements presents ample opportunities for deeper economic connections in this sector.
- Additionally, jute products, leather and leather goods, home appliances, footwear, food processing, and the establishment of offshore banking services by UAE banks, including Sharjah Islamic Bank, were highlighted as promising sectors for investment.
- The global halal market is projected to reach USD 9.71 trillion by 2025, driven by increasing demand for halal-certified products and services across industries such as food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Bangladesh's emerging potential in the halal sector offers Sharjah-based businesses a strategic opportunity to tap into this growing market.

- Sharjah Chamber emphasized the UAE's strategic location as a gateway for Bangladeshi businesses to expand into East and West African markets.
- Emphasized on skill development of Bangladeshi workers to enhance employment opportunities in the UAE, where the Bangladeshi workforce currently exceeds one million across various professions.

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN DCCI AND SHARJAH CHAMBER

Date: 27th February 2025, Venue: Sharjah Chamber

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry was signed on February 27, 2025. President of Dhaka Chamber Taskeen Ahmed and Chairman of Sharjah Chamber Abdallah Sultan Al Owais signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. Under the framework of the MoU, both chambers focus on promoting and facilitating economic cooperation among their business communities to the mutual interests of both sides including exchanging trade delegations, encouraging exports and economic discussion, expanding business network and exchanging trade information.

Outcome of the B2B Matchmaking Meetings

To assess the outcome of the B2B meetings, DCCI conducted a post delegation evaluation survey. The findings of the survey are depicted below:

