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**Shaping Bangladesh's Trade Future: Public and Private Leaders
Chart Path for a Competitive Logistics Ecosystem**

Bangladesh's logistics sector, widely recognised as the backbone of its global trade, took center stage recently at a high-level Business Session titled, *"Navigating the Future: The Evolving Landscape of Logistics in Bangladesh."* Hosted by **H.E. Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen**, Ambassador of Norway at his residence, the session was jointly organised by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka, The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) Bangladesh, and the Nordic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI). Bringing together regulators, global operators, and economic experts, the event examined how Bangladesh can overcome persistent bottlenecks in trade facilitation, reduce logistics costs, and enhance its competitiveness as the country enters a new era of economic transformation.

The session opened with welcome remarks by **H.E. Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen**, Ambassador of Norway to Bangladesh, followed by **Tanveer Mohammad**, President of NCCI and CCAO of Grameenphone, and **Md Mahbub ur Rahman**, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh. The keynote presentation was delivered by **M Masrur Reaz**, **Chairman & CEO of Policy Exchange Bangladesh**, and the panel discussion was joined by **Rear Admiral Saleh Mohammad Moniruzzaman**, Chairman, Chittagong Port Authority and **Nikhil D. Lima**, Managing Director, Maersk Bangladesh.

During the keynote presentation, **M Masrur Reaz** provided a data-driven outlook on the sector's future. He highlighted that without rapid reforms, Bangladesh risks losing its competitive edge in global value chains, particularly as preferential trade agreements phase out in the coming decade.

The discussion highlighted, Bangladesh currently handles over 90% of its trade through the Chittagong Port, placing immense pressure on a single gateway. While megaprojects such as the Bay Terminal, Matarbari deep-sea port, and Mongla expansion are underway, industry leaders spoke about the required improvements in customs clearance, infrastructure, policy supports and so on. While it has been identified that the overall logistic cost is still on the higher side in Bangladesh, some small improvements have the potentiality to bring remarkable results.

M Masrur Reaz in the event estimated, just 1% reduction in transport cost can increase RMG exports by c.7.4%. On the other hand, if logistics cost in Bangladesh can be reduced through some infrastructure and policy improvements by just 25%, exports of the country can increase by 20%. Ensuring the minimum speed at just 40 km/hr in Bangladesh's national highway can increase the exports by 3.7%. reduction in dwell time by just 1 day can boost national export by 7%+.

The session underscored that solving Bangladesh's logistics challenges will require a **whole-of-ecosystem approach**, combining **regulatory reforms, private investment, public-private dialogue, and adoption of technology**.

The discussions pointed toward several immediate priorities:

- Accelerating **digitalisation** of customs and clearance procedures.
- Ensuring timely implementation of the **Bay Terminal and Matarbari deep-sea port**.
- Promoting **multimodal transport** and regional connectivity (BBIN, BIMSTEC).
- Attracting **strategic investment** into logistics infrastructure and technology.
- Embedding **sustainability and decarbonisation** into the future of trade.

H.E. Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen shared his insights and added "As Bangladesh charts its path to middle-income status, an efficient logistics sector is not just a priority, it's a necessity. Norway stands ready to partner with Bangladesh in this journey, combining our maritime expertise, green technology, and digital innovation to support a sustainable, interconnected future."

Speaking on behalf of the Nordic business community, **Tanveer Mohammad** emphasised the urgency of reform and added, "For Bangladesh to sustain its growth momentum and attract high-quality investment, logistics must move from being a bottleneck to being an enabler of trade. Nordic companies, with their expertise in sustainable supply chains and digital transformation, are eager to partner in this journey. Together, we must build a logistics ecosystem that is competitive, resilient, and future-ready."

Speaking at the event **Md Mahbub ur Rahman** mentioned, "As the leading international bank in Bangladesh, HSBC remains ready to connect the unique synergies that exist in the Bangladesh Nordic corridor. With the evolving global trade landscape, logistics will remain crucial for making our businesses competitive. This competitiveness will also depend on national infrastructure – port and beyond that will require reform, selective privatisation, and better multimodal integration. Our bilateral trade agreements will also remain pivotal as we move towards LDC graduation – regardless of when it happens."

The Business Breakfast Session concluded with a strong call to action: Bangladesh's logistics transformation must move from aspiration to execution. The organisers — the Royal Norwegian Embassy, HSBC Bangladesh, and NCCI — committed to continuing the dialogue, fostering collaboration, and supporting reforms that will enable Bangladesh to emerge as a **competitive, connected, and sustainable trading nation**.

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Media enquiries to:

Nowrin Islam
Talukdar Noman Anwar

+8801321154978

nowrin.islam@hsbc.com.bd
talukdarnomananwar@hsbc.com.bd

Note to editors:

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