

# A journey of success in Bangladesh

How MNCs are thriving and investing back



**Bata**



 GE HealthCare

 grameenphone

  
**Hero**

 **HSBC**



**Marubeni**

  
**Nestle**

 **NOVARTIS** | Reimagining Medicine

 **SINGER**

 **syngenta**

  
Unilever

**YOUNGONE**

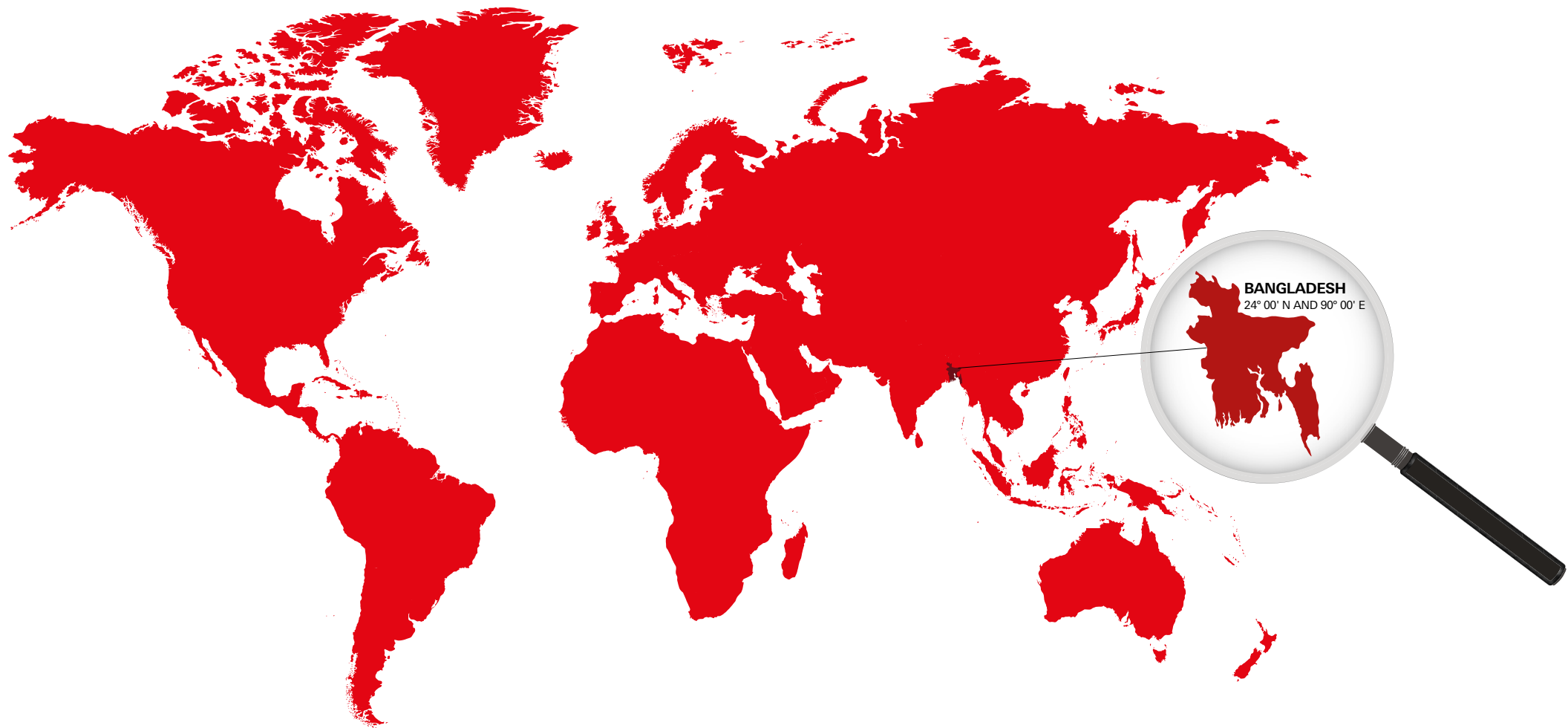


**HSBC**

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#ProudlyInBangladesh

Volume 1



Bangladesh is becoming a destination of choice for companies wanting to do business in Asia. Lying at the heart of a triangle formed by the world's most dynamic economies - China, India and Southeast Asia - and home to a growing domestic market and young workforces, Bangladesh has a reckoning global supply chain offering vast opportunities.

Visit our country guide to discover more about doing business in Bangladesh: <https://www.business.hsbc.com/business-guides/bangladesh>



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# Foreword

Bangladesh, with its young population, considerable size and strong entrepreneurial spirit, has always demonstrated high potential for growth. Over the past 26 years, HSBC Bangladesh has supported a number of world-leading multinational companies (MNCs) to build their presence in the country, as well as helping connect local businesses with a large global network, while driving high international trading standards.

One of the phrases we use a lot is "Proudly in Bangladesh". For more than a quarter of a century, HSBC has been proud to help support the country's growth journey. In this publication, we take a closer look at some of the MNCs that are driving growth, breaking barriers in innovation and creating new opportunities for the country and its people. Those same businesses also benefit from being in Bangladesh, accessing the skills, ambition and opportunities that this country offers.

As a Nation, we are proud of what we can offer the world. As a country, we are proud of our competitive advantage and the resilience we have shown to continue to grow and thrive during the challenges of the past few years. As a Bank, we have a responsibility to continue to support Bangladesh's growth in the years ahead. However, what got us here will not take us where we want to be.

We aspire to remain relevant to our customers, both corporate and retail, regardless of where they are in their journey.

In the age of globalisation and inter-connected economies, we aim to be even more connected and relevant for the world. HSBC Bangladesh has established itself as one of the country's original brands — and as a brand that people look up to. Through HSBC's global network, we continue to drive best practices and high international standards so that Bangladesh is well-positioned to take advantage of globalisation, as well as the localisation that we are so proud of.

Adapting to the changing landscape for trade and investment and bringing international standards to the country will remain our key values in the coming years and beyond.



**Md Mahbub ur Rahman,**  
Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh



A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Bata: Bringing style to the feet of millions

***Bata***

#ProudlyInBangladesh



**TRENDY,  
STYLISH,  
FRESH.**



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## A journey of success: Bata & Bangladesh

They are the shoes that have walked with pride all over the nation. From European beginnings, Bata has invested in the story of Bangladesh since it gained independence from Pakistan in 1971. The company has followed the journey of the nation's citizens, becoming a much-loved brand and socially active organisation familiar to generations young and old.

With a proud Central European heritage, The Bata Shoe Company was established in 1894 in the Czech town of Zlín. At the time it developed rapidly into a world-leading shoemaker by volume, selling its line of "stylish and comfortable shoes at an affordable price".

Affordable comfort is a characteristic of Bata shoes that has carried through to the present day – with the idea that everyone in the family, from grandparents to grandchildren, can benefit from wearing them.

Today, Bata serves customers from over 5,500 stores, and shoes are produced locally in 23 Bata-owned manufacturing facilities across five continents.

"Our founder Tomáš Bat'a had a dream to provide affordable footwear to the masses. As part of his mission, he opened businesses in many countries throughout the world," says Anirban Ghosh, Country Manager for Bata Bangladesh.

"Our factory in Tongi was opened in 1962 to service the people of Bangladesh and ensure the many who went without footwear could afford it. Bata's objective is to be recognised as a local company that is for the people of Bangladesh," he adds. "We are proud to say that the Bangladeshi people have always championed our brand and have been loyal consumers."

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Bata



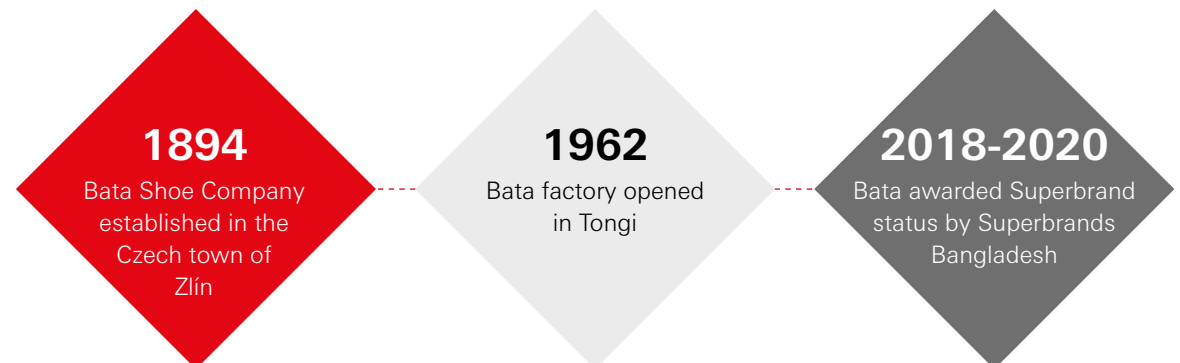
HSBC Bangladesh has remained a core trade bank for Bata Bangladesh (Bata BD) since 2007, providing a range of solutions for the company, including internet banking services and savings accounts tailored to the business' needs.



HSBC is committed to providing Bata BD with support in the company's import of raw materials and finished goods, providing overseas trade operation expertise and a network of global connectivity. HSBC has played a key role in helping Bata BD to address the challenges and uncertainties arising from international trade. The bank has particularly assisted the business with increasing its commercial and shipping knowledge and confidence.



HSBC has partnered with Bata BD to adopt a digital banking platform for international trade and payment needs.





## A journey of success: Bata & Bangladesh

Since that initial investment in the 1960s, Bata has always led the way in the sector nationally. Now with 60 years of operation in the country under its belt, the company is not only a well-loved footwear brand, but has earned an enviable reputation for its high standards of governance and its appeal as an employer of choice.

## A brand in hearts

Bata's traditional yet caring social and commercial philosophy, as seen in the way it was embedded in the town of Zlín, is something that has carried over to Bangladesh with remarkable success.

The brand is often described as being in the hearts of the people, not least because people have grown up with Bata shoes for school, for leisure, for celebrations and for work.

It's of little surprise, therefore, that it remains the most premium footwear brand with the largest market share in Bangladesh – an accolade recognised by Superbrands Bangladesh in recent years, which awarded the company Superbrand status during 2018 to 2020.



## Innovating to compete

Until 2000, Bata enjoyed free rein in Bangladesh's footwear market before local brands started to create competition. But the company's significant and continual investment in footwear innovation has helped it stand apart, thanks to its 128-year global history.

Indeed, Bata was the go-to shoe retailer for Bangladeshi schoolchildren across the country, who would be taken to the stores prior to the new school year to get formal shoes for class and white sport shoes for physical education. Brands such as 'Naughty Boy' became the popular choice for young male students.

Innovation, too, is crucial to Bata's success, supported by two principal centres in Italy and China. It's about addressing the need to develop and retain comfort for customers.

## Pioneering credentials

One fresh strategy that has captured the imagination of Bangladesh's consumers is the diversification of Bata's appeal beyond the family's choice, until recently perceived purely as the shoes all Bangladeshis grew up with, or the ideal footwear for the elderly.

Competition from other global names has also prompted a pivot in Bata's approach to include the younger, fashion-conscious Bangladeshi with a fresh and appealing range that has been named Surprisingly Bata.

And with attitudes hardening among younger consumers towards sustainable fashions, Bata has responded with innovations such as the 100% sustainable shoe – made from recycled PET bottles and recyclable ortho-line soles.



## Commerce with compassion

As for the many corporates so heavily invested in the fortunes of Bangladesh as a nation, the COVID-19 pandemic was a disruptive force that threatened to stall both the economy and its citizens. Bata's philosophy from the beginning was to offer support in any way possible. And as a result the 'One Million Pairs of Shoes' concept was one significant project.

The concept was simple and global: a commitment to donate one million pairs of shoes free to frontline workers in the fight against Covid including healthcare workers, police and their families.

Since the onset of the outbreak, Bata, through its worldwide 'Bata Heroes' initiative, had been working with its long-standing foundations, charitable partners, government officials, and other organisations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, in countries as diverse as India, the Czech Republic, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Colombia, Italy, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Chile, Peru, Thailand and Malaysia.

Bata produced and donated face masks, face shields and protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers, as well as donating food, hygiene products or funds through the Bata Children's Programme (BCP) and the Bata Shoe Foundation.

When examining where the team could make the most impact, it was clear that the critical shortage of PPE could threaten to shut down the health system at those hospitals treating seriously ill patients with COVID-19.

Although without direct manufacturing experience, the team at Bata collaborated with HeLO, a reputed local NGO which works closely with



doctors and other healthcare workers, to jointly produce and distribute 7,200 units of PPE to frontline doctors, nurses and healthcare-givers. The initiative also protected Bata's store employees with the additional production of masks, face shields and hand sanitiser.

As part of the company's wider social commitments, the global BCP initiative takes on board the importance of a universal education and delivers a whole range of projects that cover underprivileged areas, boosting access to schools, building a better infrastructure, and developing students' and teachers' capabilities.

Some projects will focus on a particular school, which – as well as receiving funds – will typically welcome Bata volunteers to provide long-term support.



## Made with love

Anirban Ghosh says: “Bata is a truly loved brand with customers at its heart. We believe we have earned both our customers’ trust and satisfaction over the years we have been in Bangladesh.”

“But we are also proud of our good governance as a business, which we believe reflects the best model for our employees. It’s normal, for example, for employees to be with us for 20 to 30 years.”

As Bangladesh progresses rapidly and continues to make its mark on the world economy, Bata’s owners say they are “excited to be a part of this opportunity. We continue to focus on growing our company, and providing more employment opportunities in the country”.

The company has an eye on its wider regional opportunities in Asia-Pacific this decade, where growth is generating a whole new class of consumers with both money and fashion sense.

It is clear that the changing fashion and dynamics of the footwear market spells a golden opportunity for Bata to consolidate its position as a future favourite for many years to come.

A journey of success in Bangladesh

# GE: US innovation helps drive growth



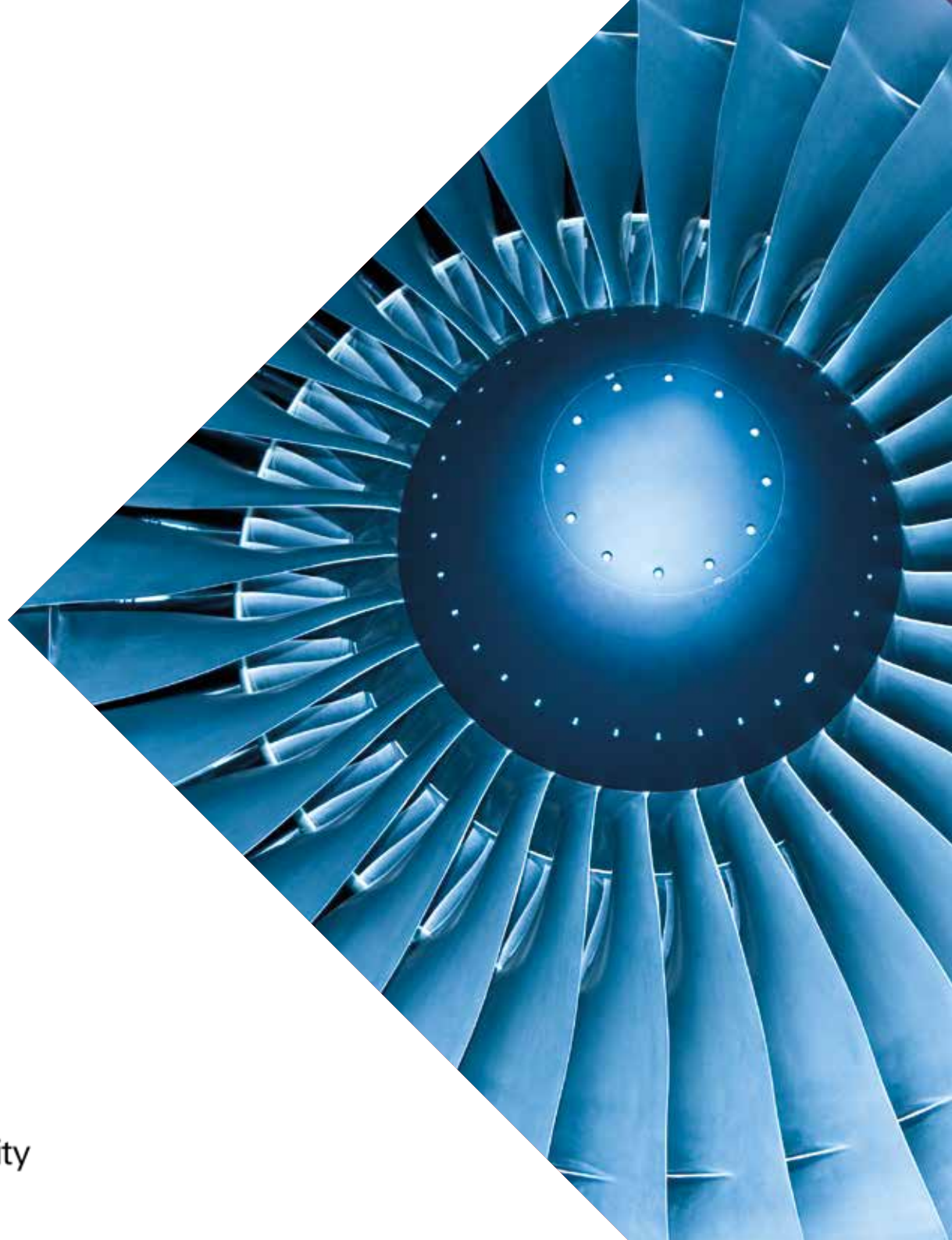
GE HealthCare

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## A journey of success: GE & Bangladesh

Bangladesh's economic growth of the past 50 years owes much to the rapid development it has seen in its energy infrastructure during that time. And one of the world's best-known industrial hi-tech companies – GE – has been at the heart of the country's progress throughout the decades from a rural, developing market to a vibrant emerging economy.

Fifty years since the founding of the modern nation of Bangladesh, there are few companies that have played such a key role in its growth and development as GE, the multinational corporate best known for its vast, innovative infrastructure projects in energy, aviation and medical technology.

In fact, GE – a company that has been innovating globally for over 130 years – is in its own right a crucial piece in the fabric of the country. Its story started in 1970, prior to the Liberation War that resulted in the birth of Bangladesh, when it installed the country's first steam-powered turbine.

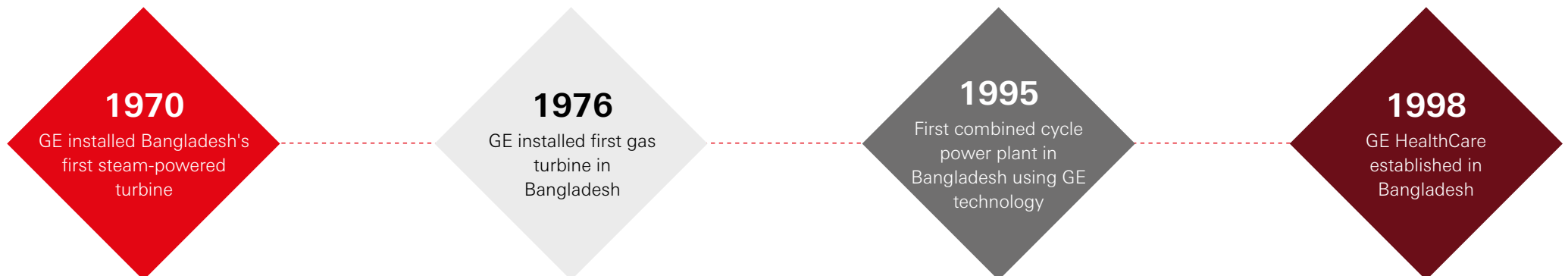
Back then, the company saw opportunity in a region that was ripe for development but which at the time lacked sufficient power resources and grid infrastructure to realise its economic potential.

In the following years, GE committed to growing Bangladesh's power capabilities.

In 1976 it installed the first gas turbine in the combined cycle mode and, by 1995, it executed the 1<sup>st</sup> controls retrofit on a gas turbine.

By the turn of the 21st Century, GE had already embedded itself in the power sector in Bangladesh, but was also diversifying into innovation in healthcare, renewable energy, engines, lighting solutions and aviation technology. Additionally, the company provides turnkey and equipment supply services for customers present in the country.

By using a partnership model with local companies across these sectors, GE has been able to live up to its mantra of "In Bangladesh, For Bangladesh" while being able to lay claim to supporting significant improvements in the quality of life for people across the country.



# Powering Bangladesh's growth

Diverse sectors aside, GE's power-generation activity has been one of the main drivers of Bangladesh's industrialisation. Today, GE Gas Power is responsible for a large proportion of the country's gas-based power output, estimated at 3GW of electricity. GE Gas Power's gas turbine technology is generating reliable, affordable and cleaner power through a fleet of 38 gas turbines across the country. These are backed up by a network of engineers to provide customer support – both local and international – when required. GE is providing its customers with life-cycle solutions for the equipment including repairs, upgrades, maintenance, and software and analytics when required.

New infrastructural opportunities also play a role in GE's continued development. Technological solutions from GE's Gas Power Services are helping to improve performance, lower costs and ensure that the lights can stay on for all.

Power stability and resilience in Bangladesh is a top priority, according to CEO of GE Gas Power for South Asia, Deepesh Nanda, given that it is the necessary foundation for continued economic growth through gas and renewables.

**“ While the country already has more than 25GW of output, the aim is to ensure that people are getting round-the-clock and reliable electricity.”**

Deepesh Nanda,  
CEO, GE Gas Power for South Asia



“Through our operations we have generated job opportunities for more than 2000 people in Bangladesh, including both direct and indirect hires. We are committed to contributing towards greater economic development in the country and addressing the challenges, while establishing a sustainable energy mix for Bangladesh and moving towards energy security.”

The longer-term shift away from agriculture to a more industrial economy means that power supply needs to keep up with growth, and there are significant opportunities to exploit it through technology and smarter business models.

One smarter way to ensure Bangladesh's infrastructure can thrive between industries is to provide that technology to energy-intensive sectors like oil and gas, marine propulsion, defence, rail, metals and mining. Through GE Grid Solutions, under GE Renewables, the company provides customers with anything from advanced transmission hardware, substations and software to motors and circuit breakers that support supply stability and efficiency.

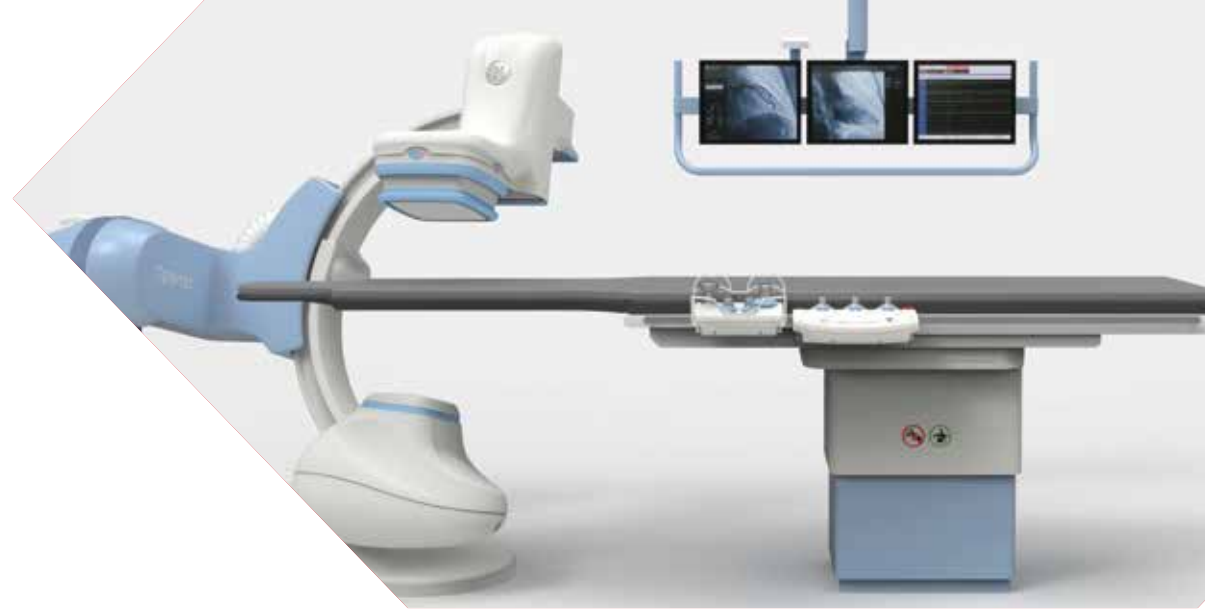
# A happier, healthier nation

The presence of GE HealthCare in Bangladesh is much more recent, having been established in 1998. In just over 20 years, GE HealthCare has transformed the technological capabilities of the country's medical sector with multiple innovations to help improve quality of life. It is the leading partner of major private and public healthcare facilities in the country, with over 5,000 installed equipment units helping to transform Bangladesh's healthcare. With the introduction of AI-based diagnostic imaging technology (MRI, CT and Cathlab), upgraded ultra-sound, echocardiography and lifecare solutions (ventilators, monitors, anaesthesia and ICU/NICU), the benefits of GE HealthCare equipment and technologies are reaching millions of people in the country.

A key focus for GE HealthCare is on equipment and technologies that will tackle some of the country's most challenging health problems. Cancer, heart disease and maternal/infant deaths have long been an uncomfortable part of life in Bangladesh – and innovative technologies are finally improving affordable access to treatments and diagnostics that are enhancing people's lives. Through a number of local partnership arrangements, GE HealthCare has been able to lay claim to establishing Bangladesh's first molecular oncology centre and its first digital mammography centre in association with United Hospital.

With maternal and infant health such an important factor in the social and economic stability of the country, GE HealthCare has helped to drive down access costs, as well as deliver training programmes via a partnership with the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck Bangladesh, GE HealthCare saw the opportunity to develop a support framework to raise awareness among the healthcare community by helping develop guidelines for the safety of healthcare professionals and patients. The dedicated service team was tasked with making sure all critical equipment was running under very difficult conditions, while a special protocol was introduced for COVID-19 diagnosis at the point of care using mobile X-Ray, ultrasound and computed topography (CT).



Cutting-edge equipment, however, needs trained operators, so GE HealthCare has partnered with the Bangladesh Society of Radiology and Imaging (BSRI), to provide professional development workshops and training.

Similarly, the company has worked with the Shristy Institute to develop and train young practitioners in diagnostic ultrasound – a crucial skill that better helps support maternal and heart health.

Indeed, GE HealthCare aims to partner with both private and governmental organisations in continuing to develop healthcare skills using education platforms. It is this innovative technology that is set to improve healthcare knowledge and access for millions of people in Bangladesh.



## The good citizenship story

Lying at the heart of GE's presence in Bangladesh is a story of empowering people – both employees and Bangladeshis in all walks of life.

While the company would be expected to encourage a healthy work-life balance, the stated mission to advance economic development and improve lives carries through to voluntary activity too.

GE Volunteers is a global network that brings staff, associates and families together to be "good people doing great things". The network has carried out a range of high-profile social improvement projects in Bangladesh, not least in child education, tree planting and environmental clean-ups. Also active at a global level is the GE Foundation, a multilayered social programme that includes, among other initiatives, educating and training the next generation of innovators across the GE specialisms.

**“ With engineering so core to GE, we have also recognised the need to pave the way for others, particularly in diverse populations who are woefully under-represented in the field.”**

Linda Boff,  
President, GE Foundation

The GE Foundation has committed up to US\$100m to create the Next Engineers programme—a global college-readiness initiative specifically focused on increasing the diversity of young people in engineering.

Over the next decade, the goal of Next Engineers is to reach more than 85,000 students in approximately 25 cities globally to develop the next

generation of engineers and innovators. The programme will focus on students under-represented in engineering in grades eight to 12 (ages 13 to 18), providing hands-on exposure to engineering concepts and careers, and ultimately awarding scholarships to pursue engineering degrees. Next Engineers has three pillars: Engineering Discovery, exposure through a careers fair, assembly, or classroom to increase awareness about engineering opportunities; Engineering Camp, a week-long immersive experience to develop engineering identities; and Engineering Academy, a three-year programme to guide and encourage students to pursue engineering degrees.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and GE



HSBC has supported GE's Bangladesh projects for 15 years, and currently acts as the sole cash management and facility bank for the company.



HSBC is able to offer extensive support to GE's wide ranging international trade endeavours, taking advantage of a global client network. Working in partnership with GE, HSBC can provide expertise in handling overseas trade operations and support GE in seamless import management.



GE makes use of HSBC's extensive international connectivity to trade with businesses across the globe.

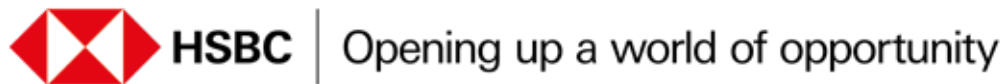


A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Grameenphone: Connecting Bangladesh to the world



#ProudlyInBangladesh



**A journey of success:** Grameenphone & Bangladesh

Grameenphone's 25-year presence in Bangladesh is a fitting example of how commercial, social and technological advances can combine under the simple idea of empowering people through connectivity. The innovative Norwegian company's journey from telephony service to a vital enabler in Bangladesh's growing data infrastructure and economy leaves little doubt as to the future opportunities that the country can now fulfil with a cutting-edge network behind it.

Grameenphone started its business in 1997 in Bangladesh to empower rural women and marginalised communities by minimising the digital divide.

With this mission in mind, it began as a social enterprise that, right up to the present day, has become part of its operational DNA in affecting social and commercial change through its digital connectivity services. After securing funding from several sources including the Norwegian telecom giant Telenor, Grameenphone was born.

The social mission to democratise access to information and technology remains strong. Its 55.8% majority joint venture partner, Telenor Group of Norway, itself has a long history dating back to 1855, and connectivity remains the number one priority. That hinterland of support has also armed the company in Bangladesh with the investment capability and technology to make a valuable difference in growing the network over 25 years.

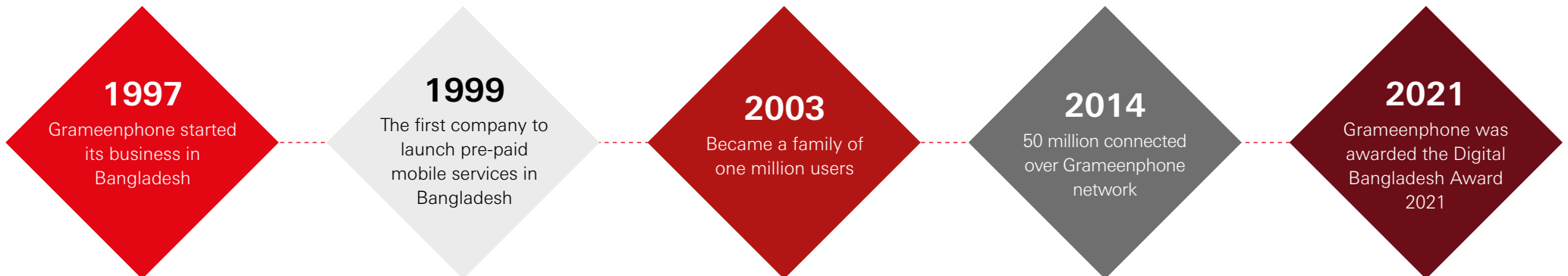
Grameenphone's early establishment in Bangladesh earned it the reputation for what was known as "bringing the village phone to the woman". This very act was significant in empowering women to be an active part of the growing economy and play a role in the country's commercial life.

It is clear that connecting people through mass, rural communication has been fundamental in the story.

"Since its inception, Grameenphone has had a rural focus," says Yasir Azman, the company's first local CEO, "staying true to its purpose of empowering societies. Our society in Bangladesh has diverse citizens with varied needs which are constantly evolving. By modernising operations and technological advancement, we are accelerating the eradication of the digital divide and getting future-ready towards a smart Bangladesh."

**“ Since its inception, Grameenphone has had a rural focus, staying true to its purpose of empowering societies.”**

Yasir Azman,  
CEO, Grameenphone



## Affecting change and building a digital economy

The Government of Bangladesh has itself set a target to become a middle-income economy by 2031 and a high-income digital economy by 2041. Grameenphone's mission has evolved over time to support the nation by empowering societies to connect them to what matters the most, fulfilling citizens' digital needs through the widest 4G network connectivity, while also creating a social impact as a responsible corporate citizen with good governance across the value chain. This enables the nation to benefit from the role it plays to realise the collective vision of building a digital future for the whole country.

Through the Digital Bangladesh initiative, for example, Grameenphone was awarded the Digital Bangladesh Award 2021 for its support of the digital ecosystem through its start-up platform, GP Accelerator. This is a pioneer business platform designed to support tech start-up businesses with resources, grants, mentoring and investor opportunities. This makes a hugely positive impact on the country's economy while bringing about an entrepreneurial revolution in the nation to tap into the fourth industrial revolution opportunities. But, more fundamentally, it is access to the deep coverage of data, network and IT services that is arguably giving these new businesses the biggest boost.

Grameenphone is the market leader in Bangladesh's telecommunications sector, since inception, holding approximately 46% of the national market share and above 81 million subscribers.

The goodwill towards the company was reaffirmed by its winning the country's Best Loved Telecom Brand award from the Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) – for the 13th time (in 2021). Azman believes that "a combination of trust and innovative technology is what continues to set us apart in the sector".

The importance of digital connectivity and the telecommunications network across Bangladesh touches nearly every sector. Perhaps no more so in recent times than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when pressure on operations, supply and performance was inevitably felt across the board in sectors including textiles, agriculture, education and health. But wherever mobile technology had played a role in pre-pandemic days, industry and society was subsequently better prepared for the surge in demand that was so vital in such difficult times.



# Connecting people across Bangladesh

In fact, it was Grameenphone's early strategic focus on developing rural areas with the "village phone" concept that has earned the business a significant competitive position in the country since then. As of 2021, Grameenphone had 19,700 base stations covering every city and most rural areas across Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's fishing fleet, too, has been able to benefit from network coverage that actually extends 38 kilometres out to sea. Previous voyages, often a month long, would see crews either completely disconnected from their families or having to rely on an expensive satellite system based out of Singapore. Simpler but effective and affordable technology has since given fishermen the ability to stay in touch with their loved ones, even tracking each other's boats for security – a prime example of minimising the digital divide.

The company's record of firsts is undoubtedly impressive: internet access in the country, as well as 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G were all pioneered by Grameenphone – and yet the journey still has many miles ahead. There remains significant untapped potential for further internet penetration across the country, including expansion of the roll-out of 5G on which much of this connectivity will depend. To get there, the company has invested substantially to secure the spectrum necessary to bolster its networks in Bangladesh. In one spectrum auction in March 2021, Grameenphone successfully bid just under US\$146m to help consolidate its position.

The circumstances of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 were an acid test of how the provider could cope with the significant increase in data load and ensure Bangladesh's network could maintain resilience throughout this period.



There was approximately 500% growth, for example, in online learning management solutions such as educational platforms, and the bandwidth requirement was breaking all previous records for the country. It has been estimated that the rate – some 2,556TB (terabytes) per second – was close to the maximum national capability of 2,700TB per second. Moreover, as more and more people were homebound, data usage increased even in rural areas, leading to the rise of small online businesses on F-commerce (Facebook commerce) platforms across the country.

## Upskilling for success

With new network demands and capabilities now a more prominent feature of daily life in Bangladesh, Grameenphone is very conscious of the parallel need for talent and training to ensure the growth journey is smooth. This will enable the company to support the country's vision of becoming a self-sustained knowledge-based economy.

New technology, for example, is coming on stream to help inaugurate 5G capacity, and Grameenphone is positioning itself to be at the forefront of the Bangladeshi Government's ambitions to move up the value chain and achieve "middle-income" status.

But in order to bring the country's talent with them, equipping the youth with digital skills to be future-ready is essential.

In Grameenphone's case, this has meant an opportunity to partner with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) to form a post-pandemic recovery project known as Future Nation. Under the scheme, one million youths will be trained in the next three years with the necessary future skill sets to lead the country's development. With this ambition, the company also formed GP Academy, a learning platform, in collaboration with Telenor Group and Cisco.

Grameenphone's own employees don't lose out either. The '40-hour learning challenge' is a highly popular vehicle for ensuring that employees have the opportunity to better their own knowledge and apply it to future development both professionally and personally. Indeed, the challenge earned Telenor Group in the Nordic Region and Asia an e-learning world record in October 2021, for training the highest number of employees in its Growth Mindset course in just 24 hours.

Bangladesh's own data revolution is well and truly underway.

Grameenphone's executive team is aware that the need for data will only keep growing. So, its future ambitions are twofold: to continue the fight to maintain stable 4G connectivity across the country and unravel 5G in due course and exploit the technologies it has available to advance when needed.

And second, Grameenphone stresses the importance of nurturing its partnerships with global technology companies, which the organisation has managed to ensure that citizens who lose network connectivity are still able to access emergency services. Partnerships like these, it says, are crucial to attracting more inward attention to Bangladesh and the growth opportunities it represents.





## Social trailblazers

There's no doubting that the appetite for data and online services in Bangladesh is vast. So, to ensure that the future generation develops a responsible and productive attitude to the opportunities coming from such advancements, Telenor Group and Grameenphone developed an Online Safety Programme with UNICEF, initiating training and sensitisation sessions for youth and parents. The programme pools the insight of thought leaders and promotes the strategy via popular social media celebrities to explore how the next generation can use the online world productively and protect their online safety. It has been so successful that the Bangladesh Government has since decided to make online safety a core part of the national school curriculum.

The social ambitions continue to diversify, too. Grameenphone proudly refers to "creating new access points for people" – whether that means providing dedicated customer care for the some three million profoundly deaf citizens across the country through its Signline initiative or integrating rural communities via the internet by helping them to use Facebook for their businesses.

Similarly, the Dakche Amar Desh, 'My Nation Calls' initiative in 2020 saw national development organisation BRAC and Grameenphone join forces to support over 400,000 people from some of the country's most vulnerable communities. In 2021, the initiative ran again – this time under the name of Dakche Abar Desh, 'My Nation Calls Again' where other corporates and individuals also supported the cause, which meant that collectively they were able to reach out to an even larger number, standing beside the nation in dire times such as the pandemic.

And in a country where natural disturbances can be all too frequent, Grameenphone has also earned a solid reputation for stepping up to provide disaster response operations during times of crisis – such as helping the Red Cross and Red Crescent provide flood or earthquake aid to citizens in need.



**A journey of success:** Grameenphone & Bangladesh

The many social initiatives that are close to the company's heart have been vital to the nation's wider social development, Azman believes. These include the Community Information Centre (CIC), a modern facility spanning rural areas, and the Village Phone Program.

"I believe that the medical team who reached out to remote villages to aid people with the power of connectivity will still feel the same pulse today as they stand by people in need," he adds. "And a successful student from the villages who overcame the odds to become a civil servant, most likely did so as a direct result of the information and educational content he accessed through CIC. But we are not done yet."

“**With the demographic dividend that our nation is enjoying, empowering them with critical competencies, especially digital skills to make them future-ready will enable them to unleash endless possibilities and capitalise on the ongoing technological revolution even beyond borders. As a responsible corporate citizen, we believe in the power of safe internet and hence we have been advocating for awareness in child online safety and online etiquette for both children and parents.**”

Yasir Azman,  
CEO, Grameenphone



## Working in partnership: HSBC and Grameenphone



Grameenphone Ltd (GP) has been banking with HSBC Bangladesh since 2002.



Over the years, HSBC has provided key balance sheet support to Grameenphone, helping the company manage its cash and working capital smoothly.



After Grameenphone went public in 2009, HSBC was mandated to provide a valuable payment solution to GP on 10 occasions to manage the local disbursements of their interim and annual dividends to a large number of shareholders through a highly customised end-to-end service proposition.

## Pillars for future growth

Grameenphone holds a unique position in Bangladeshi hearts and minds – thanks in principle to a consistent social mission that also brings the opportunity of cutting-edge commercial technologies.

Since 1997, the company's management philosophy has demonstrated a continued investment in the future of the nation, from enabling increasing numbers of people to realise their potential to advancing the infrastructure that will be needed to propel Bangladesh forward in its wider growth.

It also sees a better future being secured in safeguarding responsible, productive online use by its citizens; enabling rapid disaster response, and helping to advance the levels of skills people have to better reflect the country's ambitions.

For Azman, the future strategy is clear: "As a tech service leader and digital connectivity partner, we reflect and realise much has been done, but there is still a lot more to do."

**“ It is upon us to keep up with the momentum and decide on our fate for the next 50 years as we witness an economic boom being further accelerated by the digital revolution and adaptation.”**

Yasir Azman,  
CEO, Grameenphone

As Bangladesh embraces the fourth industrial revolution and sets out to become a knowledge-based, high-income country by 2041, Azman believes the country needs to collectively support the youth to build future-ready skills. Future-fit capabilities and digitalisation are essential for reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend and sustaining this momentum. "Therefore," he adds, "we have taken a youth-first approach to facilitate the country in building future-ready leaders, an ecosystem that taps into the potential of the fourth industrial revolution."

Azman sets great store in the country's demographic advantage for future growth. "What could be a better combination than using our tech-savvy future generation and the accelerated ongoing digitalisation to achieve our Vision 2041 and attain a more important place in the globe?"

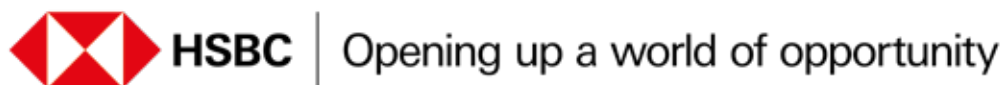


A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Hero MotoCorp: Paving the way on two wheels



#ProudlyInBangladesh



**A journey of success:** Hero MotoCorp & Bangladesh

The Hero brand name is synonymous with South Asia – and this is no less true for the citizens of Bangladesh, who for decades have run their lives on two wheels, whether for work, play or travel. Now, its joint venture HMCL Niloy, is demonstrating how its motorcycle business can flourish in sync with a nation on a course of social and economic transformation.

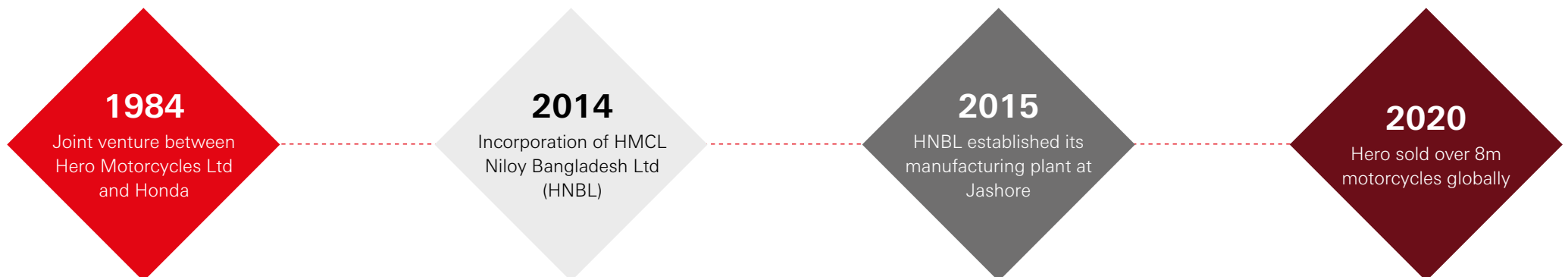
Bangladesh is no stranger to the joys of motorcycling – something not lost on the enterprising minds who, for many decades, have sold their customers the promise of freedom as well as social and economic mobility. And while HMCL Niloy Bangladesh Limited (HNBL) is a comparatively new joint venture corporation in the country, it is a successful demonstration of these enterprising minds, capitalising on Hero’s well-loved reputation for quality motorcycles in Bangladesh by incorporating in 2014.

Hero Motorcycles has a history stretching back to 1956, when it first made its name manufacturing bicycles.

Before then, the hugely successful joint venture agreement in 1984 between Hero Motorcycles Ltd and Honda helped forge a journey in South Asia that has since seen the business grow to become the world’s number one motorcycle manufacturer. Indeed, for the past 17 years, Hero has also earned the accolade of being the world’s largest motorcycle producer. In 2020, the company sold over eight million motorcycles globally.

Since its initial investment as a bicycle maker in 1956, Hero has been a leader in the sector nationally and earned a reputation not only as a well-loved mobility brand but for its high standards of governance too. The company’s factory in India has over 18,000 workers and 200 robots that assemble more than 13 billion parts every day and featured on National Geographic’s popular Megafactories TV series, a show that brings to life some of the greatest one-of-a-kind factories in the world. Its plant in Bangladesh was its first overseas manufacturing venture, and has an average production capacity of more than 100,000 vehicles per year.

Dr. Pawan Munjal is one of India’s renowned corporate leaders, championing growth and socio-economic progress. As a technological innovator and Chairman and CEO of Hero MotoCorp, he oversees the world’s largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters.



## **A journey of success:** Hero MotoCorp & Bangladesh

Under his leadership, Hero MotoCorp achieved the coveted title of World's No.1 two-wheeler company in 2001 and has successfully retained this position to date – for 20 consecutive years. The company has also surpassed the rare milestone of 100 million in cumulative production and sales. Having consistently demonstrated visionary leadership to guide the business in consolidating its leading position, and also expanding its global footprint across multiple continents, Hero MotoCorp currently sells its products in over 40 countries across Asia, Africa, Central and South America and the Middle East.

Hero MotoCorp has eight world-class manufacturing facilities, of which six are located in India and one each in Colombia and Bangladesh.

Hero Honda started trading in Bangladesh in 2000, but after this original venture parted ways, this left Hero to take a fresh direction, in partnership with Niloy, targeting the huge market potential they saw in Bangladesh. With a population of 160 million and data showing a solid young demographic of consumers, the opportunity for strong market penetration was seen as the ideal motivation for a joint venture agreement.

It's worth noting, too, that Hero is the first international brand to invest more than US\$50m to set up state-of-the-art automobile manufacturing facilities in Bangladesh. As such, Hero was the first foreign company in Bangladesh to invest in the two-wheeler industry.

HNBL established its manufacturing plant at Jashore, in the south-west of the country, in 2015, barely one year after incorporation, and was the first international brand to do so. After starting commercial operations in 2016, the new company has captured the second-highest market share

in Bangladesh – reaching 25% over the past three years. And this has not gone unnoticed by the competition. Other brands have since invested in the country, with a similar eye on the market's continued growth potential.

Globally, Hero enjoys a strong manufacturing infrastructure with its eight plants.

To date, some 100,000 jobs have been created either directly or indirectly in the manufacturing, selling and distribution of Hero motorcycles.

Bangladesh itself has its fair share of challenges in transport and communications. With this in mind, HNBL is working closely with the Government to assist in the wider development of the nation and its network, and to cultivate an infrastructure that better reflects the country's ambitions for modernisation.

## Business with sustainability at its heart

When HNBL's plant was incorporated at Jashore, the area and economy was relatively isolated and heavily reliant on farming.

Today, over 1,000 workers are employed at the plant, with positive economic knock-on effect encouraging the growth of shops and related small businesses across the district.

With a strong sustainability mission at its heart, the plant itself was designed to preserve the surrounding environment by ensuring that no contaminated water would be released into the ecosystem. State-of-the-art effluent, sewage and water treatment facilities are supporting HNBL's 'zero discharge to the environment' initiative. Additionally, HNBL has made a commitment to be self-sufficient in producing solar-powered electricity by 2025.

The business has also planted more than 3,000 plants, shrubs and trees across its 20-acre site to create a garden environment. It is a policy that has benefitted both local biodiversity and the workers who can appreciate more pleasant surroundings.

"Our manufacturing facilities are aptly referred to as 'Garden Factories' owing to their emphasis on sustainability and green initiatives," says Musabbir Ahmad, Managing Director, HNBL. "These facilities implement innovative processes that transform into a seamless assembling unit and a robust supply chain."

"Our units proactively try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt alternatives that foster greener operations. Right from recognising energy efficiency to deploying efforts for waste management and water conservation, we encourage our environmental stewardship, and all our units contribute to fulfil our sustainability goals."

On the other hand, HNBL is also using cutting-edge technology with brand-new, fully automated weld shops operated by robotics, as well as state-of-the-art technology used in its paint-shop system to reduce the carbon footprint.



## The power of the brand

The strength of the Hero motorcycle brand in the minds of the people of Bangladesh and the wider subcontinent owes much to the loyalty of existing customers in a market where two wheels have been the best way – often the only way – to travel for many decades.

Word of mouth has been a significant part of the Hero success story as a result, and it is common for new customers to canvass the views of family members before making a purchase.

The customer profile is very male-dominated, too – though that hasn't stopped the company targeting female consumers to expand its reach.

In India, for example, sales of unisex scooters reached 1.5 million in 2021. Although sales in Bangladesh remain comparatively low (though mostly sold to women), Hero has been part of an active campaign across universities to promote increased freedom, independence and security among educated women through access to their own transportation. As a result, year-on-year scooter sales have started to rise, along with changing attitudes towards seeing women on the road.

Affordability also plays a significant role in making the nation more mobile. The company has more recently been able to take advantage of a range of duty benefits from the Bangladesh Government, resulting in a large cost saving on a popular product line that was passed on to retail customers.

The positive effect of a lower price point has not gone unnoticed by the company's competitors. Many have recognised the benefits of onshoring their manufacturing in Bangladesh and securing the incentive packages available.



## Leading by example

Technology is now dictating the future direction of motorcycle transport – a factor not lost on HNBL. There were ongoing plans during 2022, for example, to launch electric motorcycles out of its local manufacturing plant, set at different price points across a wide customer segment base. Crucially, it's an opportunity to take the lead in a changing market that is getting wise to the volatility and environmental consequences of the reliance on petrol.

The company recognises what it sees as the inevitability of fuel prices increasing. And, although motorcycles consume relatively little in comparison to cars, it will become an increasing proportion of the owner's total running costs. Switching to electric is seen as both a chance for consumers to reduce these costs and an environmentally responsible decision.

To this end, HNBL is working with the Government of Bangladesh to incentivise the take-up of electric vehicles (EVs) by subsidising their costs and aiming to ensure easy and increased access to charging points.

## Responsible stewardship, from employees to citizens

Hero's Bangladesh plant is, by any standards, a trailblazing site – one that is reputed to be the first of its kind to receive Green Plant Recognition from the Government of Bangladesh. But within the premises, too, there is ample evidence of enlightened attitudes – not least the affirmative recruitment of over 20 physically-challenged staff to its production line.

In the wider community, Hero has managed to live up to its name in its efforts. These range from an annual blood donation campaign to the lightning speed in which the company was able to distribute food bags to the needy when the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country.





## The future on two wheels

While its plant in Jashore has had a significant impact on Bangladesh and its commitment to a well-loved brand, the future doesn't stop within the borders. Hero is planning to export its output to North America too – a step that will consolidate its place as a vital part of Bangladesh's move up the value chain.

Dr. Munjal has declared the goal of Hero MotoCorp to “be the future of mobility”. With this mission in mind, HNBL continues to invest in the development of new products for international markets and is determined to expand its global footprint. HNBL's goal is to develop new markets and strengthen market share in its existing ones by delivering superior products and enhanced customer experiences.

The next decade in the country holds much promise in economic and social growth opportunities — and Hero's mission is to lead in both spheres. For its part, Bangladesh has an impressive track record of growth and poverty reduction. It has been among the fastest-growing economies in the world over the past decade, supported by a demographic dividend, strong ready-made garment (RMG) exports, and stable macroeconomic conditions.

Bangladesh also tells the world a remarkable story of poverty reduction and development. From being one of the poorest nations at birth in 1971 with per capita GDP 10<sup>th</sup> lowest in the world, Bangladesh reached lower-middle-income status in 2015. It is on track to graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 2026.

“There are few countries in the world coming out with positive GDP growth during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Bangladesh is one of them,” says Bijoy Kumer Mondal, CFO & Company Secretary, HNBL.

**“ We believe Bangladesh is going to become one of the most important economies of the world in the next decade. And for that development, mobility will be the key. With the huge growth potential of the automobile industry in Bangladesh, we believe HMCL Niloy Bangladesh is the future of mobility for the country.”**

Musabbir Ahmad,  
Managing Director, HNBL

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Hero MotoCorp



HMCL Niloy Bangladesh Ltd (HNBL) has been banking with HSBC Bangladesh since 2015. As a new company, HNBL took advantage of HSBC's commitment and support when opening its first motorcycle manufacturing plant.



HSBC provided HNBL with financing that enabled the company to set up the plant quickly and efficiently. The result? HNBL was able to grab a sizeable market share within a short time due to various competitive advantages.




When the company faced challenges from the effects of COVID-19, HSBC was able to put affordable financing in place. This enabled HNBL's business operations to continue to run smoothly – despite disruptions.



A journey of success in Bangladesh

# HSBC: Connecting Bangladesh to a world of opportunities

#ProudlyInBangladesh

 **HSBC** | Opening up a world of opportunity



**A journey of success:** HSBC & Bangladesh

HSBC is synonymous with connecting the world with over 150 years of international operations – and its rich history in Bangladesh characterises the wealth of opportunity in a market that has travelled so far economically and socially. Today, the Bank has a unique role in facilitating change in Bangladesh for a prosperous future that will encourage further foreign direct investment.

Although HSBC's modern pedigree in Bangladesh spans over more than 25 years, the Bank's original connection to this part of the world actually goes back to the 1950s. The modern era for HSBC in Bangladesh, however, started in 1996, at the iconic Anchor Tower building in Dhaka – the location that helped make HSBC a familiar name in the country.

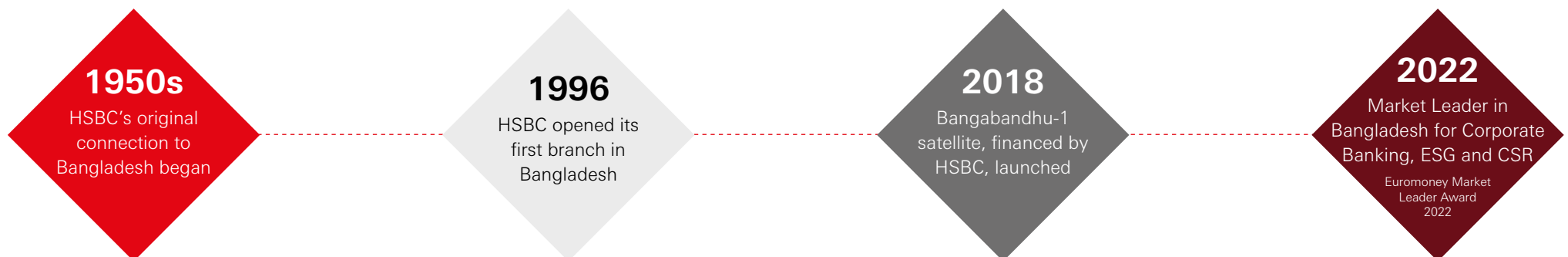
The 'genesis' of HSBC in Bangladesh, says Md Mahbub ur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh, lay in facilitating international connectivity and supporting growth in trade. Trade volume over the past decade has grown more than it did over the previous four.

Today, HSBC's clients in Bangladesh range from local companies looking to develop international trade relationships to multinational corporates looking to invest or set up a subsidiary in the country. The market in 1996 was young and dynamic and representative of the untapped opportunities that HSBC was in the ideal position to explore as part of its strategy.

Indeed, Bangladesh has always demonstrated high economic growth potential. GDP reached 7.2% in 2021, out-performing the 6.9% forecast and despite the pressures of a global pandemic. Aided by its population size and youth – 45% of its population is under the age of 25, while its middle class is burgeoning – Bangladesh has remained among the world's top 10 countries in which to do business.

**“ In its past 50 years, Bangladesh’s trajectory of economic growth has been a testament to the people’s insatiable desire and effort to do better. Continued digitalisation, the upgrading of technology, and the consistent rise in per capita income leading to incremental consumptions of goods and services and demographic dividend have been opening up a world of opportunities for Bangladesh. Historically, our private sector has always been resilient during challenging times and HSBC will continue to play its part through our unparalleled international network and connectivity.”**

Md Mahbub ur Rahman,  
Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh



## A journey of success: HSBC & Bangladesh

For more than 25 years, HSBC has carved out a vital role as a leading international bank, consolidating its corporate proposition, and been noted for its unique expertise, specialist knowledge and best-in-class international connectivity.

Bangladesh's economic growth is on course to continue over the coming years, while its population is increasing at a rapid pace, now topping 165 million. And HSBC has proved to be an excellent fit for a country that regularly requires significant infrastructure financing provision to support its own growth journey. Much of the Bank's work over the past 10 years has involved proactive collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh to help the wider economy forge ahead towards a more prosperous future. Indeed, the country already boasts a high-growth status among world economies, thanks to significant demand in infrastructure development spearheaded by the Government of Bangladesh, and the provision of financing options by HSBC. In 2022, the value of infrastructure projects in the country's pipeline sat at US\$40bn.

Developments in Bangladesh's infrastructure – from highways and large-scale distribution centres to technological developments such as mobile financial services – are creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs and driving growth. A reconfiguration of the supply chain, along with Bangladesh's geographical proximity to India and China, has helped to create what Rahman describes as a "mosaic" of international trade.

**“ We are actively supporting our customers to capture the whole mosaic of these touch points. The supply chain in Bangladesh is flourishing, and HSBC has been instrumental in its facilitation.”**

Md Mahbub ur Rahman,  
Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh

HSBC in Bangladesh maintains a leading trade bank position with more than 10% market share. Its collaborative philosophy over 25 years has the Bank uniquely present across all eight of Bangladesh's export processing zones, as well as providing support for long-term projects that are vital drivers of employment, social and environmental improvement.



## Changing the digital dialogue

Along with the rest of the world, developments in Bangladesh's digital capabilities are transforming the ways in which HSBC can connect with and support its customers. The growth of digital services and the shift to a cashless society is enabling the bank and its clients to connect with the millions who may previously have been unbanked, as well as potential prospects and suppliers from far further afield.

**“The vision of a cashless society is now enabling us to make payments to every corner of the country, in a way that would have seemed inconceivable in the past.”**

Md Mahbub ur Rahman,  
Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh

As the world's leading trade bank, HSBC has also introduced innovative payment methods for eVAT and eCustoms duty that have now become the industry norm. The Bank was instrumental in completing the first receivables trade finance deal, as well as the first international blockchain transaction.

## Transformative firsts

Among the most notable landmark financing projects undertaken with HSBC was Bangladesh's first communications and broadcasting satellite, Bangabandhu-1.

Launched in May 2018 and named after the 'Father of the Nation', Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the satellite was valued at US\$248m. It has helped expand communications coverage across Bangladesh and as far as South East Asia. HSBC supported this first foray into space by facilitating a US\$188.7m loan – helping deliver a significant milestone for Bangladesh.



In another first, HSBC also financed two Airbus Dreamliner 787 aircraft for Bangladesh's national airline. HSBC also provided financial support for the first commercial imports of liquefied natural gas for an energy sector that constantly faces structural supply challenges.

# Supporting customers on sustainability

Bangladesh, more than most countries, is conscious of the existential crisis that the urgent climate situation presents. HSBC has put sustainable financing at the forefront of the work it carries out with clients to help support their transition to a more sustainable economy, as well as pushing towards a net-zero supply chain by 2030.

Consisting of three pillars, the aim is firstly to support clients with their financing solutions in more purpose-driven ways, such as through ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) indexed loans, green deposits and green bonds. To this end, HSBC Bangladesh recently introduced the country's first Social Loan Principles-based financing for Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS), one of the largest microfinance institutions undertaking a health, education, and microfinance approach to socioeconomic development.

The bank has also structured Bangladesh's first ever sustainability-linked loan targeting the fifth of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality, for DBL Group. The interest rates under this loan agreement will be reduced if the performance targets to increase the percentage of female supervisors and reduce greenhouse gas emissions are achieved.

Thought leadership and industrial sector intelligence is also in high demand by corporate clients seeking direction – and an ESG series is designed to provide key insights and information on trends such as circular fashion in the textile and garments industry, sustainable supply chains, and the transition to net zero. Third is corporate sustainability itself. Social projects such as tree-planting initiatives to reduce carbon, the exploration of sustainable waste management solutions, and training programmes to increase financial literacy for women are key instruments in advancing Bangladeshi society at all levels.

HSBC also provided a sustainability-linked loan to the local conglomerate Square Group to facilitate exports for its textiles and garments business.

Acting as sole sustainability co-ordinator and lender, the bank restructured Square Group's US\$118m revolving facility by tying it to a target of renewable energy usage that would avoid over 3,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. The green target, including the use of solar panels on its factory rooftops, is fed back to HSBC regularly to ensure goals are being met along the way.

A recent partnership between HSBC Bangladesh and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) and BRAC to develop a mangrove plantation in Mirsarai is hoped to help capture 492 tonnes of carbon each year.

**“ We appreciate the importance of local aspects wherever we operate and want to contribute to social developments as much as possible.”**

Md Mahbub ur Rahman,  
Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh

The Bank's 'Joy of Giving' initiative was born out of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic – a corporate sustainability programme which supported over 100,000 people, whose lives have been heavily impacted by the crisis. And not just for the Bank, the 'Joy of Giving' is a vehicle that is designed to encourage other corporates and bodies in Bangladesh to work with HSBC to help the whole community.

More widely, the need for safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities has prompted the Bank to support more than 6,600 workers and their families in partnership with WaterAid.

# HSBC: Spearheading equality of opportunity

HSBC enjoys a good reputation in Bangladesh for its values-led workplace culture. With more than 800 employees based in country at present, the Bank is also highly active in boosting the representation of female workers in its business.

Employee resource group initiatives such as 'Balance Bangladesh', 'Nurture' and 'F-Major' are spotlighting and nurturing female ambition to ensure that women are not just represented in the company but that they are encouraged to aim for higher position, and senior roles in particular.

HSBC is also working on partnerships to help increase the number of women in leadership roles, particularly in the textiles and garment industry, which accounts for around 75% of Bangladesh's exports.

# Building together for a prosperous future

The future is now in sharp focus for HSBC and the Bank can play a central role in continuing to support the international corporates that are interested in investing in Bangladesh.

This role is significantly enhanced by the Bank's implementation of a number of innovative digital banking solutions. It is a timely strategy as Bangladesh has been striving to become a digital economy by 2023, and it will form the basis for HSBC's support of MNCs as they access growing business opportunities in the domestic markets with a young and vibrant workforce.

For more than 25 years, HSBC Bangladesh has put international connectivity and the global supply chain at the heart of its operations. The Bank is committed to supporting MNCs in the import and export of

goods that meet high international trading standards. HSBC Bangladesh CEO Md Mahbub ur Rahman says this has allowed for the "amplifying effect in the overall global supply chain".

In 2022, HSBC was recognised as the Market Leader in three categories in Bangladesh for Corporate Banking, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Euromoney Market Leader Awards. In the same year, the Bank was also recognised by Euromoney as Market Leader and Best Services for Cash Management and Best Services for Trade Finance in Bangladesh.

Through its Wealth & Personal Banking wing HSBC Bangladesh caters to the financial needs of individual retail customers specialising in the Affluent and High Net-worth segment with its strategically positioned branches in the capital Dhaka and port city Chattogram. 'HSBC Select', the Bank's premium banking proposition, revolves around providing personalised attention to support clients in reaching their financial goals. With HSBC's global footprint, the Bank is able to connect its clients beyond borders, seamlessly facilitating their ever-growing need for international transactions – be it the critical inflow of remittance from Non-Resident Bangladeshis or payments for students pursuing education abroad.

HSBC Bangladesh was recognised as the "International Retail Bank of the Year" for two consecutive years in 2021 and 2022 respectively by Asian Banking and Finance who also awarded the Bank in the silver category for the "Branch Innovation of the Year". Additionally, Global Banking and Finance Awards acknowledged HSBC as "Best Bank for International Services". The Gulshan Branch of HSBC became the first Retail Branch in the Bangladeshi banking sector to attain LEED certification in the Platinum category. The branch was recognised for adherence to standards of environmental-sustainability, in line with HSBC's global aspiration towards Net Zero.

With these priorities in place, HSBC aims to demonstrate its firm commitment to the Bangladesh story – both commercially and culturally. Connecting with the local culture is part of the Bank's make-up, and it's a recognition that employees, customers and investors all share the same of goal of seeking to improve their lives.

The next 25 years look set to be an exciting time for Bangladesh. HSBC has deservedly staked its claim to help forge that future and open up a world of opportunity for all its clients and customers.



A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Linde: Helping a nation thrive



#ProudlyInBangladesh



## A journey of success: Linde & Bangladesh

As the country's premier supplier of vital industrial gases, Linde Bangladesh Ltd's heritage pre-dates the birth of the nation. But this global corporate giant's own fortunes have been closely intertwined with modern Bangladesh, seeing many of its key supply sectors through significant milestones in the country's growth.

Linde Bangladesh has been contributing towards the development of the nation as an enthusiastic partner since its inception. A strong in-built culture with solid work values has developed and strengthened Linde Bangladesh, which has been reflected in the performance of its employees with continuous expansion in operations and business.

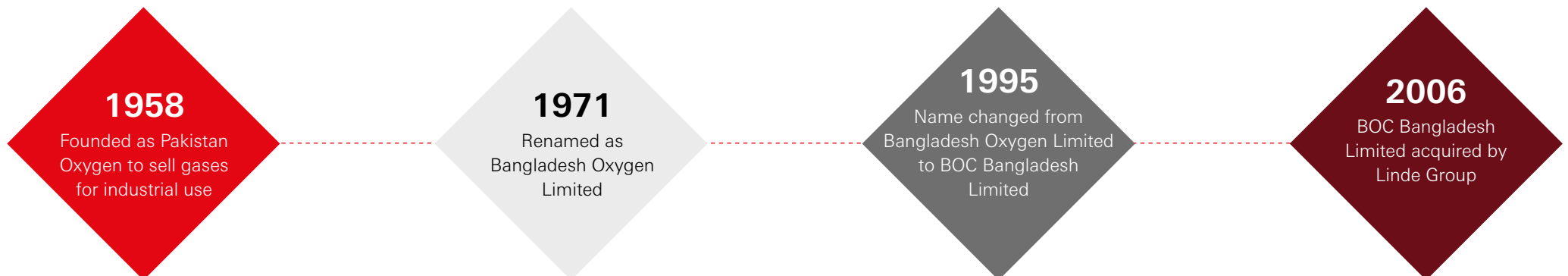
Linde Bangladesh, and the nation it shares its name with, have a deep and common history. A company that has been fundamental to the birth and development of the country, its roots actually go back to 1958 when it was founded as Pakistan Oxygen Ltd, to sell gases for industrial use.

The company was renamed Bangladesh Oxygen Limited in 1971 – and within two years it was approved by the new government as “the first fully-fledged company of the newly-formed country”.

Thus began a journey that has seen the business expand and thrive in industrial gas supply and electrodes production, to reach a customer base of over 35,000 in sectors ranging from chemicals and petrochemicals to steel.

Linde Bangladesh's presence is widely known for its two major air separation units (ASUs) in Rugganj and Shitalpur; one dissolved acetylene, CO2 production unit and centralised cylinder filling plant in Rugganj, one oxygen filling station in Khulna; and an electrodes manufacturing plant at Rugganj, backed up by nine sales centres all over the country. Today, Linde holds the leading position in Bangladesh, particularly for electrodes and medical gas.

The range of commercial-use gases spans anything from liquid and gaseous oxygen and nitrogen, argon, acetylene, carbon dioxide, dry ice, refrigerant gases, lamp gas and other gas mixtures, to medical oxygen, nitrous oxide and Entonox. Linde Bangladesh has built up vast technical expertise in designing, engineering and manufacturing pipeline and manifold systems – with more than 200 customised liquid storage installations throughout the country covering medical and industrial customers.



## Breathing life into difficult circumstances

Linde Bangladesh's oxygen service caters for demand from homecare patients, private institutions up to public and government-owned hospitals and institutions.

"We customise our supply solutions based on the requirement," explains Sujeet Kumar Pai, Managing Director, Linde Bangladesh Limited. "Not only that, we provide bulk supply with a backup manifold system to the hospitals ensuring reliability, and avoiding any possible dry-out conditions and potential safety occurrences."

The past two years have seen the Linde brand play an increasingly significant role in Bangladesh's developing healthcare sector.

Although the country runs a largely government-controlled healthcare system, Linde Bangladesh is one of the prime private medical gas contractors to the sector – specifically in the supply of liquid oxygen.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Bangladesh particularly hard in 2020. This, however, meant an opportunity for Linde to join the effort to supply sufficient quantities of oxygen to hospitals. Indeed, the company's financial and logistical reach in countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Singapore afforded it a unique position to be able to import from areas where there was excess supply.

In a move that was unprecedented during the pandemic, Linde Bangladesh spent between six and 10 months installing 40 liquid oxygen tanks in government hospitals across the country. With demand sky-rocketing,



and local companies themselves struggling to meet demand, Linde took another historical first step by importing liquid oxygen by train, thereby bolstering its customary strategy to import from India by tanker and ensuring continuity of supply.

It is a particular source of pride for Linde Bangladesh that no hospital in the country recorded any downtime due to lack of oxygen. "We are proud of the work our employees did around the country during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and we continue to put the safety, health and wellbeing of our employees, customers and our communities at the forefront of all we do," says Sujeet Kumar Pai. "Linde ensured the delivery of oxygen to all of its contracted public and private hospitals throughout Bangladesh and none of these hospitals has experienced oxygen dry-out during peak times of COVID."

**“ We sidelined industrial business opportunities to serve the people at a time when they needed our services most.”**

Sujeet Kumar Pai,  
Managing Director, Linde Bangladesh Limited

## Part of the economic and social fabric of Bangladesh

Linde's gas production activity is not in itself labour-intensive, but the parallel operations in manufacturing electrodes means that a core workforce of 320 – boosted by contractors, suppliers and vendors – make up a Linde 'community' in Bangladesh of more than 2,000.



While industrial gas remains a growing market, which is important in shipbreaking, Linde's market-leading electrode output is also a crucial element in Bangladesh's shipbuilding sector.

Aside from playing such a high-profile commercial role in the nation's economic activity, Linde Bangladesh leverages its global social responsibility philosophy in the pursuit of a number of community projects.

In 2020, the company identified a children's welfare initiative worthy of support via a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) for COVID-19 relief. Last year, too, has seen similar activity – something that has been an annual initiative even beyond the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In one significant programme, Linde Bangladesh partnered with Paribartan, an NGO based in Khulna, to provide emergency food relief to 1,000 of the most vulnerable working-children families living within the Khulna City Corporation area. These working children are part of a project supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) titled Accelerating Rights to Protection of Working Children (ARPWC).

They were provided with basic food packages and hygiene kits to support their livelihood for a month. The honourable Mayor of Khulna City Corporation also attended the inaugural ceremony of this event to provide support for the successful implementation of the programme. And as a special gesture, the employees of Linde Bangladesh each donated one day's salary to the cause in addition to the initial project grant amount of US\$14,000.

An additional initiative saw funding of US\$49,000 through Linde Global Funds for another livelihood and medical care support project, which was rolled out in the Satkhira district during November 2020 to February 2021 in collaboration with Uttaran, one of the renowned NGOs in Bangladesh.

The project provided emergency food and hygiene support to extremely poor communities while devising a system to contain the spread of COVID-19. This included the support for testing symptomatic patients, mobility support, nutritious food provision for healthy recovery ensuring isolation, and actions to prevent potential threat to famine in the area. A total of 1,400 households have since received food and hygiene packs under this initiative, most of them in otherwise disadvantaged communities.

## Moving forward together

The economic growth indicators for Bangladesh look positive over the next decade – and it's a period during which Linde Bangladesh is optimistic about consolidating its presence in the market. The medical and industrial gas sectors in particular remain key to the company strategy and its ambitions to identify and capitalise on the growing opportunities.

These ambitions are closely tied to the new technology that Linde is innovating in the field. At its heart, Linde is an engineering business that is increasingly well placed to contribute significantly to Bangladesh's modernisation as a nation.

The country's planned expansion of special economic zones across multiple industries will mean further diversification opportunities for Linde as inward investment gains momentum. There is also a solid commitment to bringing new technology to customers – building on Linde's reputation for safe and sustainable operating models.

The company is confident that the investment it is making today will pay dividends in the future. If safety and sustainability seem expensive, Linde says, these two factors in themselves are not nearly as costly as the consequences of not following regulations and guidelines properly.

**“Alongside the global economy, Bangladesh's economy has been witnessing significant turmoil and facing disruptive events since the pandemic.”**

Sujeet Kumar Pai,  
Managing Director, Linde Bangladesh Limited

“This affected lives and livelihoods adversely and brought the world to a virtual standstill – but Bangladesh is one of the few countries that registered a positive GDP growth in 2020.”

The Government retains strong ambitions of achieving double-digit growth within the economy, with measures being taken to better facilitate the ease of doing business, several megaprojects, economic processing zones, and incentives for foreign investment. The macroeconomic factors to stimulate growth look bright and Linde Bangladesh says it will continue to be an “integral contributor” to the growing industry and intends to be a partner in the country's projected economic growth.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Linde



Linde Bangladesh has been banking with HSBC Bangladesh since 2004, using a range of global payment solutions. The company was the first HSBC Bangladesh customer to go live with the bank's Enhanced Virtual Account.



As a leader in the international industrial gases market, Linde has worked with HSBC across a range of projects.



HSBC Bangladesh supported Linde's lifesaving work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Linde supplied oxygen to public and private hospitals across Bangladesh and played a key role in keeping the overall supply stable. During that time, HSBC assisted Linde by helping to facilitate a reliable, uninterrupted stream of constant liquid oxygen imports.



A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Marubeni: Japanese expertise benefits multiple sectors

**Marubeni**

#ProudlyInBangladesh



# A structurally sound investment

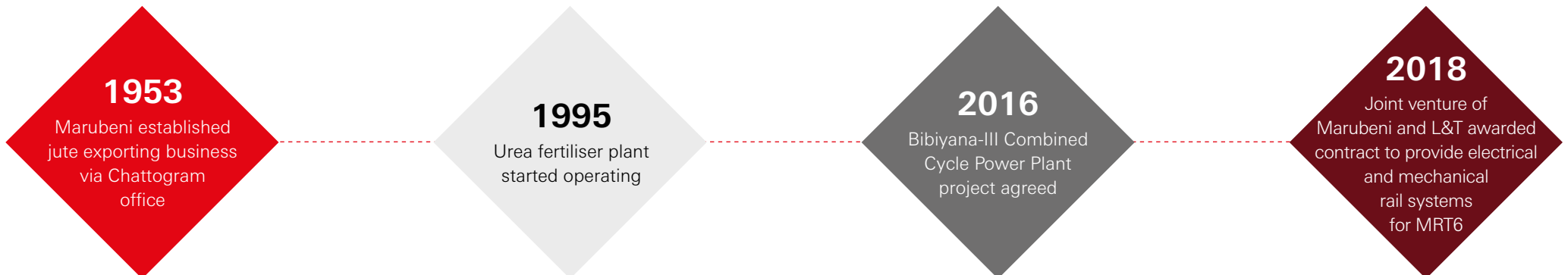
Japanese corporate Marubeni is well known as a multinational business, investing across multiple sectors and geographies to develop and enhance the infrastructure and integrity of everything from utilities and energy to IT, food, textiles, metals and construction materials. Marubeni's presence and participation in key projects over many decades have been instrumental to the growth of both the company and the country.

The sheer scale of activity that Marubeni enjoys today at a global level is by any standard a sure mark of commercial success. So, it is all the more fascinating to consider the relatively humble beginnings that defined the company's early foray into what later was to become modern Bangladesh.

It was in 1953 that Marubeni first established a presence in the region – facilitating a jute exporting business via its Chattogram office, followed by the establishment of its Dhaka office in 1955. Those two offices,

in collaboration with each other, achieved remarkable diversification, investment and capital projects across Bangladesh today. It's a journey that has been motivated by a strong relationship between the governments of Bangladesh and Japan.

A key partner in the country's economic growth, Marubeni has recognised Bangladesh's potential over many years, particularly in energy, infrastructure and the apparel sector.





## A journey of success: Marubeni & Bangladesh

There are a number of capital projects that demonstrate the strength in depth of Marubeni's investment in the Bangladeshi market – not least the elevated mass rapid transit (MRT) metro line MRT6, which is currently under construction in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka.

Dhaka is well known for its high population density and the resulting traffic congestion that blights daily commuting life – and mass rapid transport is seen as the best route to solving both the city's infamous congestion crisis, and improving the lives and economic wellbeing of its citizens.

MRT6 is the first line of a complete network to be constructed. It marks a new stage in a Strategic Transport plan which saw the Government of Bangladesh invite the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to carry out the original feasibility study and ultimately finance the project.

Marubeni is one of the partners that is central to the development of the MRT6 project.

Marubeni's dominance in supporting Bangladesh's power sector is also a sign of its commitment to the country. It is the engineering, procurement and construction partner for over 1,200MW of gas-based power generation in the country – equivalent to around 5% of the nation's total installed capacity.

Bibiyana-III, in North East Bangladesh, is a 400MW Gas Based Combined Cycle Power Plant. It is the third such project in the country that Marubeni has been involved in constructing, in partnership with the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). Agreed in early 2016 and now operational, this plant uses clean power generation technology to produce energy more efficiently – by using the steam made by the heat recovery steam generator to utilise the exhaust hot gas after the operation of the gas turbine itself.

Bangladesh has been fighting a significant battle to meet growing energy demands in the country as it develops. Projects like Bibiyana-III, and two other equivalent plants that Marubeni has constructed – New Haripur and Bheramara – go some distance in not just meeting vital demand but also laying the infrastructural foundations for future economic growth.

Marubeni also provides long-term maintenance services for these plants, including remote monitoring from Japan, which contributes to the stable operation of the facilities and the supply of electricity.



# Reshaping agricultural opportunities

Another landmark project in the country – a joint venture between KAFCO Japan Investment Company Ltd, Europe and Bangladesh – oversaw the construction of a urea fertiliser plant in the late 1980s. The plant started operating in 1995 and its impact on the country's agricultural economy has been significant.

Marubeni's country head and general manager for Dhaka, Bangladesh, Hikari Kawai, cites its work with KAFCO as a particular highlight in the connections it has built up over the decades in Bangladesh.

**“ In KAFCO, we have made a plant that is still more efficient than any other urea fertiliser plant in Bangladesh. The long-term services for sustainable usage of the facilities is one of our proudest achievements.”**

Hikari Kawai,  
Country Head of Bangladesh, General Manager, Marubeni Dhaka

For many decades, Bangladesh had been heavily dependent on importing fertiliser, and the production of urea at local level was a game changer, vastly improving route-to-market and price implications for farmers.

Another urea fertiliser plant at Ghorasal – financed in cooperation with Marubeni to the tune of US\$1bn from the Japanese export credit agency Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Nippon Export Investment Insurance (JBIC/NEXI) and US\$0.3bn from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) – a member of the World Bank group – promises to bring a new and highly-efficient production and supply of urea to the country. Launched in August 2019 and scheduled to be complete in 2023, it is Bangladesh's largest fertiliser project. When finished, it will be able to stake its claim to be the country's first green plant with newly designed CO2 capture technology, which will reduce environmental impact and simultaneously increase urea production.



Cost-effective nitrogen-based urea fertiliser is invaluable in the quest to achieve higher crop yields in the agri-food sector in Chattogram Bangladesh, and the success of KAFCO's plant and the project at Ghorasal has since paved the way for other foreign investors – themselves reassured by the modernisation taking place in the country.

Smart water management is also key to a strong agriculture sector. Bangladesh's low-lying status means it is a constant battle to control both flooding and drainage.

Marubeni was involved in the construction of the Bera pumping station, designed to take water from the Yamuna River and supply over 12 sub-districts of three agricultural districts in the north: Pabna, Sirajganj and Natore.

Before this project, those living in these areas were poor farmers struggling to survive on the income produced from one crop annually due to the constant cycle of drought and flood. After the project was implemented, they secured three or more harvests annually and they became economically solvent – and with more money in their pockets, the local economy was boosted significantly.

In fact, the impact of this project was vast considering the severe crop shortages experienced in the 1990s: irrigation over just one season annually has boosted crop yields by an estimated US\$23m year on year. And although today demand is lower thanks to highly-efficient crop diversification into value-added crops like onion, garlic, and mustard seeds, which require less water, the project is a very successful one that continues to contribute significantly to the country's economy.

For Marubeni and the Bangladesh Water Development Board, it's a source of pride that they completed the Bera project one dry season before its allocated deadline.

## Rebuilding community cohesion

Early life care has also been a long-term concern in Bangladesh. When Marubeni took the initiative to set up a number of specialist obstetrics centres in the country with support from the Japanese Government, the impact on infant death rates was hugely significant. Not only was the rate noticeably reduced, the centres also became benchmarks for other hospitals to upskill their own childbirth and neonatal care regimes.

As a result, Marubeni's promotion of food machinery, equipment for cold supply chain management, medical apparatus and high-quality disposal methods, reflect the continuing improvement of quality of life in Bangladesh as an emerging market.

Communities have benefitted directly in other ways, too. With cyclones being an ever-present danger in Bangladesh, a crucial aspect of daily life had been to ensure that radio stations could broadcast advance warnings of incoming storms. With Marubeni's support, the coastal area around Chattogram has been improved by the installation of a radio transmitter that could feed forecast warnings to all nearby vessels and the neighbouring archipelago.

As a global player, Marubeni is also committed to protecting the environment and helping communities worldwide as part of a well-developed ESG policy.



# Facing a future of opportunity

With Bangladesh's indicators looking strong for the next few years – projected GDP growth of 6.6% in 2022 and 6.3% in 2023<sup>1</sup> – and 180 million people most of whom are of working age – Marubeni sees continuing opportunities to consolidate its well-established presence in the market. Bangladesh is a country that is moving rapidly up the value chain in key sectors like apparel, with an increasingly wealthy and growing middle class that also signals wider investment potential.

Three decades ago, Marubeni was one of only a few Japanese companies working in Bangladesh. Today, the count stands at over 300 – from investors to manufacturers, all showing increased confidence in this value chain shift.

As Bangladesh graduates from its least developed countries (LDC) status in 2026, several new MRT lines will operate in Dhaka in the next 10 years. As a result, the quality of life for Bangladeshis is expected to improve significantly.

The information and communication technologies (ICT) sector is also an area to watch, according to Marubeni. The likely demographic dividend from a young population of well-trained IT workers bodes well for further prosperity for citizens and investors alike. Decades of deep involvement in the country has therefore placed Marubeni in the ideal position to spearhead mutual growth for the foreseeable future.

1 - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/13/bangladesh-economy-shows-resilience-amid-global-uncertainty#:~:text=The%20report%20projects%20the%20region,compared%20to%20the%20January%20projection.>

Takeshi Mamiya, Executive Officer, Marubeni, and Regional CEO for ASEAN and Southwest Asia, visited Dhaka in March 2022. This was 10 years after his last visit and he said he was impressed not only by the development that had taken place during the decade but also the energy of people that had created growth. He said at the time: "Everybody in Bangladesh believes in the growth of their country. Private business groups in particular are quite aggressive in terms of expansion and diversification of their business, with their firm confidence in growth. We at Marubeni have a strong wish to continue working together, with both public organisations and private companies, for further development of the country."

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Marubeni



HSBC has partnered with Marubeni in Bangladesh since 2014, providing banking services to support the company's major energy, power and infrastructure projects.



In 2019, Marubeni began work with HSBC on a record-breaking project that secured financing backed by the Export Credit Agency (ECA) of US\$1.3bn. This project will culminate in 2023, with the construction of Bangladesh's first green urea fertiliser plant – a modern, sophisticated energy-efficient plant with CO2 capture technology.



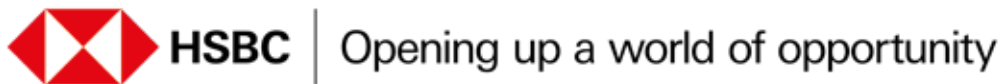
As the core bank for most of Marubeni's power projects, HSBC has assisted the company with key banking services, alongside funding arrangements and sustainability ventures.

A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Nestlé: The sweet taste of success



#ProudlyInBangladesh



## A journey of success: Nestlé & Bangladesh

Nestlé's varied and colourful growth journey in Bangladesh is a fitting example of how corporate mission and socially responsible activity can interact to bring multiple benefits to a country's society – at all levels. There is no doubting the impact that a large company like Nestlé has had on Bangladesh's economic and social fabric for more than 29 years that it has had a presence in the country. Drawing upon its global reach across 187 countries and a 155-year pedigree, Nestlé Switzerland first arrived in Bangladesh through a joint venture with Transcom Ltd in 1992. The resulting entity, Nestlé Bangladesh Ltd, opened its first factory in Sreepur in 1992 before coming entirely under the umbrella of its global parent, Nestlé SA, in 1998.

Since then, Nestlé Bangladesh has made – and continues to make – an indelible mark on the lives of everyone in the country. The company manufactures an ever-more diverse range of consumer products that sit on the shelves of virtually every kitchen cupboard.

The best-known products in its portfolio include NESCAFÉ, Bangladesh's leading coffee brand, and many household breakfast cereal favourites such as KOKO KRUNCH and Nestlé Cornflakes. Chocolate confectionery, including KITKAT and the world's No. 1 children's milk brand NIDO\* are also shopping-list staples.



Today, Nestlé in Bangladesh is also synonymous with its food sub-brand MAGGI. Known across Asia and globally, MAGGI noodles have been voted the country's Best Brand for twelve years.

**1992**

Nestlé S.A first arrived in Bangladesh through a joint venture with Transcom Ltd

**1994**

Nestlé Bangladesh started its commercial operation

**1998**

Nestlé Bangladesh became 100% owned subsidiary of Nestlé S.A Switzerland

\*(Source: Euromonitor International Limited; Packaged Food 2018 Edition; NIDO brand shares by umbrella brand name, as per powder milk definition; all retail channels; retail value rsp. 2017 data)

## Operational excellence

Nestlé's activity in Bangladesh is centred on its Sreepur factory, where the staff were initially tasked with repackaging powdered beverage milk and, subsequently, manufacturing of noodles. Today, the business spans three operational lines – food manufacture, product repackaging, and importing finished products for domestic sales. It also has an infant cereals manufacturing facility in Bangladesh with two twin roller driers, one filling line, and the seasoning plant for the famous SHAAD-E-MAGIC.

Recently the company established an infant formula processing, mixing, and filling plant. The workforce of over 1,000 people is responsible for production in the country, while distribution partners are responsible for retail distribution across the nation.

Perhaps the most prominent brands, particularly among families with infants, include Nestlé's nutrition-based product lines.



## Creating shared values

For Nestlé Bangladesh, responsibilities are performed through CSV (Creating Shared Value) initiatives, a core principle that reflects the company's global values. In-country, the company has a distinguished record in providing "the means to make a platform to benefit both shareholders and society." This combined commercial and social philosophy has helped implement many highly-successful initiatives to improve lives – among them, the Nestlé for Healthier Kids programme is worth mentioning. The programme has been running for over 10 years, led by nutritionists from Dhaka University. It sees nutritionists going into classrooms across the country to teach a 6-week dedicated interactive education course to students in challenging social circumstances where malnutrition is common. Each year, around 3,000 students graduate with a specialist nutrition qualification to promote a healthier eating regime, becoming wider ambassadors for good nutritional habits. The scheme has become so successful that over 25,000 school-going kids have benefitted from the programme. Social media has been a valuable recruiting agent for a wider audience. Leveraging Facebook Live, for example, has been successful in attracting parents who could also benefit from initiatives such as cooking with children and becoming involved in more innovative meal-planning activities.

Where food and drink are the mainstays of Nestlé's business model, even the basic necessity of access to clean water is a vital part of the company's social activity in Bangladesh.

Good nutrition needs to go hand in hand with clean water. And with this in mind, Nestlé backed a Clean Drinking Water Project for 58 schools in areas that struggled to meet sufficient standards of cleanliness in their water supply. By constructing, testing, and cleaning water tanks for each school, more than 68,000 students now have access to safe water. The school scheme has been so successful that it has expanded into the broader communities.





## Breaking taboos to protect women's futures

Poor hygiene has also proved to be a challenge, creating particular barriers to the educational development of girls, with many growing up culturally ashamed of using toilet facilities outside the home. To help combat this issue, Nestlé Bangladesh invested in new toilet provisions across 39 schools to stem the drop-out rate of girls from classes. This initiative means that over 19,000 school-girls have access to adequate facilities – and school drop-out rates have fallen.

Another taboo that has been hard to break in Bangladeshi society is breastfeeding. With poorer young mothers disproportionately affected either by a lack of facilities or the alienation of their communities, Nestlé Bangladesh was able to reach out to around 100 small-town communities and provide unique breastfeeding booths for mothers. Nestlé also has an ongoing global campaign to promote breastfeeding.

As part of a commitment to market its infant milk products only as a responsible alternative, it has created breastfeeding rooms in many places in Bangladesh.

## Ensuring a sustainable harvest

For over a decade, Nestlé Bangladesh has played a vital role in delivering training to the country's agriculture sector to support farmers in becoming part of the company's supply chain and, more widely, Bangladesh's processed food industry. Previously, the country's native crop yields were often susceptible to high pesticide contaminants, which meant that the company relied on importing essential commodities such as rice, wheat, and spices to manufacture its products. In response, in 2008, Nestlé launched a farmer training initiative designed to encourage more modern agricultural practices – with the additional motivation that crops of a compliant grade would be purchased at a fair and equitable price from the producer. New rules adopted as a result of the training program have led to highly successful rice yields (100% is sourced from local farmers), and in 2019, attention turned to wheat output. Though this remains challenging, Nestlé can now secure 25% of its wheat supply from Bangladeshi sources. Spice, too, is gaining much ground, with around 70% now coming from local farmers.

Nestlé also sponsors the Water Ambassadorship Programme – an initiative designed to create students' awareness of water scarcity.

For its role at the heart of initiatives that have seen a marked improvement in farming business success and efficiency across the country, Nestlé has been recognised with a CSR award for its services to the sector. For its unique proposition, Nestlé has also been in dialogue with Ministry of Agriculture to provide support on developing the processed food industry in Bangladesh.

All these efforts will further enhance the organisation's equity with the government authorities as a Force for Good.

## Preparing the ground for a prosperous future

Nestlé Bangladesh shares the country's own optimism for the future. Already a household name that touches nearly every Bangladeshi consumer's life, over the next 10 years, the company will focus less on consolidating its brand position in the country and more on promoting 'NHW' – nutrition, health, and wellness among its citizens.

For Nestlé, the company's products have always been intrinsically linked to the opportunity to educate consumers about good nutrition.

Sustainable growth and prosperity play a significant part in this commitment.

Nestlé has taken a robust stand, for example, preparing the ground for a prosperous future by pledging to be a net-zero carbon business by 2050 – with an intermediate target of 100% recyclable laminates by 2025.

Indeed, the business has already blazed a trail in achieving one of its highlighted ambitions:

100% zero liquid discharge in its factory processes through recycling and retreating the fluids it produces.

And with further commitments to operating more sustainable logistics, procurement practices, and energy usage already in the pipeline, it is clear that the blossoming relationship between Nestlé and Bangladesh will stand the test of time for decades to come.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Nestlé



Nestlé Bangladesh has been banking with HSBC Bangladesh since 2001.



In the journey of providing world-class food products and nutrition solutions to Bangladeshi consumers, Nestlé regards HSBC as a business partner and a trustworthy advisor with a shared vision.



HSBC provides innovative transaction solutions to Nestlé locally and the company uses its accounts to collect its sales proceeds and also to make various statutory payments such as import duty, VAT etc. through HSBC's digital platform. HSBC also provides liquidity solutions to Nestlé and options for investing its surplus cash balance in income-generating products and accounts.




Nestlé was the first customer to use supply chain financing from HSBC Bangladesh. The solution has helped Nestlé to digitally manage and finance its complex supplier network.

A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Novartis: Swiss innovation nurtures a healthy Bangladesh

 **NOVARTIS** | Reimagining Medicine

#ProudlyInBangladesh

 **HSBC** | Opening up a world of opportunity



## A journey of success: Novartis & Bangladesh

Having started its journey in Bangladesh in 1973 as Ciba-Geigy (Bangladesh) Limited, Novartis has been fundamental to the progress of both the country's healthcare sector and its economy. Today, the Swiss corporation has had a hand in some of the world's most pioneering treatments in the quest to advance the health of the Bangladeshi population and secure the country's place on the global pharmaceutical stage.

As part of a highly dynamic pharmaceuticals sector, Novartis has had more influence than most in shaping the health of populations worldwide. Globally, the Switzerland-based multinational has grown to form one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the international market, bringing in just under US\$51.6bn in revenue in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Armed with a mission to "reimagine medicine to improve and extend people's lives", Novartis started its journey as a standalone corporation following a merger between the Swiss pharmaceuticals companies Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz AG in 1996, bringing with it a rich history that has spanned over 250 years.

The resulting entity subsequently grew its interests worldwide – and for Bangladesh, the company embarked on the development of two lines of operation: the Innovative Medicines segment which develops,

manufactures, and sells patented prescription medicines to ensure best health outcomes; and Sandoz, which caters to the generic market including biosimilars and also manufactures active pharmaceutical ingredients to maximise people's access to them. In its current form, Novartis has been active in the Bangladesh market for over three decades.

Over this time, Novartis indirectly contributed to developing the healthcare sector of the country by introducing not only lifesaving innovative drugs, but also helping to develop the medical professionals in the relevant therapeutic areas through different knowledge sharing programmes and training. It also introduced state-of-the-art medicine manufacturing knowledge through tech transfer.

Novartis Bangladesh Limited's (NBL) manufacturing capability today centres around a cutting-edge pharmaceutical manufacturing plant located at Tongi in Gazipur, which is based on the most stringent compliance standards expected by the World Health Organization as well as Novartis Global. The high quality and pace of output has enabled NBL to meet the demand in the country, and start exporting to over 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and Canada.

Novartis has received several awards for its work, culture and initiatives and was awarded as one of the pharmaceutical sector's 'Dream Companies to Work For' in 'Bangladesh Best Employer Brand Awards, 2018'. The company has also been a serial award winner of the National Export Trophy by the Government of Bangladesh for outstanding export performance in 2002, 2003 and 2005.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.novartis.com/investors/financial-data/annual-results>

## A journey of success: Novartis & Bangladesh

In the early 1980s, the Government of Bangladesh introduced a policy to encourage the growth of local manufacturers. The pharmaceuticals landscape had faced challenges with the consistency of supply and product registration, and this strategic shift was designed to boost healthcare provision and increase self-sufficiency in the country.

With such a strong commitment to the market, NBL saw an opportunity to innovate its offering to become a more intrinsic part of Bangladesh's healthcare sector, and act on its mission to extend care to all.

By working with the regulators, the company has been able to help establish standards and ensure that its European Union-certified manufacturing capabilities set the benchmark for better drugs provision in the country. To help establish ethical pharma promotion in Bangladesh, Novartis has also expressed its intention to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to support the newly formed Ethical Pharma Promotion Guideline Committee of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) with its global knowledge and experience.

NBL takes pride in providing access to the most advanced and world-class biologics to the people of Bangladesh and is amongst the pioneers in bringing these biologics to the country. Biologic medicine is produced from living organisms or contains components of living organisms, which include a wide variety of products derived from human, animal, or microorganisms using biotechnology.

Examples include Cosentyx, which became 'a new hope' for patients with psoriatic arthritis (PsA), ankylosing spondylitis (AS) & psoriasis (PsO) in Bangladesh as the first originator biologic. Lucentis, another biologic for retina care, was launched in 2007 when retina specialists were few in numbers. However, with the help of those retina specialists, NBL has launched academic programmes to train existing ophthalmologists in the discipline. Xolair was launched in 2007 for severe allergic asthma and in 2019 for chronic spontaneous urticaria in Bangladesh. Thousands of cancer patients are now treated with NBL's research biologics including Femara, Zometa, Glivec and Asunra.

## Stronger healthcare for all

The result of these collaborations has meant that NBL has been able to carve out an increasingly crucial role for itself in Bangladesh's future healthcare system framework. The company has also been able to take the opportunity to address some of the more serious provision shortages through a wide range of initiatives.

One such initiative – known as ASTHA – has seen NBL work with the non-profit poverty organisation Swisscontact to develop and support accredited mid-level healthcare community paramedics (CPs) in remote and rural areas of Bangladesh. To date, the ASTHA programme has resulted in over 5,000 CPs being trained and qualified nationwide to deliver primary healthcare services to their communities. The double benefit, too, is that vital skilled jobs have been created in under-resourced areas, such as in mother and child health provision.

Indeed, NBL estimates that over 400,000 citizens across rural Bangladesh have been able to receive treatment from qualified CPs, while free health camps and awareness activities have ensured that health information and education are consistently prioritised across the community.

## Inclusivity from workplace to community

The global Novartis mission to 'reimagine' medicine has had a deep and lasting impact on the way the company operates in Bangladesh – and this is also reflected in its diverse talent strategy within the company itself.

The advantage of having a Country Leadership Team that brings together Bangladeshi personnel with diverse experience both at home and abroad, says NBL, is that they deliver a continuous improvement mindset to the wider sector in Bangladesh, driving innovation, performance, reputation and enhancing the experience of work.

This strong sense of positive employee culture extends beyond the workplace too, most significantly characterised by the annual Community Partnership Day - offering support and engagement with charitable schools such as the JAAGO Foundation for underprivileged children. Activities range from simple craft activities to sponsoring affordable meals under the One Taka Meal programme.

As COVID-19 hit Bangladesh, NBL also took the opportunity to reinforce its community commitment by pledging PPE equipment to the Red Cross in Bangladesh, and ensuring safe healthcare practice could take place from the earliest days of the pandemic.



With a vision to prevent death due to heart failure, NBL introduced the concept and supported the establishment of Heart Failure Clinics across the hospitals in Bangladesh. The first Heart Failure Clinic was launched in 2019 at Sir Salimullah Medical College and, within two years, eight more clinics were started in Dhaka and Chattogram, providing a high standard of care to more than 3,000 patients. And in another first, NBL helped establish the country's first Psoriasis Clinic at the dermatology department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital in February 2022. The company is now committed to supporting the establishment of Psoriasis Clinics across the country to ensure a similarly high standard of treatment for psoriasis patients in Bangladesh.

## Striving for sustainability

As with all manufacturers, the impact of processes can take its toll on the wellbeing of the surrounding environment. NBL has taken steps to ensure that better practice, combined with an improved understanding of the sustainability agenda, is intrinsic to responsible business.

The company's commitment to the Science-Based Targets (SBTi) criteria of being carbon neutral by 2030 and net-zero by 2050, has already seen it deliver a 19% drop in emissions since 2016. This was achieved by applying green energy technology at all of its sites through sensor lighting and a smart heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system.

NBL has significantly reduced water consumption to just 35% of its 2020 levels. And in a world first, its head office has become the first of all Novartis premises globally to be entirely free of single-use plastics.

In keeping with Bangladesh's progress to a digital future, NBL has also reduced a major portion of its paper use in favour of new digital streams.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Novartis



Novartis Bangladesh has been banking with HSBC in Bangladesh for over 20 years. HSBC is Novartis' preferred trade bank and has supported the company with a range of innovative projects.



HSBC provides Novartis with extensive financial support against global economic and supply chain disruptions.



When COVID-19 struck, HSBC was able to cater to Novartis' immediate import demands, reacting quickly to provide seamless support in the transition to working from home. HSBC worked with Novartis throughout the pandemic, offering email indemnity and responding to all urgent requirements.



HSBC helps Novartis to simplify and streamline its global banking activities.



## An eye to the future

Continuing to 'reimagine medicine', NBL intends to play its part in developing more innovative medical solutions, including gene therapy.

The company has already embarked on a collaboration with the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (BADAS) to introduce a Certificate Course on Cardiovascular Disease (CCDV). This will support the development of thousands of general physicians in areas such as hypertension (HTN), acute coronary syndrome (ACS) and heart failure.

These non-communicable diseases carry huge challenges in developing countries such as Bangladesh, and their early detection, awareness and subsequent management would be seen as a major milestone in medical progress in the region.

By 2025, Novartis Group is looking to grow by 200% to consolidate this progress; and for NBL the priority is clear. By forming the relationship further upstream with health professionals as a partner in Bangladesh's health system, the company wants to ensure that excessive prices do not create a barrier to affordable care for all. The opportunities, it says, are there to be taken.

The sense of achievement the company can demonstrate during its long journey in Bangladesh cannot be seen as being due to just one innovation, says Dr Riad Mamun Prodhani, Novartis Country President & Managing Director, Bangladesh.

"Since 1973, we have supported the community by bringing life-saving innovator molecules to patients in Bangladesh at an affordable price. By doing so, we have introduced standard-of-care practices of disease management, and innovated an international ethical pharma-promotion and compliance guidance that is world-leading.

**“ Our strong future pipeline gives us confidence that we will be able to bring many unmet solutions to Bangladesh that nobody has worked on before.”**

Dr. Riad Mamun Prodhani,  
Novartis Country President & Managing Director, Bangladesh

"Through our patient access, we are committed to ensuring that innovative medicines are accessible to all classes of patients. The company hopes that its ongoing partnerships with different organisations will continue to revolutionise the healthcare system of the country."

Currently, most of the innovations are happening in the health science arena. As a leading pharmaceutical company, Novartis hopes to connect those latest innovations in disease diagnosis and management to the patients of Bangladesh. It's a continuous journey where the mission is to create ever-more impactful programmes in place for the nation's patients and communities.



## Leading the way in gene therapy

In late 2022, The National Institute of Neurosciences & Hospital (NINS) used gene therapy to treat the chronic neurological disease Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) for the first time in Bangladesh. The therapy – approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) – was provided free of charge by NBL.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a rare and complex congenital disease of the nervous system caused by genetic disorder. The muscles of children suffering from the disease continue to weaken and as a result, they cannot sit or stand. Every year, many children around the world die because of the lack of treatment for the disease.

Novartis' Global Managed Access Programme (GMAP) is designed to provide a feasible pathway for patients. Under the programme, patients who fulfil the required eligibility are selected for treatment which is then completed in accordance with local laws and regulations.

A Bangladeshi child was selected for this treatment under the programme. As the drug is prepared by taking into account each patient's genetic characteristics and various other physical factors, which is a very complicated process, the treatment is very expensive. The medical cost of this gene therapy is unaffordable for many people.

Through Novartis' humanitarian initiative, new doors have opened up for treating patients of SMA in Bangladesh. Novartis is ensuring not only treatment for patients, but also making sure that doctors in Bangladesh receive proper training to use the gene therapy for their patients.



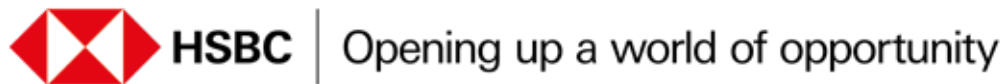


A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Singer: Stitching together future prosperity



#ProudlyInBangladesh



## A journey of success: Singer & Bangladesh

The Singer brand, with its archetypal sewing machine products, is known worldwide for its historic popularity with consumers and the garments industry alike. The company's rich journey of growth and diversification in Bangladesh has made this household name a vital part of the country's future development.

It's not for nothing that the Singer logo in Bangladesh incorporates the slogan "trusted for generations". The company's roots can be traced back to 1851, when a patent was issued for the first sewing machine as invented by Isaac Merritt Singer the year before.

While the Singer sewing machine gained popularity and worldwide sales soared (reaching 90% of global market share in 1890), it wasn't until 1905 that the brand made a new home in what was then East Pakistan, to sell its flagship sewing machine.

That year, two shops were set up in Dhaka and Chattogram, and in 1947, after the partition of the subcontinent, Bangladesh became East Pakistan. Singer in East Pakistan operated as a branch of Singer Pakistan and the products used to come from West Pakistan. Initially, only 10 shops were set up for operations, which rose to 43 by the late 1960s.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Singer



HSBC Bangladesh has provided banking services, trade bank solutions and funding facilities to Singer Bangladesh Ltd since 2001. HSBC has remained a key trade bank for the world-famous sewing machine manufacturer, supporting its seasonal working capital requirements.



HSBC provided support to aid Singer's cash-flow challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Singer has also benefitted from the reliability of HSBC's global network, helping to expand the company's international trade footprint.

**1905**

Two Singer shops set up in Dhaka and Chattogram

**1980**

Sewing machine factory with 10,000 units-per-year capacity established in Chattogram

**1985**

Singer began to transform from a single product into a multiproducts consumer durable company

**2005**

Singer took a strategic multibrand decision to broaden the choice available to its customer base

## A journey of success: Singer & Bangladesh

After the Bangladesh Liberation War and the birth of a new country, Singer Bangladesh had to limit its operation to 23 stores and the branch office was promoted to country office. A change in the investment policy in 1979 created new business opportunities and the enterprise was registered as an operating company, and a sewing machine manufacturing factory with 10,000 units-per-year capacity was established in Chattogram. The capacity increased significantly to 25,000 units per year by 1989.

Although sewing machines are Singer's core business, the management of Singer Bangladesh realised that for sustainable growth in the long run it had to diversify its portfolio. This led the business to expand into numerous ranges of products. In 1985, Singer began to transform from a single product into a multiproducts consumer durable company for future growth and expansion. In 1993, the company established its new audio-video plant and, in 1996, a washing machine assembling section.

In 2005, Singer took a strategic multibrand decision to broaden the choice available to its customer base. But it wasn't just a strategy to introduce globally-known brands; rather, it meant that Singer products would still be seen as competitive and fairly-priced alternatives to others on the market. With this in mind, Singer kept 90% of its goods as under its own name.

By 2016, Singer's revenue from its locally-produced goods in Bangladesh comprised about 24% of its total income. Today, this has risen to more than 50% and the company plans to increase it to at least 90% to maintain its competitive strength and reap the bigger economic rewards of boosting the country's economic position.

2019 saw a new milestone in the Singer Bangladesh journey, when Singer Asia's controlling shares were transferred to the Turkish Fortune 500 company, Koç Holding.



Koç Holding's subsidiary company Arçelik took over a controlling share in Singer Bangladesh, heralding a new vertical integration opportunity for the company, which involved incentivising household appliance and white goods manufacturers to base themselves in the country and supply their components to Singer to assemble.

The addition of Arçelik was a huge boost to the Singer brand too, bringing a long-established expertise in consumer durables. It was a perfect combination for Singer's local production capabilities, which has since boosted productivity and market share significantly, and resulted in cost savings that could be passed to the customer.

Over the past six years, Singer Bangladesh has increased its revenue by 100%.

## Striving for gender equality

The Singer brand – forever linked to its sewing machine products – has always been associated with empowering women to make a good living.

The company set up sewing schools for women back in 1979 in Bangladesh in order to ensure that the market itself would gain traction and develop commercially – and they are still functioning today as a way of taking underprivileged women out of the poverty trap and enabling them to become economically active.

One of Singer's pioneering initiatives, its hire-purchase scheme, has been helping empower the women of Bangladesh since 1905. In addition, these schemes have helped Bangladesh's large numbers of middle-class families to expand their purchasing capacity.

And the scheme still benefits many today in Bangladesh's middle- and lower-income population, with some initiatives also gifting sewing machines to women for training. Singer Sewing School is a key corporate social responsibility (CSR) pillar of Singer Bangladesh, which provides either free or subsidised sewing training to women, significantly contributing to the improvement of their living standards and quality of life.

Although women still account for a minority of Singer Bangladesh's workforce, a fresh approach to gender opportunities has been a feature of Arçelik's influence in recent years.

Across the country, the cultural changes that have led to compulsory education for girls as well as boys mean that women's participation in higher education and the workplace is growing. This is having an exponentially positive effect on culture and lifestyle, which also brings economic benefits.



## An award-winning formula

Singer's activity in Bangladesh – whether commercial or social – has not gone unnoticed by those who are charged with assessing its place in the market over its 117-year history. The awards it has received during that time reflect a high level of trust in the brand promise, as well as what are seen as premium products. Singer was formally recognised as one of Bangladesh's Super Brands in 2018, for example. It was also voted Best Refrigerator Brand by its customers in the same year, and was in turn recognised as a Super Brand in 2020 in the air-conditioner category.

The hire purchase scheme operated by Singer plays a major role in this level of trust. Unlike a traditional bank-based finance scheme, Singer's proprietary model is supported at community level, out of local showrooms. This has brought comfort and convenience to the lives of millions of consumers.

As a listed company, Singer proudly follows a strict code of corporate governance, reflected by its parent company, meaning that it has achieved award-winning excellence. This has afforded it a triple-A credit rating in the country for many years.

Singer has achieved a Corporate Governance Excellence Award for the past nine consecutive years, as well as receiving accolades for the best-presented financial statements and annual reports for many years.

## Caring throughout COVID

When the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world in 2020, Singer Bangladesh's parent company Arçelik was quick to set in motion a scheme to donate mechanical ventilator equipment to the countries in which it operates. For Bangladesh, this meant being able to donate to three hospitals.

During the uncertainties of the first wave, when doctors and nurses were thrown into the front line against a largely unknown disease, Singer donated washing machines and microwave ovens to medical staff in Dhaka and beyond to ensure they were able to maintain hygiene and feed themselves quickly during long shifts.

At the core of this is a corporation that has managed to demonstrate resilience and care for others under some of the most challenging circumstances.

In its own words, Arçelik wants Singer Bangladesh to continue to be "a great place to work".



## A hopeful future awaits

Singer Bangladesh and parent company Arçelik are highly conscious of the role that more enlightened sustainability and green policies will need to take in securing a healthy future both for the company and the country. Arçelik is already a carbon-neutral corporation in its energy use, and Singer's stated aim is to continue to improve the quality of life for Bangladeshi society.

The company is also investing in the development and training of its people resources and to stay abreast of change dynamics and market competition.

The expansion of economic opportunities, implementation of mega-projects, and development of infrastructure are going to ensure a visible change in people's lifestyles as they continue to ascend the economic ladder in greater numbers. A good number of people will be added to the middle class, providing Singer with tremendous opportunities to expand its business. Bangladesh is the next big frontier of opportunity as its per-capita income reached US\$2,227 in a pandemic situation in the year 2021 from USD\$1,970 in 2020.

Over the past 117 years, Singer has overcome many challenges. But with a young population and Bangladesh's GDP growth on a healthy upward turn, there is much untapped potential, with Singer's relatively low market penetration offering room to grow. This, coupled with the rise of a dynamic middle class with income to spend, will ensure Singer's place in Bangladesh's future – as well as its history – for many years to come.






A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Syngenta: Agricultural expertise helps Bangladesh flourish

**syngenta**

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 **HSBC** | Opening up a world of opportunity



## A journey of success: Syngenta & Bangladesh

In recent decades, Syngenta Bangladesh has made its mark on an economy that relies so heavily on the success of its agriculture sector – thanks to a renowned expertise in innovation, research and development (R&D) that is helping to secure Bangladesh's productivity for many years to come.

Swiss-based specialist agri-company Syngenta is present in over 90 countries, where it is combining cutting-edge science, crop technology and sustainable models to ensure that society's future nutritional needs are met. In 2021, Syngenta Group reached US\$28.2bn in global sales, of which around US\$13.5bn was from crop protection and over US\$4bn was from seeds.

In Bangladesh, the company's roots stretch back to Swiss pharmaceuticals company Ciba-Geigy – itself the result of two companies merging in 1970. Today, Syngenta Bangladesh is 60% owned by its Swiss parent and 40% owned by the Government of Bangladesh through the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC). With a head office in Dhaka, Syngenta has three zonal and 11 regional offices across the country.

Its crop protection and seeds plants are in Chattogram and Bogura, with four site offices – Bogura, Jashore, Gazipur, and Chattogram. It also has a learning and development centre in Bogura to conduct training, workshops and seminars for its employees, distributors, retailers, farmers and relevant stakeholders as well.

The core mission for Syngenta Bangladesh is to encourage and develop the most efficient sustainable farming methods possible for a country with a booming population and an ever-increasing demand for food. Hedayet Ullah, Managing Director of Syngenta Bangladesh, explains: "We do this by working with farmers across the country to increase crop yield with high-quality seeds and planting technology, and to encourage better land stewardship by using safe crop protection."

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Syngenta



Syngenta Bangladesh has been banking with HSBC in Bangladesh for nearly two decades, and HSBC Bangladesh is proud to operate as Syngenta's preferred trade bank. Throughout this long-standing financial relationship, HSBC has supported Syngenta on a range of agricultural import and distribution projects.



Syngenta has been able to take advantage of HSBC's global client network, benefitting from access to an international agricultural network which has helped see Syngenta continue towards its leading position in the industry.



When COVID-19 struck, HSBC Bangladesh offered support to Syngenta through a working capital stimulus loan. During the pandemic, HSBC Bangladesh also supported Syngenta with the smooth transition of its business operations into a work-from-home environment, ensuring minimal disruption to its banking needs.

**1973**

Ciba-Geigy started its operation in Bangladesh after the independence of the country

**1996**

Ciba-Geigy merged with Sandoz and formed Novartis

**2022**

Syngenta in Bangladesh runs 'Break the Bias' initiative in support of International Women's Day

## A journey of success: Syngenta & Bangladesh

For all Bangladesh's remarkable progress in forging a modern economy that is ripe for success in a digitally-led 21st century, agriculture naturally remains a vital sector in the country. The exposure that Bangladesh has due to repeated natural disasters creates an endemic problem for producers, and this in turn puts pressure on their profitability.

In previous decades, the Government has applied subsidies to help reduce the cost of cultivation, supported also by global and local corporates that have been able to apply modern technological solutions to traditional agricultural methods. In practice, this has meant introducing high-yield crop seeds and vegetables, something from which Bangladesh has hugely benefitted.

Rice production has increased significantly since the early 1970s and hit new highs in 2020-21.

This, has, in the last 12 months, placed Bangladesh as the third-largest rice-producing country in the world, and innovative work by Syngenta has been key in helping to achieve a high level of domestic self-sufficiency for the country's most vital staple.



## Nurturing the new era

Syngenta Bangladesh's deep relationship with the farming and food sector is proving to be one of the key factors in ensuring future food security by using some of the most highly innovative crop protection methods available.

The company has grown to enjoy a leading position in the country's sector, selling crop protection and micronutrients as well as rice, corn and vegetable seeds. It operates a number of nationally-based crop protection and seed field research stations, research and development facilities, laboratories and seed production sites.

The evolving relationship between seller and farmer, however, reflects a wider opportunity for the sector to adapt and change in response to new challenges. Syngenta Bangladesh has responded by creating a retail chain known as Krishitey Syngenta, which provides support, training and agronomic advice to customers in addition to the product transactions.

Over 12,000 retailers have received training under this go-to-market model, and the company is reporting higher yields and return to the farming communities as a result.

## Knowledge is everything

With environmental and food sustainability increasingly a top priority worldwide, it is no accident that Bangladesh is making the extra effort to future-proof crop yields and food supply. Training and education is ever more relevant to producers to ensure that skills levels are up to the standards required to take the economy forward.

For Syngenta, this marks a core part of its services in the country. A recent addition is the network of Syngenta Learning Centres (SLCs) that offer farmers guidance throughout the entire growing season of their crops. Crop-protection techniques, for example, require careful monitoring during the growth cycle – and when used correctly on a range of local rice varieties, yields can increase by up to 30%.

The impact of such skills on the wider agricultural communities in Bangladesh is significant. As well as ensuring farmers themselves receive stewardship training, Syngenta's programme also targets crop-spray professionals, emergency medical staff who require upskilling on the potential effects of poisoning from the use of crop protectors, agriculture students undergoing Lead Farmer training, and Sub Assistant Agriculture Officers (SAAO).



## Levelling up the nation

As to underline the relevance of agriculture to Bangladesh's future wellbeing, Syngenta engages in a number of key initiatives that are designed to ensure a more equitable and diverse agriculture sector that will enhance community wealth and cohesion across the country.

In Bangladesh and indeed across the wider region, Syngenta takes pride in the significant work carried out to empower women from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds in this sector – not least in its trailblazing support for female students at the Asian University for Women (AUW). In 2022, the company committed to sponsor five students for the full five-year term of their studies, during which time they are covered for accommodation, tuition, health cover and supplies.

The collaboration between Syngenta APAC and AUW is testament to the efforts being made to unlock the potential of Bangladeshi women from otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds who are key to participating in the future macroeconomic health of the country. Indeed, the Managing Director of Syngenta Bangladesh, Hedayet Ullah, describes education as “the fundamental right of every girl in Bangladesh”, where the barriers need to be removed sufficiently to help them contribute to the development of the nation. Other community development initiatives ensure that underprivileged schoolchildren receive education stipends, among other aid, to secure better futures.

Underlining the importance of empowering women in the economy, Syngenta Bangladesh is also active in running programmes to mark International Women's Day. The 2022 initiative – under the title 'Break the Bias' – was marked as the company's most prominent series of events yet, where the Leadership Team made significant pledges to acknowledge and support the growth and contribution of female colleagues. “The contribution of women in socio-economic development and our agriculture sector is growing day by day,” adds Managing Director Hedayet Ullah.

The company's Memoranda of Understanding with universities are also ensuring a culture of technology transfer and research by professors and students for new molecules, as well as training on crop protection application for graduate and postgraduate students, which promotes better understanding of new pest solutions.

In a bid to lead the agenda in public and governmental life, Syngenta provides a fellowship programme for FIDA, a non-profit, non-government journalists' and writers' organisation that focuses on agricultural issues.

This in turn encourages collaboration between professional groups, policymakers, development agencies, and experts on agriculture; the media and the wider community.

The day-to-day concerns of farmers are also being addressed by services that include fintech-based financing solutions to the growers recommended by Syngenta retailers across the country. With this facility, growers can source financing from the local bank agent without any collateral.



## Healthy growth ahead

Syngenta's journey in Bangladesh will remain a crucial one in the coming years. While GDP growth reveals a country on the march industrially and technologically, the agriculture sector remains an important pillar in its future economic fortunes.

The biggest challenge, however, is space. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Arable land is decreasing year-on-year, and the effort to feed a huge population from a shrinking area remains a big challenge for the government. For Syngenta Bangladesh, this underscores the importance of its mission to develop cutting-edge agri-tech and high-yield crop strains that increase yield, are sustainable and protect the environment in the longer term.

Whether on the bigger challenges of environment and technology, or the daily challenges to secure a minimum quality of living in the agriculture sector, Syngenta's approach is "to ensure that everybody wins: that farmers are prosperous, agriculture becomes more sustainable, and consumers have safe, healthy and nutritious food".

A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Unilever: Empowering consumers with passion, innovation and care



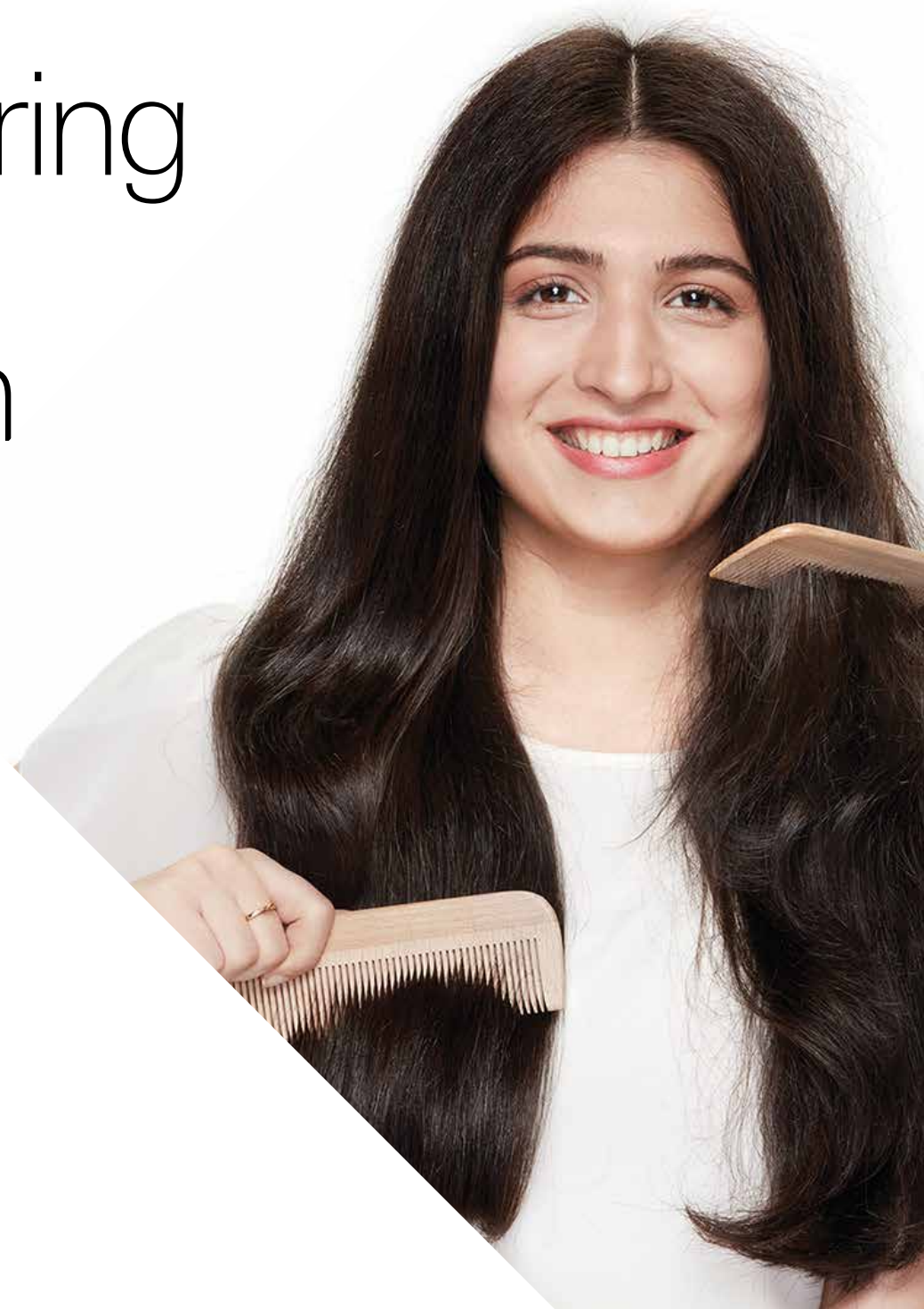
Unilever

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HSBC

Opening up a world of opportunity



There are few global corporates that can truly lay claim to the same brand penetration that Unilever enjoys, especially in South Asia. Unilever's business in Bangladesh is part of the national fabric of life – whether present in households or blazing a trail in the country's communities. Unilever's investments, innovations and social impact in Bangladesh are testament to its legacy and a parallel success story along with the growth and development of a young nation.

With over £42bn turnover, Unilever is one of the leading Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies in the world with around 3.4 billion consumers in 190 countries. Its products are everywhere in our homes and among some of the best known household brands. Around 58% of Unilever's revenue is from emerging markets such as Bangladesh. Its presence in Bangladesh has seen it grow for more than 50 years with activities spanning manufacturing, marketing, selling and distribution of over 28 branded product lines across four core business groups: beauty and wellness, personal care, home care, and nutrition.

With product penetration in more than nine out of 10 homes of the country, market leadership in eight out of nine operating categories and a network of 1.3 million retailers, Unilever Bangladesh continues to have an amazing growth journey, and it has played a significant professional, economic and social role in the development of modern Bangladesh.

Although the company was incorporated as Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd in 1973, the journey actually had begun with product availability since the early 1900s and establishment of its first factory in Kalurghat, Chattogram, in 1962.

Following the birth of the new nation of Bangladesh, the company began work on production of its Sunlight Soap product in the country. It was a product that had been at the core of the global business since 1885, when it was manufactured as the must-have item for Victorian Britain to maintain its health and hygiene.

One of Unilever's early projects in Bangladesh that has changed the game for FMCG investors in the country was the creation of the personal products segment. During the 1980s, there was minimal demand for imported personal products in Bangladesh, but Unilever believed this could be a market for the future. At the time, three-quarters of the population of Bangladesh lived in rural areas, a market largely untapped by any FMCG company. For the rural population, or the urban low-income segment, personal products were not items seen as being necessities and neither were they affordable.

**“ If you look at the demographics of the country in those days, people had aspirations but one of the biggest challenges was having products at an accessible pricepoint. The insight Unilever had was that consumers wanted the same things, but in a smaller portion.”**

Zaved Akhtar,  
CEO & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh





**A journey of success:** Unilever & Bangladesh

The demand had to be created and that's where Unilever decided to innovate. Designers made a small pack size to ensure affordability and ran a trial for shampoos in a BDT1 sachet (1p pack) and the industry was changed forever. The sachet revolution was so huge that, in a few years, Unilever had to build one of the largest personal product factories in South Asia in Bangladesh. It also introduced new categories including handwash liquids, hair conditioners, and dish-washing liquids in addition to skin cleansing, oral care and home care products, which had already been introduced in Bangladesh by Unilever.

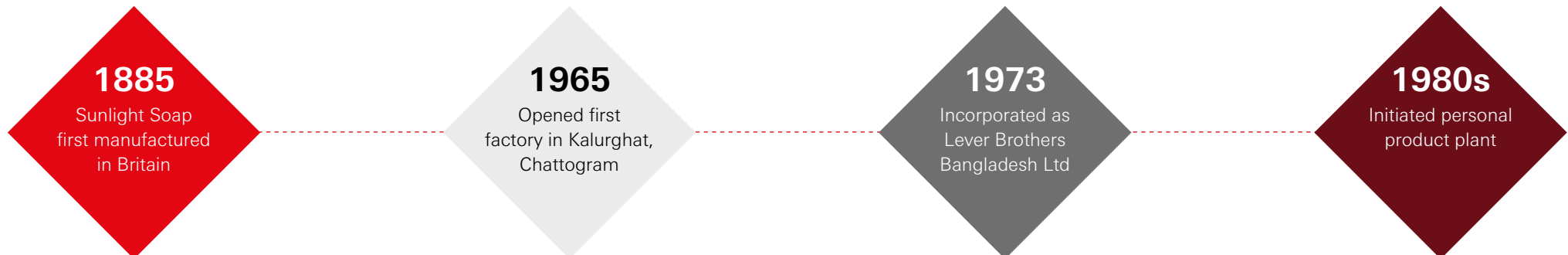
Brand names such as Lux and Lifebuoy Soap, Wheel, Surf Excel and Rin Detergent, Pepsodent Toothpaste, Sunsilk and Dove Shampoo are recognised across all strata of society – but with an added brand proposition where 'purpose' is at the centre of its ethos. Every brand in Unilever Bangladesh's staple makes a difference to people's lives.



**“The philosophy of Unilever is that you must create a company that has a direct impact on the community. You have to see the world through the consumer’s eyes. Whatever he or she does, you have to observe it. As an FMCG company, if you’re not close to your consumers, you won’t be able to understand their pain points or their wider needs.”**

Zaved Akhtar,  
CEO & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, Unilever has heavily invested in market development and product awareness creation. For example, by identifying the knowledge and awareness gap related to handwashing, Unilever Bangladesh, through Lifebuoy, initiated a 21-day behaviour change programme for schoolchildren to teach them proper handwashing techniques. Since its inception in the 1990s, this programme has trained over 11 million pupils. Similarly, Pepsodent is credited with underlining the importance of oral hygiene, by reaching schools with their Dentibus – a modified bus with a dentist and dental check-up facility, providing free dental sessions to millions of youngsters and creating awareness among their parents.



## A culture of opportunity

In 2022, Unilever Bangladesh was declared by Universum as the number one employer of choice across all sectors in Bangladesh. And while this recognition is new, the company has held the accolade of Top Employer in the FMCG sector for the past decade, contributing to the growth and development of the nation. Spanning over 56 years, Unilever's journey and people development philosophy in Bangladesh has been transformative.

So, what model does Unilever Bangladesh rely on to maintain the strength and influence it enjoys in the market? The answer lies in the company's core philosophy that brands and people are its biggest assets. "Once you take care of the people, the people take care of the business", says Akhtar.

Currently, Unilever Bangladesh has around 1,500 employees and more than 20,000 people working in its extended value chain across the country. Since its early days, the company has enjoyed a reputation for instilling a deep sense of pride and a motivation to succeed among its workforce; and this is reflected in the large number of structured development programmes the organisation runs to ensure continuing leadership development.

Unilever is credited with introducing modern people and organisational development philosophy in Bangladesh. It was the first company in the country to introduce an accelerated apprentice or management trainee programme in 1980. Through this initiative, Unilever has nurtured young talent to become high-profile leaders in other national and multi-national organisations.

The management trainee programme is currently known as the Unilever Future Leaders Programme (UFLP). Spanning 15 months, it gives young talents both functional and cross-functional exposure while preparing them for the leadership roles within and outside the country. The company also offers numerous internships and live projects to young students through their Unilever Leadership Internship Programme (ULIP) or BizLearner programmes. Additionally, the flagship Learn2Lead and BizMaestros student competition help equip young people across approximately



30 universities with business skills in line with their social commitment of equipping one million students with future-fit skills by 2030.

At Unilever, the open relationship between workers and management is a key motivator – encouraging enhanced productivity, while management training has been core to the career experience at Unilever Bangladesh since its inception. Globally, it is a gender-balanced organisation with a 52/48 (female/male) ratio. At Unilever Bangladesh there is a 41/59 (female/male) ratio, with steady plans towards an equal slate in the next two years. Unilever Bangladesh has female representation at all levels, from the factory shop floor to out in the sales field. It is also a matter of great pride that the company draws its workforce from across the social spectrum, including transgender people, those with disabilities and men and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is particularly important because it demonstrates how the consumer base is represented within the workforce.

**“ We need to foster diversity and equity, and not only in gender. In 2016, we had 10% women in the workforce, now we have 41% and we are aiming for 50%. But we also need to foster diversity of thinking, ethnicity and diverse orientation.”**

Zaved Akhtar,  
CEO & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh

## Social impact on a national scale

As an organisation operating in Bangladesh for over five decades with nationwide coverage, Unilever has had a lasting impact on shaping the lifestyle of Bangladeshi consumers. Besides its mission to build a legacy with purpose through its brand campaigns, the company takes its wider ESG responsibilities seriously.

Unilever Bangladesh regards itself as a proactive corporate citizen in promoting sustainable living as part of its commercial objective. There is a clear ambition to be a leader in sustainable business, showing that its purpose-led, future-fit business model delivers superior performance. Making sustainable living commonplace is, Unilever says, more than philanthropy.

On the ground, this means that Unilever designs initiatives considering their scalability and true impact – and it implements these actions through a multi-stakeholder model that includes the Government, NGOs and civil society. For example, understanding the geographical challenge of the flood-prone northern Chars of Bangladesh, Unilever, in partnership with the charity Friendship, launched a floating mobile hospital in a converted ship in 2002. The Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital since its inception has provided healthcare services to over 1.5 million people living in the Chars.

Unilever approaches social problems with adaptive, scalable intervention models. An example could be the Pallydut (Micro Entrepreneurs) programme – an initiative to empower rural individuals to work as micro resellers of Unilever products in deep rural locations. Unilever supports them by facilitating financing through financial institutions, along with training and partnership.

Currently, over 1,100 Pallyduts are working, Unilever Bangladesh has recently started to include women in the programme as Dyuti (Community Product Advisers), in a mission to engage and educate rural women on health and hygiene across the country.



## A journey of success: Unilever & Bangladesh

Two other key initiatives that the company has rolled out include the Vaseline Healing Project, a campaign to prevent the onset of skin diseases during winter, and the Dove Self-Esteem Project to promote body positivity and self-confidence among young people.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a challenging backdrop for some intense activity by Unilever Bangladesh to help in the nation's effort. Since the start of the pandemic, the company has invested at least £1m supporting 32 public hospitals with COVID-19 testing kits, PPE, oxygen concentrators, and hygiene products. It also launched awareness campaigns and helped around 53 million people through direct and indirect intervention.

Bangladesh's infrastructure and economy itself has similarly benefitted from the secondary supply industry ecosystem that an operation the size of Unilever Bangladesh enjoys. It is estimated that the extended supply chain feeding into the company's activities numbers over 20,000 people – consisting largely of 235 distributor networks, seven third-party manufacturing units and large vendors providing packaging and marketing functions.

## A sustainable route to the future

With the urgency of climate change now a real and present threat, a consumer goods company of the scale of Unilever Bangladesh has the power to both exacerbate and mitigate the collective crises the planet faces. Bangladesh is very much a frontline country in the face of the climate emergency and Unilever is committed to transforming lives and businesses by making sustainable living the norm.

Unilever is one of the pioneers of decarbonising in the country and is in the process of reducing the CO2 emissions of its business and supply chains. It is also one of the first companies in the country to install water treatment plants (WTPs) and effluent treatment plants (ETPs). Unilever Bangladesh is a zero-landfill company. Unilever also was one of the first businesses

to start focusing on clean energy in its production operations by installing solar panels at production facilities, implementing more efficient processes and machines and by obtaining the International Renewable Energy Certificate (I-REC). Energy saved by Unilever Bangladesh in 2021 alone is equivalent to planting at least 150,252 trees. The company is committed to making its production process net zero by 2030.

However, Unilever's commitment towards the planet is not only limited to production. As consumer activity grows in Bangladesh, plastic – especially single-use plastic – is creating severe challenges due to the informal and unmanaged nature of waste disposal and collection.

**“If you look at our sustainability journey in Bangladesh as a country, our big challenges are in health and wellbeing, the environment and waste management, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). So, Unilever examines how we drive those three pillars.”**

Zaved Akhtar,  
CEO & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh



**A journey of success:** Unilever & Bangladesh

"Our brands have a role in terms of health and hygiene; their reason for existence should be that they are having an impact," continues Akhtar. "We are making great progress in DE&I. Our next job is to ensure the health of the planet. Waste is a big problem and the largest part of it is single-use plastic. Unilever feels that it needs to lead here in order to try to find a solution."

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO), the company has launched the largest municipal-backed waste-collection project in Bangladesh at Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC). Unilever is piloting three different models at NCC, engaging over 1,200 city corporation waste collectors and empowering waste-collection workers. The mission is also to change consumer behaviour and to facilitate an ecosystem so that waste has a viable value for recycling, and a circular economy is established.

Though FMCG products have reached over 95% of Bangladeshi households, and some analysts might think that the growth of the FMCG sector in Bangladesh will become difficult in the coming years, the actual situation is noticeably different.

Compared with its regional counterparts, Bangladesh is still far behind in its per capita consumption of FMCG products. Against comparable countries such as Indonesia (four times more), and the Philippines (10 times more), consumption in Bangladesh is still lower, indicating a huge growth potential.



## A journey of success: Unilever & Bangladesh

“The per capita consumption of FMCG in Bangladesh is US\$23. It’s US\$44 in India and in Indonesia it’s US\$103. That tells you what the opportunity is. The scope for FMCG is phenomenal. Sitting where we are, we can double our business. On top of that, imagine the economic growth this country can achieve,” says Akhtar.

**“ The next 50 years of Unilever will be even better in Bangladesh, because the opportunity is phenomenal, but we need to put in a concerted effort. In some ways, the past 30 years saw accidental growth. But our next 30 years can’t be accidental – the growth has to be planned.”**

Zaved Akhtar,  
CEO & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh

The challenges facing the industry today are far more complex and multidimensional. The future will be very different from what it is today. From the asset-heavy, end-to-end control of the flow of goods, easier awareness building through mass media coupled with access through extensive distribution networks, the business will likely morph into a very different organisation. Unilever will be moving the business from a linear value chain to a dynamic connected ecosystem of consumer, customer, and operations with data, tech, and analytics at the centre.

It is clear that Unilever’s business journey in Bangladesh is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to the country as it strives for healthy economic growth; today, the real ambitions are only just taking shape.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Unilever



Unilever Bangladesh and HSBC Bangladesh have been partners since 2004.



HSBC provides innovative transaction solutions to Unilever locally and the company uses its accounts to collect its sales proceeds and also to make various statutory payments such as imports duty, VAT etc. through HSBC’s digital platform. HSBC also provides liquidity solutions to Unilever and options for investing its surplus cash balance in income-generation products and accounts.



Unilever is also using supply chain financing from HSBC Bangladesh. The solution has helped Unilever to digitally manage and finance its complex supplier network.




HSBC’s supply chain financing solution enabled Unilever to deepen its ties with several key suppliers by channelling increased order volume and providing those suppliers with access to a competitive source of financing.

A journey of success in Bangladesh

# Youngone: Pioneering apparel investment

**YOUNGONE**

#ProudlyInBangladesh

 **HSBC** | Opening up a world of opportunity



Steeped in a long-standing tradition of high-quality, innovative textile manufacturing for all lovers of outdoor activity, South Korean company Youngone Corporation has played an intrinsic role in developing both its own commercial strength, and the wellbeing of the Bangladeshi people, since its founding in the country in 1980. Today, the company is at the heart of an exciting future for the nation.

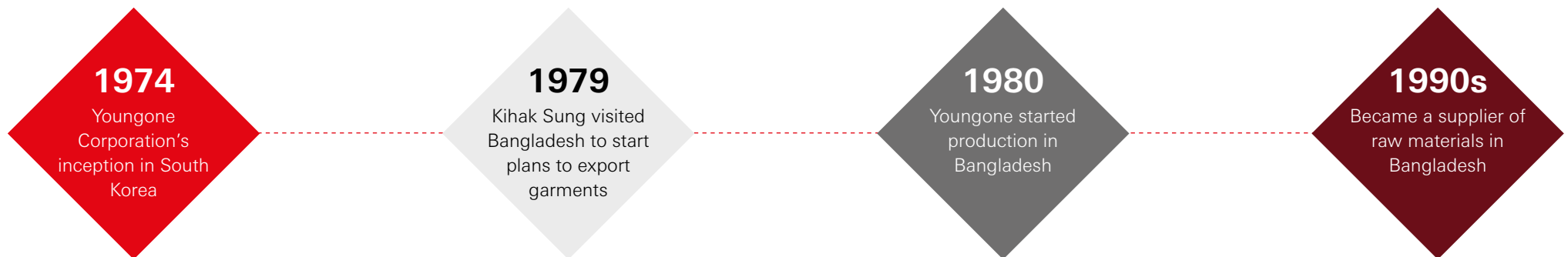
Hiking, trekking, or camping – even simply keeping warm and being protected while enjoying outdoor activities – has been at the core of Youngone Corporation’s mission since its inception in South Korea in 1974.

The multinational apparel and textile giant, famed for its pioneering work in outdoor clothing and accessories, has a long history across continents of spreading a philosophy of living the outdoor life while caring for nature around us.

Youngone’s journey in Bangladesh started in 1980, and since then it has earned its credentials to become one of the country’s largest manufacturers and exporters of technical outdoor wear, sports shoes, backpacks, textiles and fibre products. Chairman & CEO, Kihak Sung is famed for pioneering support for Bangladesh with his transformative investment in the country’s textile and garment sector. He has committed to enhancing the image of Bangladesh by manufacturing products for world-famous brands.

“It was in May 1979 when I first visited Bangladesh, with an eagerness to promote garment exports from the country,” recalls Kihak Sung. “The infrastructure was not ready for the RMG [ready-made garments] industry, so we decided to make a small investment and start production in a rented building, Jahan Building-2 located at Agrabad, in Chattogram, with a workforce of 250, within one year of my first visit.”

By the early 1980s, the business was importing raw fibres such as polyester for carding, and filling them into nylon outerwear for high-volume export to the Swedish markets. Five years later, it was producing polyester padding for winter garments and supplying it to garment manufacturers in Chattogram. “That was one of the first man-made fibre backward linkage industries in Bangladesh”, explains Kihak Sung. “By the late 1990s, we had become a supplier of materials like nylon and polyester fabrics to garment makers as we completed the structure of weaving, dyeing, and finishing products in Bangladesh.”





## A journey of success: Youngone & Bangladesh

Today, Youngone has 20 companies operating with around 60 state-of-the-art factory units and plans are afoot to further increase the number of these factory units.

The company's employment strength in Bangladesh currently stands at about 70,000, 70% of which is female.

The act of manufacturing such products on a grand scale brings with it a number of environmental challenges – though Youngone's values have been fine-tuned since its founding to ensure that its activity is in keeping with the ecological balance of the country in which it is operating. Indeed, its parallel mission is to actively conserve the environment and improve biodiversity wherever it operates.

Commercially, Youngone enjoys a reputation as Bangladesh's largest ready-made garment exporter. The expansion of its vertical manufacturing activity has made it a major catalyst for increased foreign direct investments in the country for the textile sector overall. And the high level of innovation demonstrated across its product line is apparent in the company's technology-led approach to fabric.

The resulting product lines boast pioneering synthetic fabrics in Youngone's jackets, shoes, and related garment items including patented insulation features that are breathable, quick-drying, stretchable and hypo-allergenic.



## Opening up new opportunities

Perhaps the most influential development in Youngone's journey of growth in Bangladesh was incorporation of the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ). Comprising a free-trade-zone and industrial park located in Chattogram that today houses a mix of factories and protected green space and marshland, the KEPZ has been fundamental in providing inward investment opportunities for overseas corporations. However, it has also been the bedrock for Youngone's expansion and subsequent vertical growth.

The KEPZ is the first and only private export processing zone in Bangladesh. It was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina in October 1999. The first factory to begin production there was Youngone Corporation's Karnaphuli Shoes Industries in November 2011.

The notable characteristics of the KEPZ are the result of a holistic development concept that has, over two decades, ensured the parallel development of increased economic activity and urbanisation furthering the environmental ecosystem that represents 48% of the land.

The past three years have seen the rapid development of 45 factory sites, which have the potential to provide the regional economy with hundreds of thousands of new jobs, either directly or indirectly.

As well as being a major infrastructural achievement of real pride for Youngone, the KEPZ has gained a leading international reputation as a target investment location – helping to put Bangladesh firmly on the map.

## Working in partnership: HSBC and Youngone



Youngone Bangladesh has been banking with HSBC Bangladesh for over two decades.



Youngone uses a range of working capital facilities including HSBC's supply chain financing products.



HSBC provides Youngone with extensive support in its international trade operations, which is critical for the textile manufacturing process through the bank's global network and expertise.

“It has been a challenging job to turn what was once barren land to an eco-friendly industrial zone, but in keeping with the stipulation of the Environment Clearance Certificate (ECC), 52% of the land has been developed as green space with water bodies and open areas. The remaining 48% of land is reserved for industry, infrastructure, utilities, and other logistic units.”

Kihak Sung,  
Chairman & CEO, Youngone Corporation

Since its inception, the KEPZ had a plan to establish a state-of-the-art hi-tech park, and accordingly earmarked an area of 100 acres within the zone. The park will have a number of software development facilities including high-rise IT buildings, universities, schools and community complexes with serviced apartments.

In all, it will create working opportunities for up to 20,000 people when fully implemented.

Youngone is setting up its first IT related infrastructure and facilities for its sister concern, Tekvision (BD) Limited, in the park. This company will produce and develop a range of software, industrial digitalisation, data entry and outsourcing with an estimated investment worth US\$200m.

## Custodians of a greener future

The sheer extent of the territory making up the KEPZ reflects the responsibility Youngone holds to ensure that the land is managed in a responsible and sustainable manner. Among the many green initiatives that have been undertaken in the zone is a cutting-edge 40MW rooftop solar power generation project – the largest in the country, valued at US\$40m, and constructed over two phases. Its second phase of 20MW is in quick progress. This vast operation is of course vital in ensuring the sustainability of industrial activity as the KEPZ continues to expand – but it is also designed to feed surplus energy into Bangladesh’s national grid, giving a welcome boost to an often-struggling power supply nationwide.

Significant work is also being undertaken to protect, maintain and increase the biodiversity present on the KEPZ site – most notably through tree-planting initiatives, which Youngone has been spearheading since 1999. To date, over 2,500,000 trees have been planted across the zone and work is continuing where possible. The Department of Botany at nearby Chattogram University carried out a survey in 2019, which confirmed that there are over 400 different species of plants now forming the rich ecosystem at the KEPZ.

Water is also a key feature of Youngone’s sustainability activity here. As part of what are known as “Blue & Green” initiatives, the company has created water bodies across the KEPZ to ensure the continued supply of fresh water as and when needed. To date, 25 water bodies have been created, with the combined capability to hold up to 500 million gallons of rainwater each year. It will be doubled to one billion gallons in the next few years.

This initiative is the largest man-made rainwater harvesting system of its kind in the private sector anywhere in Bangladesh – and given the country’s challenges in tackling regular and extreme weather conditions, projects such as this go a long way towards improving the sustainability of the region.

## Business as a force for good

While the commercial and environmental footprint of Youngone in Bangladesh has been a significantly positive influence on the way multinational corporations invest in new markets more widely, the company implements a similarly impressive ESG policy that today benefits some 70,000 employees in the country.

The Youngone brand reputation for diversity has been a positive driver that has enhanced its brand goodwill since its expansion from a mere 250 workers in its early days.

Internally, it is important to Youngone that this diversity is harnessed to drive better performance outcomes and increase its growth. The critical mass of talent Youngone now enjoys in Bangladesh is central to a strategy that will see it continue up the value chain, thanks to diverse ideas and new technology. By upholding workers' rights – most importantly those specified by the International Labour Organization (ILO) – the company is demonstrating that good governance breeds both commercial and social goodwill.



## Pride in Bangladesh's heritage

This goodwill also comes from external activity. Besides the innovative work being carried out to ensure the KEPZ's sustainable growth, Youngone has taken major steps to ensure that Bangladesh's rich heritage is recognised and restored where possible. This reflects the idea that, without respecting one's past, it is impossible to move forward with a clear identity and purpose. This philosophy is manifested in the restoration work Youngone is carrying out at Sonargaon.

In 2012, the Government of Bangladesh and Youngone partnered in a unique and major project to revitalise a 500-year-old heritage site at Sonargaon.

The first of its kind, the restoration represents a significant ambition by Youngone to recognise the welcome and support it has been given by the country by creating this special 'gift of the past' for the people of Bangladesh to enjoy. Five years later, in 2017, the project was completed and doors were opened to the public.



## Looking forward with confidence

The futures of both Youngone and Bangladesh are also intrinsically connected. As the company pushes forward with more innovative fabric manufacturing processes, it has also recognised the impact of the digital revolution on ways of working and the business opportunities to grow. In the KEPZ, the hi-tech park that is being developed will provide essential support in the form of education, technical training and human resource development. Its IT facility plays a crucial role, not just in contributing to the digital growth of Bangladesh but also for the expansion of the KEPZ to boost production capability, as well as attract and accommodate new industry.

As well as its high-tech plans, Youngone is investing heavily in five highly sophisticated factories.

So far, three factories of 40,000sq m each have been completed. Construction work of two more will start soon creating a combined production space of 200,000sq m. These operational sites include state-of-the-art knitting, weaving, dyeing and finishing plants.

On completion, it will become a textile hub in Bangladesh to produce and supply much-needed high-quality yarn and man-made fibre to supply to garments and apparel factories in Bangladesh as an import substitute. In addition, fully automated warp knitting and weaving machines have been installed alongside a wide range of European finishing equipment.

All of this highly sophisticated plant and equipment has been purchased with an eye to the future and the environmental demands from brands and customers. Bangladesh as a whole is indeed at the forefront of a continuing revolution, and Youngone is proudly positioning itself to play a part in the country's future prosperity.

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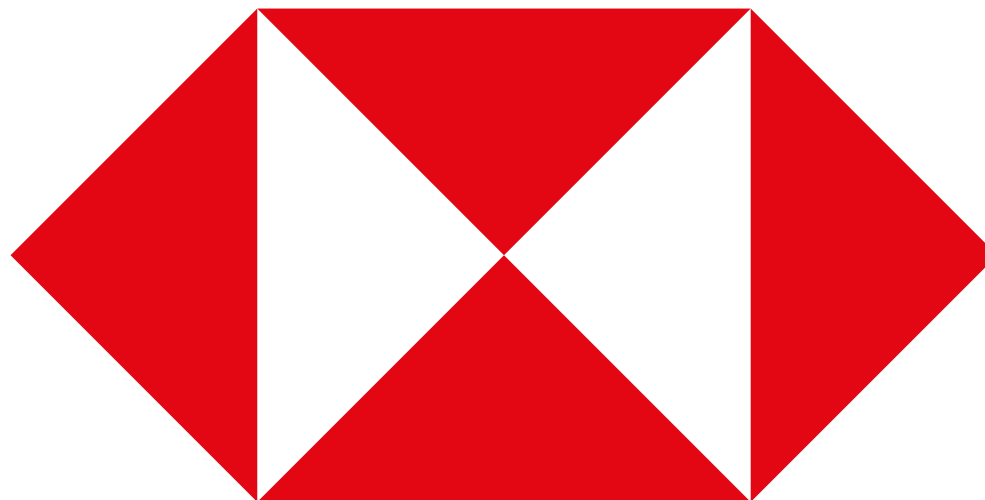
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