

# BANGLADESH

**Global FDI**  
R E P O R T S

BUSINESS FEATURE

May 2026



## *A new chapter in investment relations*

**E**lections in February 2026 marked the start of a new era for Bangladesh, as the country moved from interim administration to an elected government with a renewed policy mandate. In his first address to the nation, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman set out priorities centred on economic revival, depoliticising institutions and the rule of law, while also pledging equal rights for all citizens and greater inclusivity. “We have to ensure good governance,” Rahman said. “We want to have an economy where everyone, based on their qualifications and merit, can do business, trade and thrive.”

That encapsulates Rahman’s wider message that the next stage of development will depend on expanding opportunity and creating a more competitive business environment. Prior to the election, Rahman set a target of creating 10 million new jobs through comprehensive reforms in banking, insurance and capital markets, increased domestic and foreign investment and revitalised regional economies. “Key sectors have been identified, and specific strategies have been formulated to create new employment opportunities,” he said. In conjunction with initiatives to support growth in areas ranging from traditional products to content creation, it signals an administration seeking to use its political momentum to engineer a broader economic reset.

The government’s agenda also speaks

to the priorities of Bangladesh’s business sector. Grameenphone is the country’s largest telecoms operator, serving 86 million customers, and its largest foreign investor. As the company engages in a comprehensive transformation programme, CEO Yasir Azman emphasises that a stable regulatory environment is

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**TARIQUE RAHMAN,**  
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

crucial to long-term confidence. “We have rebuilt the organisation to be more forward-leaning and digital-centric,” he says. “That transformation requires belief in the country, society and the regulatory environment. We believe in Bangladesh and its potential, and our long-term commitment is forward-looking.”

As a reform-led agenda takes shape, Bangladesh is also putting greater emphasis on its international economic relationships. The UAE is already a key partner and significant investor, particularly across energy, ports and infrastructure. In February 2025, the Dubai-Bang-

ladesh Business Forum highlighted bilateral trade of around \$2 billion in FY2024 – a figure the UAE has previously targeted to reach \$10 billion by 2030. In February 2026, UAE Ambassador to Bangladesh Abdulla Ali AlHmoudi reaffirmed the growing strategic partnership between the two countries, following discussions centred on accelerating talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

That fits a broader shift in how Bangladesh is positioning itself within regional and global markets. With its traditional strengths in export-led manufacturing, the country is increasingly seeking to build momentum in higher-value segments including logistics, energy, infrastructure and digital services. Upgrades in transport connectivity and urban infrastructure, together with a large and youthful workforce, are pillars of efforts to diversify the economy.

That mix of traditional strengths and new entry points is reshaping how Bangladesh presents itself to international partners. The emphasis is now on execution, as policymakers look to turn rhetoric into results. In a country combining market scale with a renewed economic roadmap and growing external engagement, the next chapter is set to be defined by success in mobilising those strengths. “Bangladesh is at an inflection point,” says Azman. “It is no longer only about potential, but increasingly about value creation.”

### INSIGHTS

**“OPPORTUNITIES IN DIGITAL BANKING WILL INTEREST UAE INVESTORS.”**

**ASHIK CHOWDHURY,**  
CHAIRMAN, BIDA

**“WE HAVE TRADE LINKS AND A STRONG FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UAE.”**

**NUZHAT YASMIN,**  
CEO, BANGLADESH TOURISM BOARD

**“WE CAN ASSIST UAE INVESTORS TO IDENTIFY SECTORS WITH STRONG POTENTIAL.”**

**MUZAFFAR AHMED,**  
EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT, CREDIT RATING INFORMATION AND SERVICES LTD

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## INVESTMENT

## Why invest in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's prime minister aims to turn stabilisation into growth, prioritising investor appeal.

**P**rim Minister Tarique Rahman has made streamlining entry for investors a national priority. In May he directed senior officials to simplify the approval process for investment projects, while pushing to increase loans to facilitate private investment in government factories. That aligns with his previously outlined strategy to attract higher levels of local and international capital. "We will pursue prudent deregulation, improve the ease of doing business and foster a competitive environment that attracts responsible investment," he said in March. "Our goal is to unlock the full potential of our people and the private sector."

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) April 2026 report on Bangla-

desh points to both the challenges and long-term appeal of one of South Asia's largest economies. The IMF estimates Bangladesh's GDP at \$511 billion – ranking second in the region, behind India – with growth forecast to reach 4.7% in financial year 2026. That outlook comes against a backdrop of moderating inflation, rising foreign-exchange reserves and a reform agenda aimed at improving transparency, competition and private-sector participation.

Net foreign direct investment rose 39% in 2025 to \$1.77 billion but was largely driven by activity from existing overseas firms. The government aims to build on that figure by drawing new investment across a broader range of sectors. Textiles and garments remain the dominant destination, but pharmaceuticals, telecommunications and the digital economy are all areas of growing interest internationally.

With opportunities arising across the economy, renewable energy is an area of particular focus. Trailing its neighbours in renewables adoption, the Merchant Power Policy opens Bangladesh's energy supply to the private sector through



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corporate power purchase agreements, while a rooftop solar programme targeting 3,000MW of new capacity and a new PPP framework opening public land to large-scale solar projects aim to significantly boost generation. With Gulf investors already active in Bangladesh's energy and infrastructure sectors, the scale of the transition – solar capacity is projected to reach 8.5GW by 2035 – represents a significant pipeline of opportunity.

### BIO TARIQUE RAHMAN

**1985**

Enrols at the University of Dhaka but later drops out to start a business in textiles and shipping.

**1988**

First enters politics as a member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in his native Bogura District.

**2009**

Elected Senior Vice Chairman of the BNP at its 5th National Council.

**2026**

Named Chairman of the BNP before leading the party to a two-thirds majority in general election.



Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photo: Pexels

## ADN GROUP

## ADN Group: transforming Bangladesh's connectivity

Founder Asif Mahmood casts the firm as an early telecom mover in local digital development.

**A** spin-off from an IT retail firm, ADN evolved into a leading provider of systems integration, connectivity and telecom licensing. Listed since 2019, the group now generates about \$25 million across subsidiaries, with a nationwide footprint and strategic global alliances. In this interview, Founder and Chairman Asif Mahmood outlines ADN's trajectory so far and what comes next for the company.

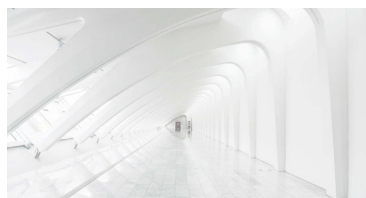


Photo: ADN Group

### Q: How did ADN Telecom evolve from an IT business into a telecom player?

ADN Telecom was founded in 2003, but our business started in 1990 when information technology in Bangladesh was in a very nascent state, and we operated essentially as a computer shop. We became a partner of Wang, a US-based company, around mini-computers and main-

frame concepts. As distributed computing and networking expanded, we moved into systems integration by building large networks as Bangladesh evolved toward being information technology-centric across government and the broader economy.

In the late 1990s, early internet access was expensive and slow, used mainly for basic browsing. In 2000, Bangladesh liberalised the sector so the private sector could distribute Internet access, and we entered telecommunications and connectivity by selling satellite bandwidth. The government later signed onto SEA-ME-WE 4, and by 2006 we decided that beyond systems integration, we should participate fully in telecommunications liberalisation to contribute to the country and the economy.

### Q: How would you describe ADN's current market position?

Our total revenue, including all subsidiaries of ADN Telecom, is around \$25 million. We have a strong team, with many people who have been with us for 15 to 20 years. I consider our "ADN DNA" to be our people. Our advantage is our long presence in Bangladesh, our physical footprint across the country, and internationally our position as a trusted partner of major global companies.



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**ASIF MAHMOOD,**  
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN, ADN GROUP

We evolved from systems integration to domestic connectivity and then international connectivity. We have also invested in voice services through IGW.

We became a listed company around 2019, so we operate with a board structure and hire international talent. Our expansion policy is driven by telecom experts in management, and the board includes independent directors and industry veterans.

### Q: Why is this the right moment for Gulf investors?

With greater international connectivity and more data centres, Bangladesh could become a destination due to low-cost land, low-cost energy and a large population. AI is now taking a different leap and requires significant data centre capacity, processing, connectivity and cross-border bandwidth. The government is preparing to take advantage of new technology, and as a telecom company we expect to grow as well.

I would like to acknowledge the Gulf as a wealthy region whose sovereign funds and other mechanisms have contributed significantly to Bangladesh's economy. The Gulf has consistently contributed through generating employment for Bangladeshi workers and through remittances, which provide Bangladesh an edge among similar countries. Foreign reserves have started growing, and this is the right time to enter because early entrants benefit more.