

WAVERLEY GATEWAY GUIDE

Connecting International Capital with Emerging & Frontier Markets

BANGLADESH

Asia West

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WHERE AND HOW TO ENTER

KEY INVESTMENT LOCATIONS

Location / Region	Strategic Importance	Priority Sectors
Dhaka	Capital city and primary financial, commercial, and administrative center, home to most corporate headquarters and government institutions	Finance, professional services, retail, government-linked contracting
Chattogram (Chittagong)	Principal seaport and industrial hub, handling the large majority of Bangladesh's maritime trade	Port logistics, heavy industry, shipbuilding, garment export processing
Gazipur / Narayanganj (Greater Dhaka industrial belt)	Core of the country's ready-made garment (RMG) manufacturing base, the dominant engine of Bangladesh's export economy	Garment and textile manufacturing, light industry
Mirsarai Economic Zone (Chattogram)	Bangladesh's flagship planned economic zone, intended as the country's largest industrial park under the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority framework	Diversified manufacturing, heavy industry, energy
Cox's Bazar	Tourism destination and site of the world's largest refugee settlement (Rohingya camps), creating both opportunity and humanitarian-linked complexity	Tourism, hospitality, humanitarian-linked infrastructure
Mongla	Secondary seaport with a dedicated export processing zone, offering lower-cost alternative capacity to Chattogram	Port logistics, export processing, light manufacturing
Sylhet	Northeastern region with a large diaspora-investment base (particularly UK-linked) and growing tea, natural gas, and services activity	Diaspora-linked investment, natural gas, agriculture, services

INVESTOR ENTRY ROUTES

- Foreign investors have historically registered through the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), or the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) depending on project type; the Tarique Rahman government has announced plans to merge all three into a single Invest Bangladesh Authority, which should streamline registration once implemented
- Export-oriented garment and textile investment typically proceeds through the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), which administers the country's established export processing zones with dedicated fiscal incentives
- Bangladesh Bank administers foreign-exchange approvals and capital repatriation; investors should confirm current procedures directly given a February 2026 change in central-bank leadership that has drawn some governance-independence concerns
- The ready-made garment sector benefits from a February 2026 US-Bangladesh trade agreement reducing the US reciprocal tariff from 20% to 19%, alongside a planned mechanism for a zero reciprocal tariff rate on qualifying textile and apparel goods made with US cotton and man-made-fiber inputs

- Bangladesh maintains an active IMF-supported reform program (a USD 4.7 billion arrangement approved in 2023, with a USD 1.3 billion tranche disbursed in mid-2025), which investors should track as a signal of macroeconomic stabilization progress and reform conditionality
- Large-scale or strategically significant projects can also be negotiated directly with relevant ministries, particularly in energy, infrastructure, and special economic zones, though investors should expect administrative processes to still be adjusting to the post-transition institutional landscape

MARKET-ENTRY OBSERVATION

Bangladesh enters October 2026 roughly eight months into a genuinely new political era. Following the July-August 2024 uprising that ousted long-serving Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and an interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh held its first national election since the transition on February 12, 2026, with the Awami League barred from contesting. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Tarique Rahman, won a decisive 209 of 299 contested seats, and Rahman was sworn in as the country's prime minister on February 17, 2026, alongside a referendum on a "July National Charter" reform package that passed with roughly 73% support. The new government has branded its foreign policy "Bangladesh First," pursuing a diversification of international partnerships: it concluded a February 2026 trade deal with the United States cutting the reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi goods from 20% to 19% with a further zero-tariff mechanism planned for qualifying textile exports, while a June 2026 visit to China produced 17 memoranda of understanding and a new Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership; relations with India, more complicated since the Hasina era, are described by the government as gradually normalizing alongside continued border-security tensions.

Economically, the interim government had targeted roughly 5.5% GDP growth for the fiscal year, and the new administration has prioritized essential-goods price control, law and order, stable electricity and energy supply, and anti-corruption measures, while pursuing a VAT increase across most goods and services for FY2026-27 (paired with targeted tax relief for small businesses and environmentally-friendly products) and a pre-financing scheme using surplus bank liquidity to help reopen closed garment factories. A planned merger of the country's main investment-promotion bodies (BIDA, BEZA, and the PPPA) into a single Invest Bangladesh Authority is intended to streamline what has historically been a fragmented approval process. Set against these positive signals, a fuel-price increase in June 2026 triggered a gas, electricity, and fuel supply crisis through July and August that drew a public apology from the prime minister, and the February 2026 replacement of the Bangladesh Bank governor drew criticism from some observers as a potential erosion of central-bank independence both reminders that Bangladesh's post-transition institutional consolidation remains a genuine work in progress rather than a completed process.

INVESTOR RISK & MARKET ACCESS

KEY ENTRY BARRIERS

Issue	Potential Impact	Possible Mitigation
Still-consolidating post-transition institutions	Bangladesh is less than a year into a new elected government following a historic political transition, and institutional practices including the February 2026 central-bank leadership change are still settling into a stable, predictable pattern	Engage experienced local legal and regulatory counsel to navigate still-evolving institutional processes; monitor the planned BIDA-BEZA-PPPA merger into the Invest Bangladesh Authority for implementation timing
Energy and utility supply instability	A June 2026 fuel-price increase triggered a gas, electricity, and fuel supply crisis through July and August 2026, underscoring the fragility of power and energy infrastructure for manufacturing operations	Build backup power capacity and realistic energy-cost contingencies into any manufacturing or industrial investment plan
Heavy dependence on garment-sector export performance	Textiles and ready-made garments account for roughly 80% of Bangladesh's exports, leaving the broader economy highly exposed to US and EU demand conditions, tariff policy, and global apparel-sourcing shifts	Diversify investment exposure beyond garment manufacturing where feasible, or structure garment-linked investment to benefit from the new US zero-tariff mechanism for qualifying inputs
Ongoing IMF-linked fiscal and monetary adjustment	Bangladesh's active USD 4.7 billion IMF program reflects continuing current-account, currency, and foreign-exchange reserve pressures, and the FY2026-27 VAT increase reflects the fiscal-consolidation side of this adjustment	Monitor IMF program reviews and reform conditionality as a leading indicator of macroeconomic stabilization progress and policy direction
Rohingya refugee situation and humanitarian complexity	Cox's Bazar hosts the world's largest refugee settlement, creating ongoing humanitarian, security, and resource-management complexity in that specific region	Factor humanitarian-context considerations into any Cox's Bazar-area investment, particularly in tourism or infrastructure

Issue	Potential Impact	Possible Mitigation
India relations and regional border tensions	Relations with India have grown more complicated since the change of government, with periodic border-security friction even as both sides describe a gradual normalization process	Monitor bilateral developments for any investment with India-linked supply chains or border-adjacent operations
Infrastructure and bureaucratic friction outside core industrial zones	Outside the established Dhaka-Chattogram industrial corridor and existing export processing zones, investors can still encounter slower permitting, land-access, and infrastructure gaps	Favor established export processing zones (BEPZA) or the planned Mirsarai Economic Zone for new manufacturing investment where possible

INVESTOR RISK NOTE

Bangladesh presents a transition-era risk profile: a newly and credibly elected government has replaced an extended period of single-party rule following a genuine popular uprising, and the democratic process itself a contested election, a reform referendum, and a peaceful transfer of power from the Yunus-led interim administration has functioned as intended. The principal risks for investors are accordingly institutional-consolidation risk (how smoothly ministries, the central bank, and investment-promotion bodies settle into the new government's processes) and macroeconomic-adjustment risk (continued IMF-linked fiscal and currency stabilization) rather than any acute political-violence or expropriation risk; the energy-supply disruptions of mid-2026 are a tangible, near-term operational risk worth direct attention.

MARKET ACCESS

Bangladesh is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and is scheduled to graduate from Least Developed Country status, a transition that will gradually phase out some preferential trade arrangements with the EU and other partners. The February 2026 US trade agreement, reducing the reciprocal tariff to 19% with a planned zero-tariff mechanism for qualifying textile exports, and the deepening economic relationship with China formalized in June 2026, both reflect the new government's explicit strategy of diversifying Bangladesh's trade partnerships beyond its traditional reliance on EU and US garment markets alone.

WHO SHOULD THE INVESTOR MEET?

INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Actor	Why It Matters	Waverley Engagement Angle
Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)	Primary national investment promotion and registration body, slated for merger into a new Invest Bangladesh Authority	First point of engagement for most new foreign-investment entities pending the merger's completion
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)	Administers export processing zones with dedicated incentives for export-oriented manufacturing, particularly garments	Primary vehicle for garment and textile export-manufacturing investment
Bangladesh Bank	Central bank overseeing monetary policy and foreign-exchange administration, under new leadership since February 2026	Key relationship for understanding current FX and repatriation procedures amid leadership transition
Office of the Prime Minister (Tarique Rahman, BNP, from February 2026)	Sets overall national policy direction, including the "Bangladesh First" foreign-policy diversification strategy	Relevant for understanding the broader post-transition policy environment
Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA)	Administers planned economic zones including the flagship Mirsarai Economic Zone, slated for merger into the new Invest Bangladesh Authority	Relevant for large-scale diversified manufacturing investment outside traditional garment exports
IMF / International development partners	Provide ongoing fiscal and monetary program support and reform conditionality monitoring	Useful external benchmark for tracking Bangladesh's macroeconomic stabilization trajectory
Dhaka and Chattogram Chambers of Commerce and Industry	Leading business associations connecting foreign investors with the domestic business community	Practical entry point for networking and market intelligence beyond formal government channels

CURRENT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CHANNELS

Foreign investors commonly engage through the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, and sector bodies including the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers

and Exporters Association (BGMEA). Development-partner-organized investor briefings, particularly those linked to IMF program reviews and World Bank or ADB-financed infrastructure programs, provide an additional practical channel for new entrants scoping the post-transition market.

INVESTOR PROFILE BEST SUITED

Bangladesh suits investors with genuine emerging-market experience, comfort with ongoing political and institutional transition, and an interest in a large, low-cost manufacturing and consumer base of roughly 170 million people. It is a strong fit for garment and textile investors able to benefit from the new US tariff arrangement, for manufacturing investors considering diversification into the Mirsarai Economic Zone or BEPZA-administered export zones, and for investors tracking the country's IMF-anchored macroeconomic stabilization. It is a weaker fit for investors requiring complete near-term institutional predictability or seeking to avoid any exposure to energy-supply disruption risk, both of which remain live considerations roughly eight months into the new government's term.

FROM INTELLIGENCE TO ENGAGEMENT

STEP 1: Confirm registration pathway amid institutional transition

Engage BIDA, BEZA, or BEPZA depending on project type, and monitor the planned merger into a single Invest Bangladesh Authority for implementation timing and any procedural changes.

STEP 2: Assess garment-sector fit and US tariff benefits

For textile and apparel investment, evaluate eligibility for the new US zero-tariff mechanism tied to US-origin cotton and man-made-fiber inputs.

STEP 3: Confirm FX and banking arrangements

Engage Bangladesh Bank and a local banking partner to confirm current foreign-exchange and repatriation procedures given the February 2026 central-bank leadership change.

STEP 4: Build energy-supply contingency planning

Incorporate backup power capacity and energy-cost contingencies into project planning given the mid-2026 gas, electricity, and fuel supply disruptions.

STEP 5: Finalize structure and complete registration

Complete registration with the relevant investment-promotion authority, confirm any required sector-specific licensing, and finalize the investment structure with realistic timelines given the evolving institutional landscape.

WAVERLEY'S ROLE

- Independent assessment of BIDA, BEZA, and BEPZA registration pathways and the forthcoming Invest Bangladesh Authority merger for specific transactions
- Coordination with Bangladesh Bank and sector-specific ministries on FX, repatriation, and licensing matters amid institutional transition
- Ongoing monitoring of the Tarique Rahman government's policy consolidation, the IMF program trajectory, and energy-supply conditions relevant to investment timing
- Introductions to the Dhaka and Chattogram Chambers of Commerce, BGMEA, and development-partner-linked investor networks

INVESTOR CALL TO ACTION

Engage Waverley for a structured BIDA/BEZA/BEPZA registration assessment before committing capital to Bangladesh.

Contact Waverley for an independent political and institutional-transition briefing ahead of any investment with meaningful exposure to Bangladesh's post-election policy environment.

WAVERLEY INVESTOR INTELLIGENCE & OPPORTUNITY PIPELINE

Waverley is tracking opportunities across three tiers: (1) garment and textile manufacturing investment positioned to benefit from the February 2026 US tariff reduction and planned zero-tariff mechanism for qualifying inputs; (2) diversified manufacturing and industrial investment in the planned Mirsarai Economic Zone and other BEZA-administered zones, supporting the government's export-diversification agenda; and (3) infrastructure and energy-sector investment addressing the supply instability exposed by the mid-2026 crisis, for investors comfortable engaging during the country's ongoing post-transition institutional consolidation.

POSITIONING

Waverley views Bangladesh as a genuine large-scale manufacturing and consumer-market opportunity entering a credible new political chapter, with the country's first post-uprising elected government now roughly eight months into consolidating its institutions and economic policy direction.

Waverley's approach is to help clients capture Bangladesh's garment-sector and emerging economic-diversification opportunities while maintaining close, continuously updated monitoring of the government's institutional consolidation, energy-supply stability, and IMF program trajectory, so that investment timing reflects the country's real transition progress rather than either excessive optimism or unwarranted caution.

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