

## PM inaugurates US-Bangladesh Business Council

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Dhaka : Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has inaugurated the US-Bangladesh Business Council on April 7 to boost bilateral trade and investment between the United States and Bangladesh. She hopes that the new trade council, initiated by the US Chamber of Commerce, will serve as a major platform for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

The virtual programme was hosted by Nisha Biswal, Former US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs and President of the US-Bangladesh Business Council. Prime Minister's ICT Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus, Former US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, US Ambassador Earl R Miller, Bangladesh Ambassador M Shahidul Islam, FBCCI President Sheikh Fazle Fahim and Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi were also present at the event.

Representatives from world renowned corporate companies like Chevron, Walmart, General Electronics, MetLife, Facebook and ShopUp spoke at the event.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina remarked that it is important for both the countries to provide adequate policy support for the expansion of bilateral trade. She said, the launching of the US-Bangladesh Business Council reflects the growing interest of the US business community about investment and doing business in Bangladesh.

In his speech, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, ICT Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh

highlighted the positive impacts of the government's Digital Bangladesh initiative. Noting that international quality technology companies are being set up in Bangladesh due to infrastructure and policy support, he said, "Today, Bangladesh has a rapidly growing IT entrepreneurship sector. We have many start-ups in Bangladesh such as Pathao and bKash which are now recognised worldwide."

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Council, Kamal Quadir, Founder and CEO of bKash, along with the top executives of US multinational Excelerate Energy and MetLife, participated as panelists in the discussion titled 'The Future of Bangladesh's Economy: Mapping the Next 50 Years Growth'.

Referring to the global recognition of bKash, Kamal Quadir said, the government's Digital Bangladesh initiative, central bank's regulatory guidelines, investment from world-renowned companies and strong mobile network infrastructure have enabled bKash to contribute exponentially to the country's financial inclusion.