



## News AT A GLANCE



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# Bangladesh pharma industry set to shine at Asia Pharma Expo 2026

OUR BUREAU, MUMBAI

**B**ANGLADESH'S pharmaceutical industry, now meeting 98% of domestic demand and exporting to 157 countries, is taking centre stage at the 17th Asia Pharma Expo 2026 & Asia Lab Expo 2026, underway at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre (BCFEC), Purbachal, Dhaka, from March 29–31, 2026.

Jointly organized by GPE EXPO PVT

LTD and the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), the event continues its 23-year legacy as the region's premier platform for pharmaceutical manufacturing technology, bringing together more than 850 exhibitors from over 30 countries.

The expo will spotlight cutting-edge innovations in pharmaceutical processing, packaging, APIs, excipients, laboratory instruments, cleanroom systems, water management, and

turnkey project services.

**A Proven Gateway to South Asia's Pharma Growth**

Following the success of APE 2025, which drew 14,500 trade visitors and 750+ exhibitors from 32 countries, the 2026 edition aims to deepen international collaboration and technology transfer. The expo is positioned as a B2B hub where global

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# Bangladesh pharma: From generics powerhouse to global contender

LAXMI YADAV, MUMBAI

by execution,” he says.

Generics have not only strength-

ened the domestic market but also

expanded Bangladesh’s global foot-

print. Yet, as the country prepares

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**B**ANGLADESH’S pharmaceutical industry is at a defining moment. From humble beginnings in the early 1980s, when the market was valued at just USD 25 million, the sector grew into a USD 3 billion industry by 2020 and is projected to surpass USD 6 billion by 2026. This remarkable trajectory reflects not only rising domestic demand but also strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, and regulatory compliance.

Today, Bangladesh meets 98% of its domestic pharmaceutical needs through local production and exports to 157 countries, including highly regulated markets such as the USA, Germany, and the UK. In fiscal year 2023–24, exports surged by 52.45% to USD 92.58 million during July–November compared to the same period a year earlier. With the global generics market valued at USD 440 billion, even a 1% share could translate into USD 4 billion in export revenues for Bangladesh.

## The Generics Legacy

Bangladesh’s pharmaceutical sector is widely recognised for its strength in generics. Cost-efficient manufacturing and disciplined execution have made medicines affordable and accessible at home and abroad.

Dr. Sanjay Agrawal, Scientific Advisor of ALKOMEX GBN PHARMA USA, calls this achievement a “quiet revolution.”

“Over the years, Bangladesh has transitioned from dependence to near self-sufficiency, meeting the vast majority of its domestic pharmaceutical demand through local manufacturing. To me, that’s not just progress, that’s intent backed by execution,” he says.

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DOXYCYCLINE MONO	RUPATADINE
DUTASTERIDE	RUTIN (RUTOSIDE)
ESTRADIOL/VALERATE/PHENYL PROP./BENZOATE	SERRATIOPEPTIDASE
ETHINYL ESTRADIOL	TACROLIMUS
FINASTERIDE	THALIDOMIDE
FLUTAMIDE	TIMOLOL MALEATE
FUSIDIC ACID	TORSEMIDE
GATIFLOXACIN	TRETINOIN 0.1% , 0.04% , 1% 4%
GADOBUTROL	TROPICAMIDE
GINSENG EXTRACT	VERAPAMIL
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HYDROXYZINE HCL	VITAMIN E 50% POWDER
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EXCLUSIVE



# Bangladesh pharma: From generics...

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to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, the industry must adapt to a patent-conscious environment.

## LDC Graduation: A New Reality

The cessation of patent-free pharmaceutical production will challenge the generics-driven advantage Bangladesh has relied upon. Exporting to regulated markets will require validated processes, rigorous documentation, and compliance with international standards.

Dr. Agrawal warns, "This could impact the generics-driven advantage that the country has relied on so far. I believe this is a moment where strategic foresight and policy support will play a defining role."

## Backward Integration: The API Industrial Park

Dependence on imported Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) remains a vulnerability. To address this, Bangladesh has invested in the API Industrial Park, a landmark initiative aimed at reducing import dependency, lowering production costs, and fostering R&D for new APIs.

Paresh Jhurmarwala, Founder & CEO of GPE Expo Pvt Ltd and Co-organiser of Asia Pharma Expo, an international exhibition on complete pharma manufacturing taking place in Bangladesh, underscores the importance of this development: "At this year's edition, visitors will find a strong representation of technologies and solutions that directly support local API production — including chemical synthesis and reaction systems, process scale-up equipment, solvent recovery and recycling

technologies, intermediate processing machinery, and utility systems designed for API manufacturing environments such as specialised water treatment, HVAC, and waste management solutions."

## Biologics and Innovation

The transition from small-molecule generics to biologics and biosimilars is one of the most technically demanding shifts in pharmaceuticals. It requires advanced R&D, skilled talent, and sophisticated facilities.

Dr. Agrawal points out, "While Bangladesh has done exceptionally well in generics, the shift toward innovation-driven pharma, like biologics and complex formulations, will require deeper investments in research infrastructure and talent development."

Here, collaboration with India offers a natural synergy. India brings strengths in API manufacturing, advanced R&D, and regulatory expertise, while Bangladesh offers cost-efficient production and access to emerging markets.

## Sustainability as Strategy

Sustainability is no longer optional. Resource efficiency directly impacts operational costs, and water management is particularly critical for Bangladesh.

Jhurmarwala notes growing interest in advanced water purification and recycling systems, zero liquid discharge (ZLD) technologies, energy-efficient water-for-injection (WFI) generation systems, and real-time water quality monitoring solutions.

"For a country like Bangladesh, where water management is both an environmental and an operational priority, these technologies are particu-

larly relevant," he says.

## Asia Pharma Expo: A Catalyst for Growth

Asia Pharma Expo has emerged as a vital platform for Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry, connecting manufacturers with global suppliers, consultants, and decision-makers.

"Bangladesh is at a critical inflection point. LDC graduation, the API Industrial Park, growing export ambitions, the push toward biologics, the demand for regulatory compliance in advanced markets — all of these are happening simultaneously. The next five years will determine whether the industry scales up to meet these opportunities or falls behind," says Jhurmarwala.

He adds, "The one shift I want us to be remembered for is helping Bangladesh move from being seen primarily as a generics manufacturing hub to being recognised as a serious, capable, and globally competitive pharmaceutical manufacturing destination."

## Policy and Institutional Support

Government and industry leaders echo this optimism. MD. Saidur Rahman, Secretary, Health Services Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, highlights the industry's dual contribution: meeting domestic demand and boosting export earnings.

Major General Shameem Haidar, Director General of Drug Administration, stresses the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange, noting Bangladesh's strong export presence in regulated markets and the DGDA's commitment to achieving WHO Maturity Level 3 for vaccine regulation.

Abdul Muktedir, President of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI) and Chairman of

Incepta Pharmaceuticals, praises the expo for exposing young professionals to global technologies and reaffirms the need for backward integration in API manufacturing.

## The Nutraceutical Opportunity

Beyond pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals represent a promising frontier. With the global shift toward preventive healthcare, Bangladesh and India can combine traditional wellness knowledge with modern science to co-create holistic solutions.

Dr. Agrawal is particularly optimistic: "By combining traditional wellness knowledge with modern science, we have the potential to co-create solutions that go beyond treatment and move toward holistic well-being."

## Conclusion

Bangladesh's pharmaceutical industry has transformed from an import-dependent sector into a self-sufficient, export-oriented powerhouse. The next phase — innovation, compliance, sustainability, and collaboration — will determine whether it can evolve into a globally competitive destination for pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals. Asia Pharma Expo, by consistently connecting stakeholders and showcasing cutting-edge technologies, is playing a pivotal role in this journey.

With strategic investments, policy support, and regional collaboration, Bangladesh is poised to move from being a generics hub to a global pharmaceutical contender. With strategic investments, policy support, and regional collaboration, Bangladesh is poised to move from being a generics hub to a global pharmaceutical contender.

# Zuellig Pharma acquires Cialis from Lilly in three additional markets in Asia

OUR BUREAU, MUMBAI

ZUELLIG Pharma, a leading healthcare solutions company in Asia, has acquired all rights, title, and interest in and to Cialis (Tadalafil), a leading men's health product from Eli Lilly and Company (Lilly) in Hong Kong, Macau and South Korea.

Following the acquisition, Zuellig Pharma will now own the trademarks, marketing authorizations and license manufacturing know-how

for Cialis, a treatment for erectile dysfunction (ED) and benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), in 11 markets in Asia, with the expansion of its ownership into three additional markets beyond the original eight. Zuellig Pharma will also continue to promote and distribute the brand in these markets.

The expanded ownership of Cialis will widen accessibility of the drug to a significant population of men in Asia who are affected by ED and BPH. The acquisition also aligns with

Zuellig Pharma's strategic priority of building a strong portfolio of owned prescription healthcare products as an integrated healthcare solutions company.

"Our acquisition of Cialis in three additional markets builds on the strong foundation we established two years ago and highlights our proven success in scaling trusted brands effectively through our commercial capabilities and deep expertise. As we broaden our footprint, we remain focused on delivering sustainable growth and ad-

vancing our purpose of making in-demand healthcare solutions more accessible to communities in Asia," said John Graham, CEO of Zuellig Pharma.

Zuellig Pharma is a leading healthcare solutions company in Asia, and our purpose is to make healthcare more accessible to the communities we serve. The company provides world-class distribution, commercialization, and clinical trial support services, underpinned by a strong culture of innovation to support the growing healthcare needs in this region.