



**PwC's 29th CEO Survey—
Bangladesh edition**

Shaping tomorrow's enterprises: Value creation in the age of AI

June 2026



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Foreword



Shams Zaman
Country Managing Partner
PwC Bangladesh

The 29th edition of the CEO Survey—Bangladesh edition presents a clear message: business leaders are no longer debating whether they need to reinvent but whether they are doing so at the right pace and with the requisite expertise to remain viable in future. Most leaders remain optimistic about their medium-term revenue prospects and are positive about domestic economic growth. Many have reported increasing market share and are continuously exploring newer avenues for growth. Yet, behind this optimism lies a growing unease. Almost half of the respondents are concerned about whether they are doing enough to remain viable in the long run. Over one in four are also worried whether they are keeping pace with technological change.

Many organisations are already indicating that reinvention initiatives are being implemented in their business operations. One in five CEOs said that AI is increasing revenue, while one in four said that AI has been helping them in decreasing costs. Most CEOs also stated that their organisational culture supports AI adoption and integration. Companies in Bangladesh are also looking beyond traditional industry barriers. Almost three quarters of the respondents stated that they have begun competing in new sectors in the past five years. Some have already started deriving a meaningful portion of their revenue from these new products indicating that businesses are experimenting with and diversifying their operations.

The survey also revealed important gaps that need to be addressed. Although AI adoption and experimentation is prevalent, enterprise-level readiness remains a challenge. Only a few organisations have adopted mechanisms to make innovation cyclical at scale for processes related to

rapid testing with customers, reviewing underperforming projects, enabling meaningful collaboration with external partners and dedicated innovation structures. This low adoption rate may result in lower percentage of converting AI projects into result-yielding success stories. Climate is another key area where intent may be ahead of integration. While some organisations have started integrating climate considerations into product design, there is scope to also factor in these considerations into the supply chain and capital allocation aspects.

Another influencing factor is the increasing geopolitical uncertainty in recent times. The respondents have reported significant exposure to inflation and macroeconomic volatility. Tariffs and geopolitical risk are already dampening their appetite for large scale investments. It will also be interesting to see the policy initiatives to be undertaken by the newly elected government. The priority now is to improve the quality of investment decisions than to increase their volume. With AI experimentation, launch of new products, and increasing market share among key initiatives taken by CEOs, some structural gaps such as organisation-wide AI integration, climate considerations, and capital allocation need to be bridged to push forward towards the next phase of growth.

We hope that this report will help CEOs plan where to focus and how to move next. The decisions they take today will shape not only their organisations, but the contours of the next decade. We are grateful to the CEOs who have shared their perspectives and insights. For a broader view of global CEO sentiment, please refer to PwC's 29th Annual Global CEO Survey.

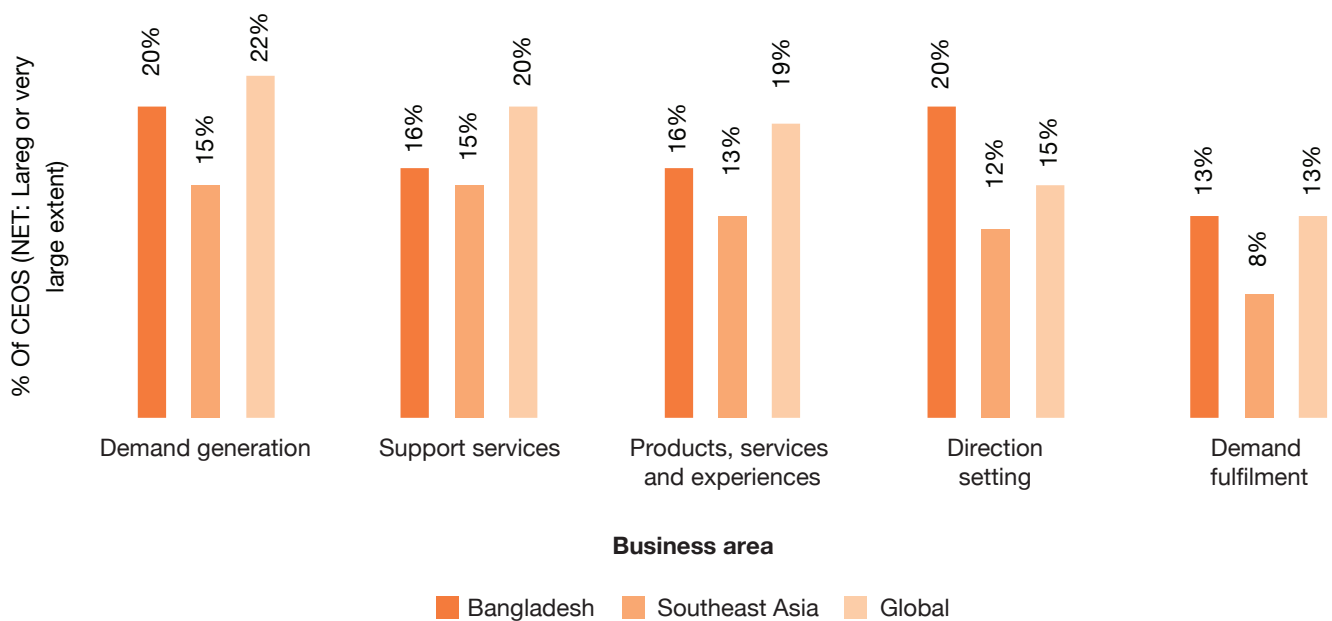
The opportunity horizon

AI at enterprise scale

Bangladeshi companies remain at an early stage of deploying AI at enterprise scale, with adoption still limited across most business functions (Q14). Across all five areas assessed, **one in five CEOs in Bangladesh report using AI to a large or very large extent**, highlighting that AI is yet to be embedded deeply into core business processes.

Extent of AI application across business functions

Base: Question: Q14. To what extent has AI been applied in the following areas of your business? Showing NET 'to a large or very large extent' responses only.

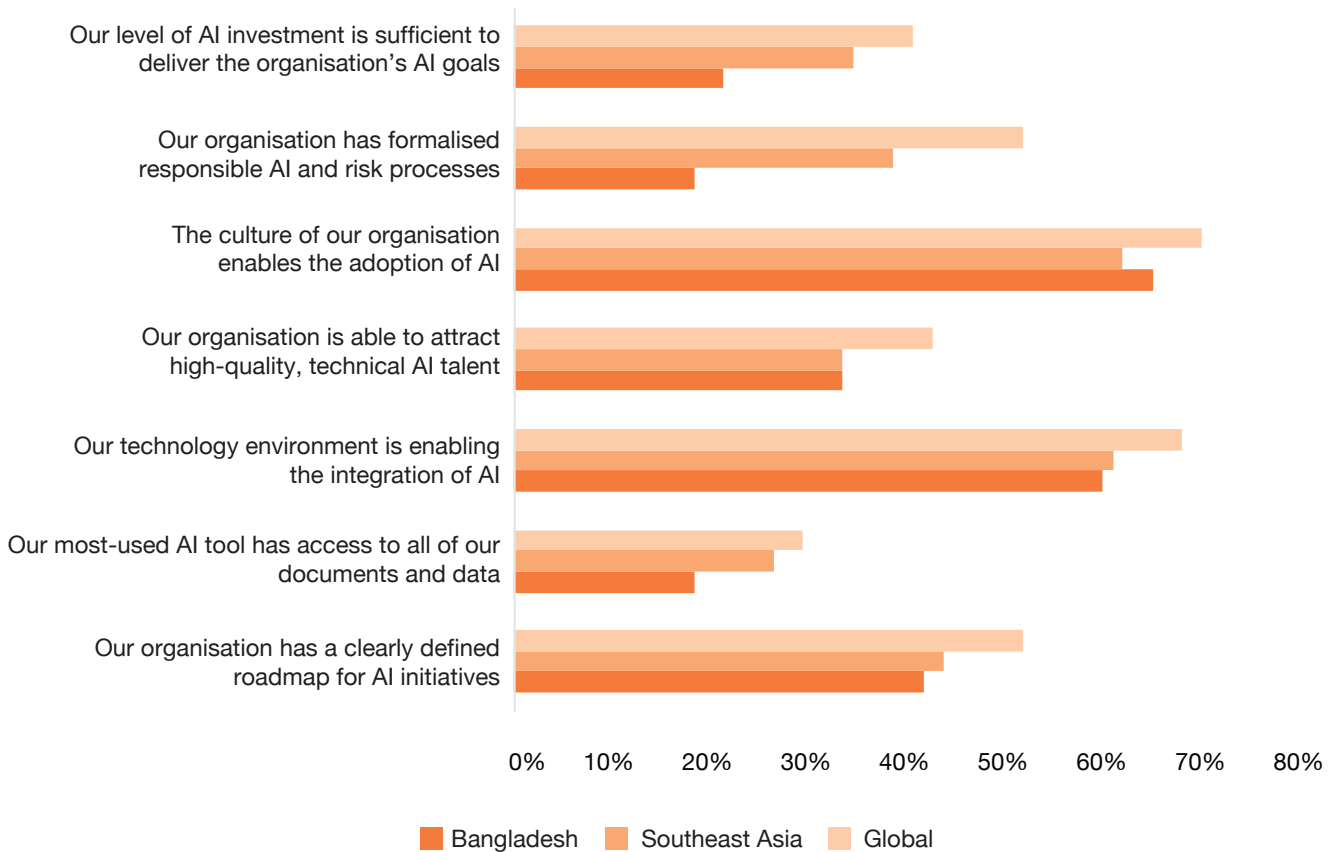


Bangladesh's results compare more favourably with Southeast Asia. Across the five business functions, Bangladesh reports higher levels of AI application than Southeast Asia, in areas such as demand generation, support services and direction setting (Q14). For example, one in five Bangladesh CEOs report using AI in both demand generation and direction setting, compared to lower proportions in Southeast Asia. When it comes to AI adoption, Bangladesh generally trails in areas such as support services and products, services and experiences where adoption reaches around one-fifth of companies globally. However, in direction setting and demand fulfilment, Bangladesh performs at or above global levels as reflected in the figure, pointing to early experimentation with AI in strategic decision-making and operational processes. Overall, the challenge for Bangladesh is less about regional underperformance and more about scaling AI adoption more broadly across the enterprise.

Limited enterprise-wide deployment reflects uneven foundations for AI readiness (Q15). Compared to Southeast Asia and global benchmarks, Bangladesh CEOs report lower levels of preparedness across most core enablers, suggesting that many organisations are yet to gather and harness the capabilities required to move from experimentation to scale. Strategic clarity remains a constraint, with just over four in ten CEOs reporting a clearly defined AI roadmap. While a majority indicate that their technology environment can support AI integration, which is broadly in line with Southeast Asia; confidence drops sharply around data access. Fewer than one in five CEOs say their AI tools have access to all relevant organisational data, placing Bangladesh well behind regional and global peers.

AI foundations at enterprise level remain uneven

Base: Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to AI use at your company?



Gaps in governance, investment and talent further limit progress. Only a small share of organisations report having formalised responsible AI and risk processes in place, and just over one in five believe that their current AI investment levels are sufficient to deliver the AI goals (Q15). Talent availability also remains a challenge, with Bangladesh lagging its global peers in the ability to attract high-quality technical AI skills. While organisational culture in Bangladesh seems supportive of AI adoption, structural gaps continue to constrain enterprise-scale deployment.



For a diversified group like A.K. Khan, operating across logistics, telecom and infrastructure, AI at enterprise scale is no longer a side experiment—it is the backbone of how we plan to grow across sectors. But to move beyond pilots, Bangladeshi companies like ours first must get the basics right: a clear AI roadmap, the right data plumbing and governance that works in our context. Only then can we really capture the benefits of this ‘sectors without borders’ world, where a logistics insight can improve our telecom business and an infrastructure project can be redesigned with AI-driven demand forecasts.”

Asif Bhuiyan

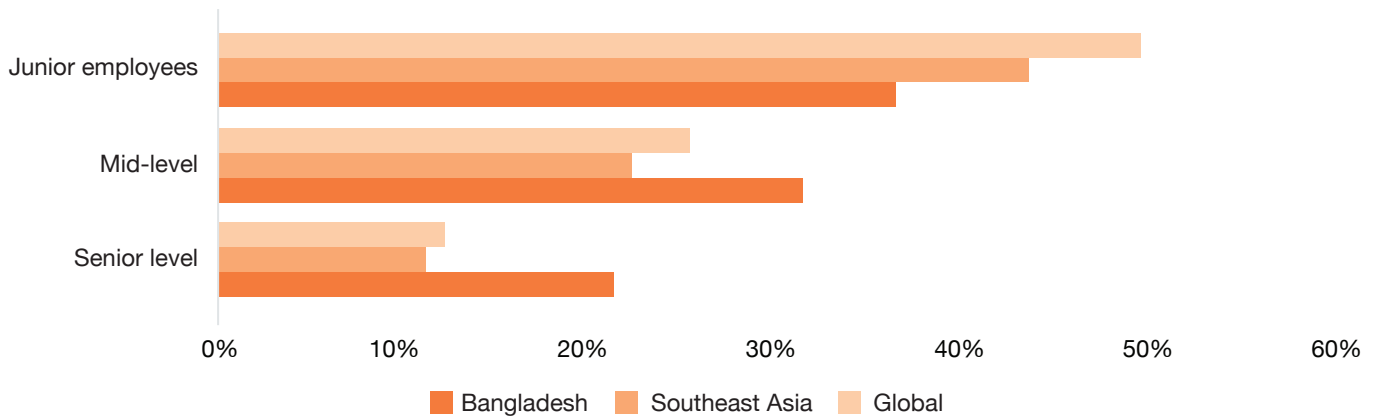
Group CEO

A.K. Khan & Company Ltd.

Expectations around AI's impact on employment can be seen in the projected changes across different employee levels (Q16). According to the participants, the impact of AI on the workforce will be uneven, with reductions most likely at junior and mid-level roles over the next three years. Just over one-third respondents expect junior-level employment to decline, a lower share compared to Southeast Asia (43%) and companies across the globe (49%), while around three in ten foresee reductions at the mid-level, broadly in line with the global peers. By contrast, relatively few CEOs expect AI to reduce senior-level employment, reinforcing that AI is more likely to augment leadership roles than replace them. Overall, the findings point to targeted workforce adjustment rather than widespread job losses, underscoring the importance of reskilling and workforce transition as AI adoption advances.

Expected impact of AI adoption on employment levels by role

Base Q16: For the following groups, how do you expect your company's AI adoption to change your employment levels in the next three years?



The next move: Build AI foundations

Isolated, tactical AI initiatives rarely deliver sustained value and this year's survey findings reinforce that message. While early experimentation with AI is emerging, particularly in strategic and operational areas, uneven foundations across strategy, data, governance, talent, and investment continue to limit enterprise-wide scale. Companies seeking to move beyond pilots will need to position AI as a core business transformation priority, underpinned by a clearly defined roadmap, robust data environments, formalised responsible AI processes, and sustained investment in skills. As AI adoption accelerates, these foundations will be critical not only for unlocking productivity gains but also for managing workforce transitions and supporting long-term growth.

Sectors without borders

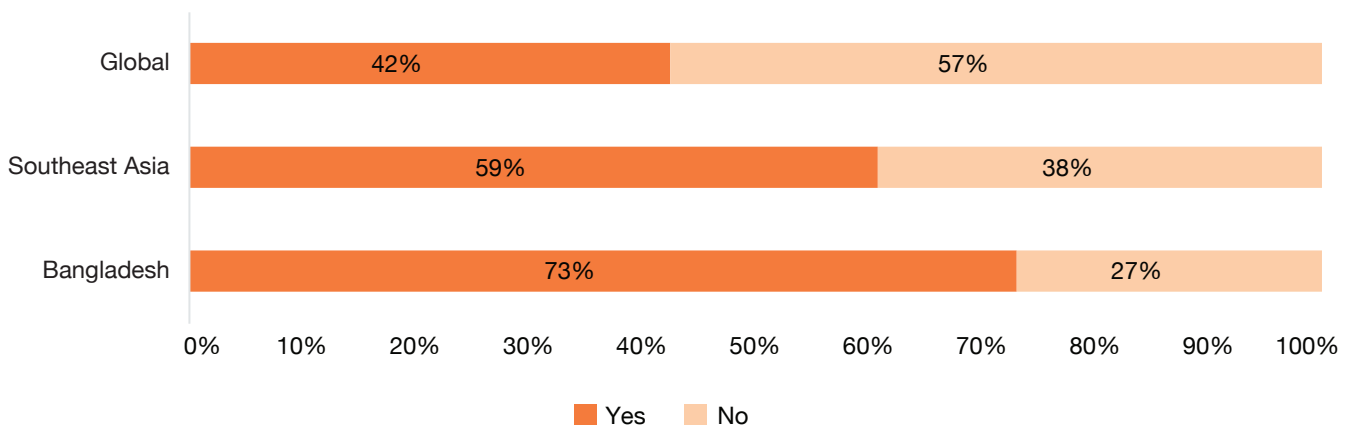
In their pursuit of growth, Bangladesh CEOs are displaying a pronounced willingness to look beyond traditional sector boundaries. Nearly three-quarters of CEOs in Bangladesh (73%) say their company has begun competing in new sectors or industries over the past five years, well above Southeast Asia (59%) and almost double the global average (42%) (Q21). By contrast, 57% of the CEOs globally report that they have not entered new sectors during this period, while fewer than three in ten Bangladesh CEOs say the same.

However, this appetite for diversification is yet to translate into material revenue impact for many firms. While a growing share of Bangladesh CEOs report having entered new sectors, only 15% say that more than 20% of their revenue over the past five years has come from these activities, compared to 27% respondents in Southeast Asia. This suggests that although experimentation beyond core industries is increasing, converting cross-sector moves into meaningful revenue streams remains a challenge for many Bangladesh companies.

Taken together, the findings point to a business environment where diversification and reinvention are already at an exploratory stage. These moves may reflect efforts to reduce concentration risk, respond to evolving customer needs, or capture opportunities emerging from technological change, sustainability transitions and shifting trade dynamics. At the same time, the gap between sector entry and revenue contribution suggests that many firms are still testing new growth paths rather than consolidating around a clearly defined portfolio of scalable businesses.

Share of CEOs that have begun competing in new sectors

Base: Q21: In the last five years, has your company begun competing in new sectors or industries in which it hadn't previously competed?



Note: Please note that the sum of the figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.

The next move: Reinvent to outperform

The survey results suggest that many Bangladesh companies are already moving decisively across sector boundaries. The challenge, however, is to ensure these moves translate into sustained value creation. Effective reinvention requires clarity on the capabilities needed to compete in new sectors, and disciplined choices about whether those capabilities should be built internally, acquired, or accessed through partnerships. As cross-sector activity accelerates, companies will also need to strengthen collaboration across ecosystems and invest in systems that support integration across value chains. Those that approach sector expansion as a structured, capability-led transformation are more likely to convert diversification into material and durable growth.

Globalisation and its impact on trade

Bangladesh CEOs are approaching large-scale acquisitions cautiously over the next three years with a higher degree of uncertainty than their regional and global peers (Q18). Just over one-third of Bangladesh CEOs (36%) say they are not planning any major acquisitions worth more than 10% of company assets, compared to 38% in Southeast Asia and 46% of global respondents. A further 20% of CEOs in Bangladesh, 20% in Southeast Asia, and 20% in global respondents expect to make a single major acquisition, indicating similar levels of selective deal-making across markets.

Plans for multiple major acquisitions remain limited in Bangladesh with only 4% of CEOs expecting to make two major acquisitions while 7% respondents expecting three acquisitions, and none planning four or more. This is a contrast compared to their Southeast Asian and global peers where expectations for multiple acquisitions are modestly higher, particularly at the two-acquisition level. At the same time, uncertainty is notably more pronounced in Bangladesh: one-third of CEOs (33%) say they do not yet know how many major acquisitions they will pursue, compared to 21% respondents from Southeast Asia and just 13% global respondents. This suggests that acquisition planning in Bangladesh remains more fluid, reflecting heightened sensitivity to economic conditions, financing constraints and global volatility.



As global capital becomes more selective, resilience-led financing—combining global standards with Bangladesh’s development ambitions, strong governance and technology-enabled sustainability—is essential to keep apparels, infrastructure, and energy sectors investable and competitive.”

Naser Ezaz Bijoy

CEO

Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh

The survey’s results indicate that while Bangladesh companies are not disengaging from inorganic growth, they are proceeding with greater caution and less visibility than peers, balancing ambition with risk management in an uncertain global environment.

The next move: Strengthen capital choices

The survey highlights a clear need for sharper capital discipline. With relatively few Bangladesh companies planning multiple large acquisitions and many still undecided, the focus should be on improving the quality rather than the quantity of investment decisions. CEOs will need to clarify where acquisitions, partnerships or organic expansion can most effectively strengthen core capabilities and competitive positioning. As global conditions remain volatile, clearer prioritisation and more deliberate capital allocation will be critical for turning selective investment activity into sustained performance.

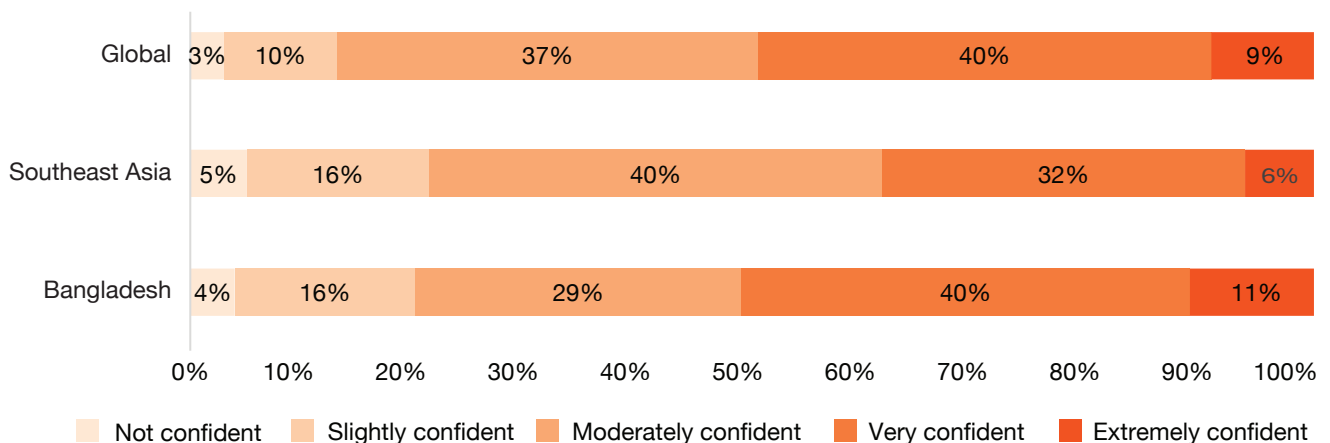
Feeling the chill

Confidence dips as threats continue to rise

Bangladesh CEOs continue to express confidence in their companies' medium-term prospects, however, this confidence is increasingly shaped by a more uncertain external environment shaped by geopolitical unrest, rapidly changing economic conditions and shifting global market dynamics are influencing their viewpoint. Half the respondents say they are very or extremely confident about their company's revenue growth over the next three years (Q11B), close to the global average and higher than the responses from Southeast Asia. At the same time, nearly three in ten describe themselves as only moderately confident, suggesting that optimism is becoming more measured rather than absolute.

Confidence in revenue growth over the next three years

Base: Q 11B: How confident are you about your company's prospects for revenue growth over the next three years?



Note: Please note that the sum of the figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.

This becomes clearer when CEOs look beyond their own businesses to the wider economy. Expectations for global economic growth over the next 12 months are notably subdued among Bangladesh CEOs (Q4A). More than four in ten anticipate a slowdown or decline in global growth, while only around one in three expect improvement. This contrasts with a more optimistic view of domestic conditions. When asked about economic growth in their own territory, a majority of Bangladesh CEOs expect improvement over the coming year, with over two-thirds anticipating either moderate or significant growth (Q4B). The divergence between global pessimism and domestic optimism highlights how leaders are increasingly separating external headwinds from local growth dynamics.



As a global apparel manufacturer producing over 100 million pieces annually for leading international retailers and employing more than 35,000 people, we are experiencing first-hand how the role of CEOs in Bangladesh is rapidly evolving. Today, leadership is less about scale alone and more about how effectively we manage transformation, technology, climate risk, and global uncertainty.

In the garments sector, transformation is increasingly driven by data, automation, and advanced manufacturing technologies. While AI adoption in manufacturing is still at an early stage in Bangladesh, we see strong potential in predictive maintenance, quality control, and supply-chain visibility, which will become critical as buyer expectations around speed, transparency, and compliance continue to rise.

Climate and sustainability have moved from being reputational considerations to core business risks and value drivers. Sustainability has to be embedded in factory design, capital investment decisions, and daily operations.

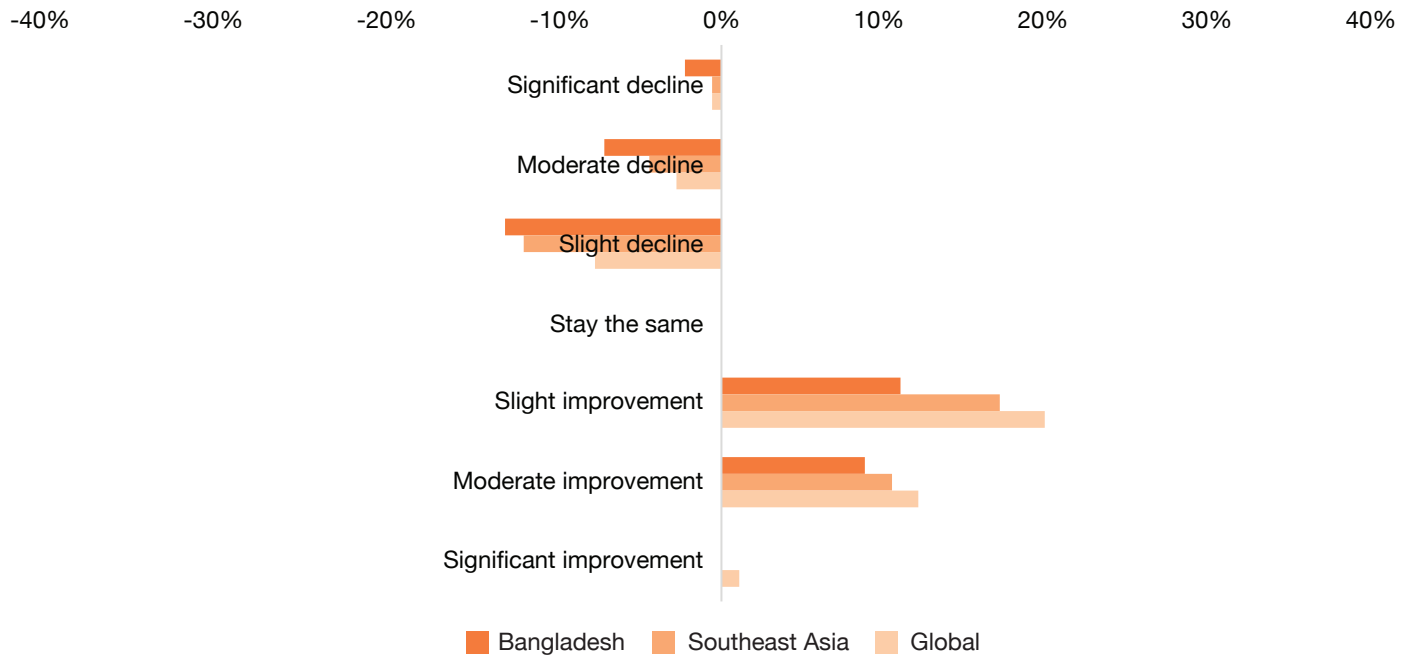
Globalisation remains both an opportunity and a risk. While Bangladesh continues to benefit from strong global demand, geopolitical uncertainty, supply-chain fragmentation, and evolving trade and regulatory regimes are forcing manufacturers to become more agile and diversified. CEOs today must actively manage these risks while maintaining trust with global buyers through transparency, compliance, and consistent delivery.

Looking ahead, I believe the Bangladeshi companies that will succeed are those that treat sustainability, technology adoption, and risk management as integrated strategic priorities, rather than isolated initiatives.

Sharif Zahir
Managing Director
Ananta Apparels Ltd

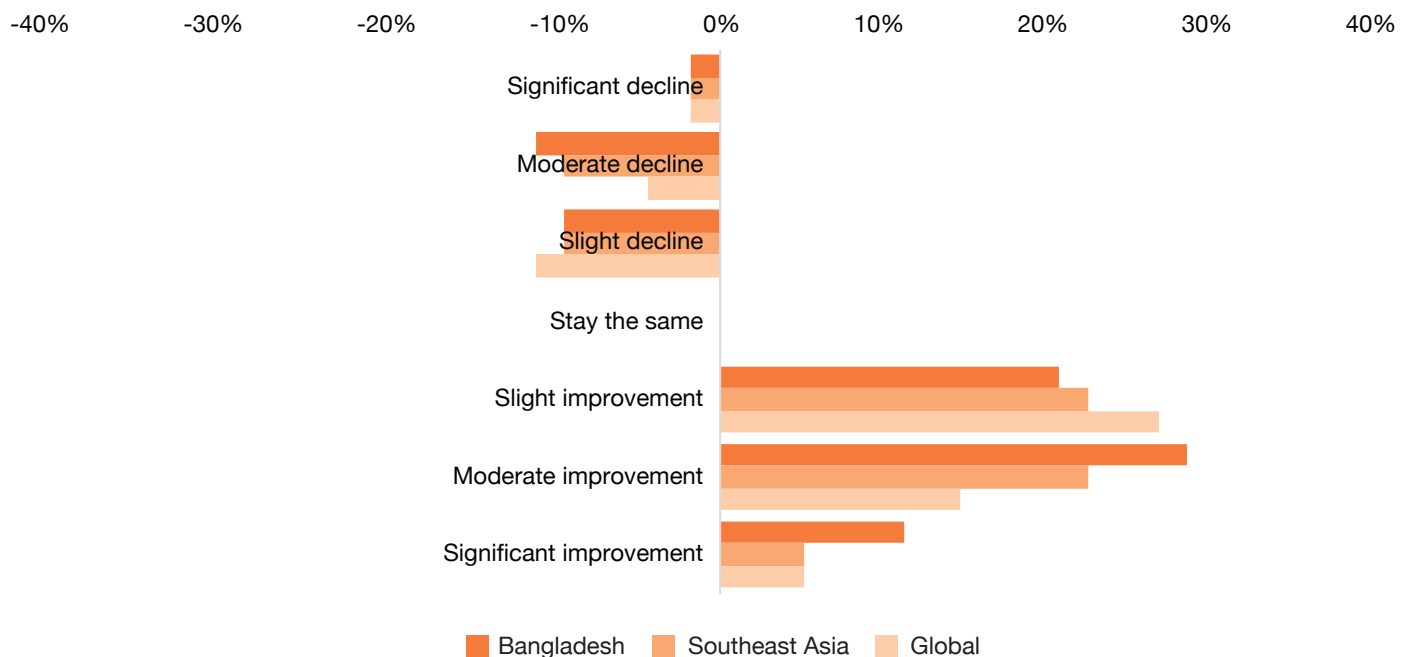
Outlook for global economic growth

Base: Q4A. What do you believe economic growth (i.e. gross domestic product) will be over the next 12 months in the global economy?



Territory-level outlook for economic growth

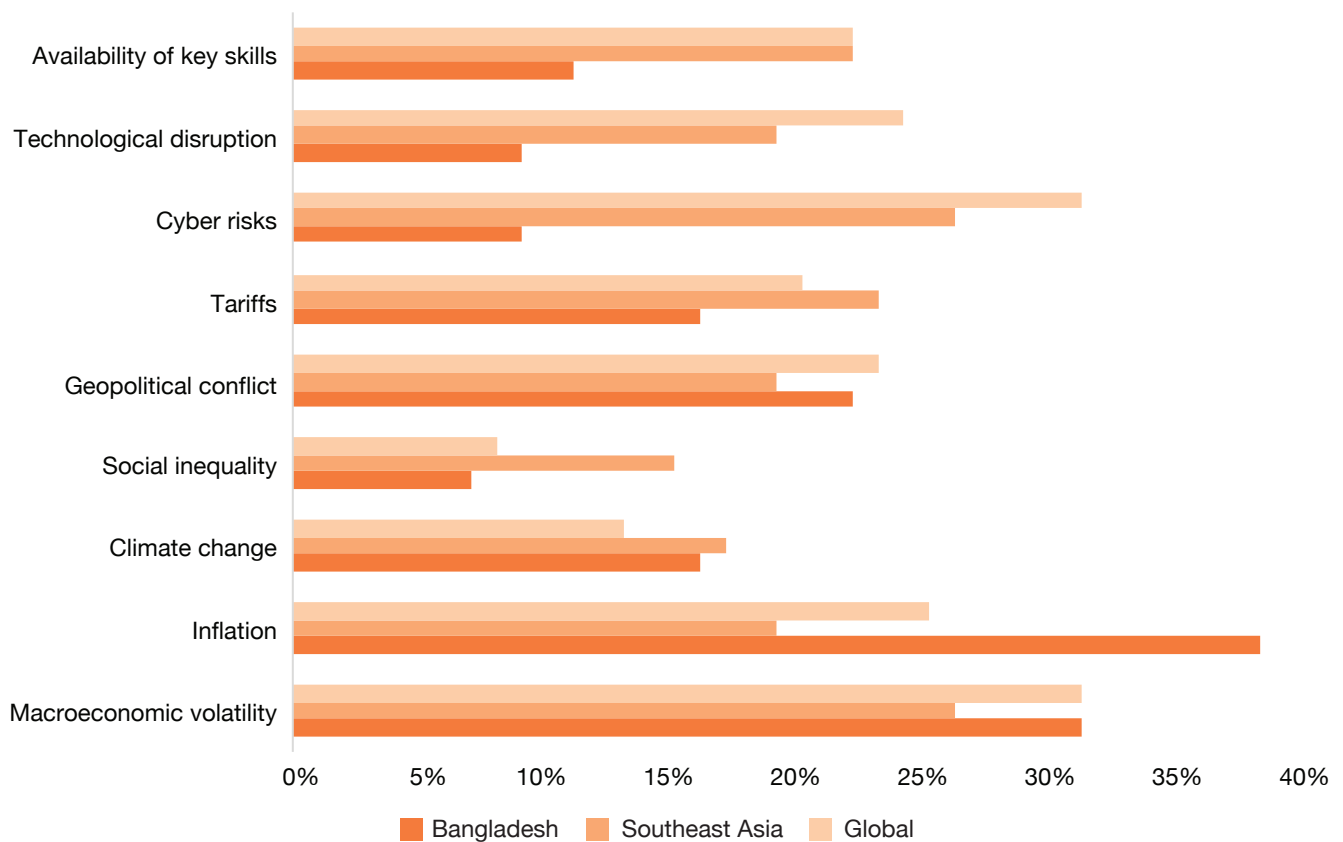
Base: Q4B. What do you believe economic growth (i.e. gross domestic product) will be over the next 12 months in your territory?



With these shifting expectations, perceived exposure to near-term risks is rising. Bangladesh CEOs report high levels of exposure to macroeconomic volatility and inflation over the next 12 months, with both ranking among the most significant threats (Q6). Around one-third say they are highly or extremely exposed to macroeconomic volatility, while inflation is cited as a critical concern by an even larger share, which is higher than both Southeast Asia (19%) and global averages (25%). Cyber risks also feature prominently, with perceived exposure broadly comparable to global levels, underscoring the growing importance of digital resilience. Concerns about geopolitical conflict and tariffs are also elevated, reflecting Bangladesh's sensitivity to external shocks in an interconnected trade environment.

Exposure to key threats over the next 12 months

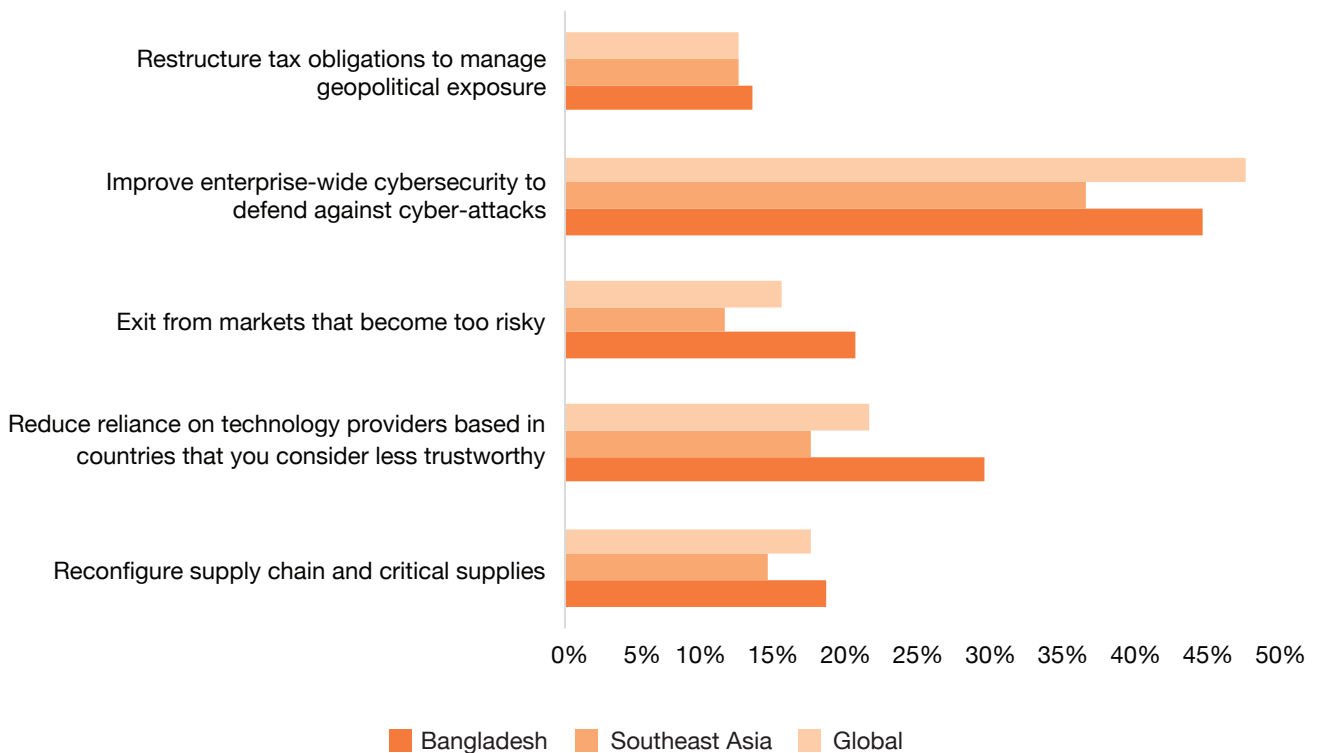
Base: Q6. How exposed do you believe your company will be to the following key threats in the next 12 months?



These risk perceptions are already influencing corporate responses. In anticipation of geopolitical risk, Bangladesh CEOs are prioritising actions that strengthen resilience rather than withdrawing from markets immediately (Q7). Improving enterprise-wide cybersecurity is the most widely cited response, with 44% expecting to take action, above the Southeast Asia (36%) average and close to global levels (47%). Nearly three in ten Bangladesh CEOs also expect to reduce reliance on technology providers based in countries they consider less trustworthy, signaling increased scrutiny of digital and technology supply chains. By contrast, fewer expect to exit markets which are deemed too risky, suggesting a preference for risk mitigation and adaptation rather than retrenchment.

Expected actions in response to geopolitical risk over the next three years

Base: Q7. To what extent do you expect your company to take each of the following actions in response to potential geopolitical risk, over the next three years?.



The survey's findings indicate a more cautious leadership mindset. Confidence in long-term company growth, particularly within Bangladesh, remains intact. However, rising exposure to economic, technological and geopolitical risks is pushing CEOs to reassess assumptions, sharpen priorities and place greater emphasis on resilience as uncertainty intensifies.

The next move: Calibrate risk, sustain momentum

The survey results suggest that Bangladesh CEOs are not retreating from growth but are becoming more selective about how they pursue it. Strong confidence in domestic economic prospects (Q4B) provides a foundation for continued ambition, even as expectations for global growth weaken (Q4A). At the same time, elevated exposure to macroeconomic volatility, inflation and cyber risk (Q6) highlights the need for more deliberate risk management.

The priority now is calibration. CEOs should distinguish between risks that require immediate defensive action and those that can be managed without constraining long-term strategy. The measures which are already being planned, particularly investments in cybersecurity and adjustments to technology dependencies (Q7), suggest a shift toward strengthening resilience rather than scaling back activity. Maintaining this balance will be critical. Leaders that regularly reassess risk exposure, test assumptions against regional and global benchmarks, and align risk responses with growth priorities will be better positioned to navigate uncertainty without losing strategic momentum.

The road to reinvention

Innovate to reinvent

The survey data indicates that CEOs in Bangladesh clearly understand the importance of innovation, but their organisations are yet to build the full set of capabilities to deliver it consistently at scale.

Around half of the respondents (48.9%) in Bangladesh said that innovation is a critical component of their overall business strategy to a large or very large extent (Q26F), similar to global proportions (49.7%). This signals strong intent at the top. However, if we delve into the specific practices that support innovation, we can clearly see a divide between aspiration and reality. Only around 29% reported that they test new ideas rapidly with customers or end users to a large or very large extent (Q26A). This means that for many organisations, innovations are still conceived and refined internally, without systematic real-time feedback from the market. Similarly, only around 24% said they collaborate with external partners such as suppliers, start-ups or universities at scale (Q26B). In a world where collaboration drives breakthrough ideas, many organisations are still innovating largely on their own.

The risk appetite in the country is also constrained. Only around 11% of CEOs said their organisations tolerate risk in their projects to a large or very large extent (Q26C). This number falls short of the global rate of 25%. This suggests that companies gravitate towards incremental, low-risk initiatives, which may be safer in the short term but less likely to produce distinctive new offerings.

Processes to close out underperforming initiatives are not yet widespread either. Only 22.2% reported having routine processes to stop underperforming R&D projects to a large or very large extent (Q26D). Without such mechanisms, resources can become tied up in legacy projects, crowding out investment in more promising, newer ones.



In today's rapidly evolving landscape, CEOs in Bangladesh must embrace transformation as a continuous journey, not as a one-time initiative. The integration of AI into core operations is no longer optional—it is essential for driving efficiency and unlocking new growth opportunities. At the same time, sustainability, risk preparedness, and climate resilience must remain at the heart of our strategies, ensuring that progress is inclusive and future-proof. Success will depend on our ability to balance innovation with responsibility, creating value for both business and society.

Yasir Azman

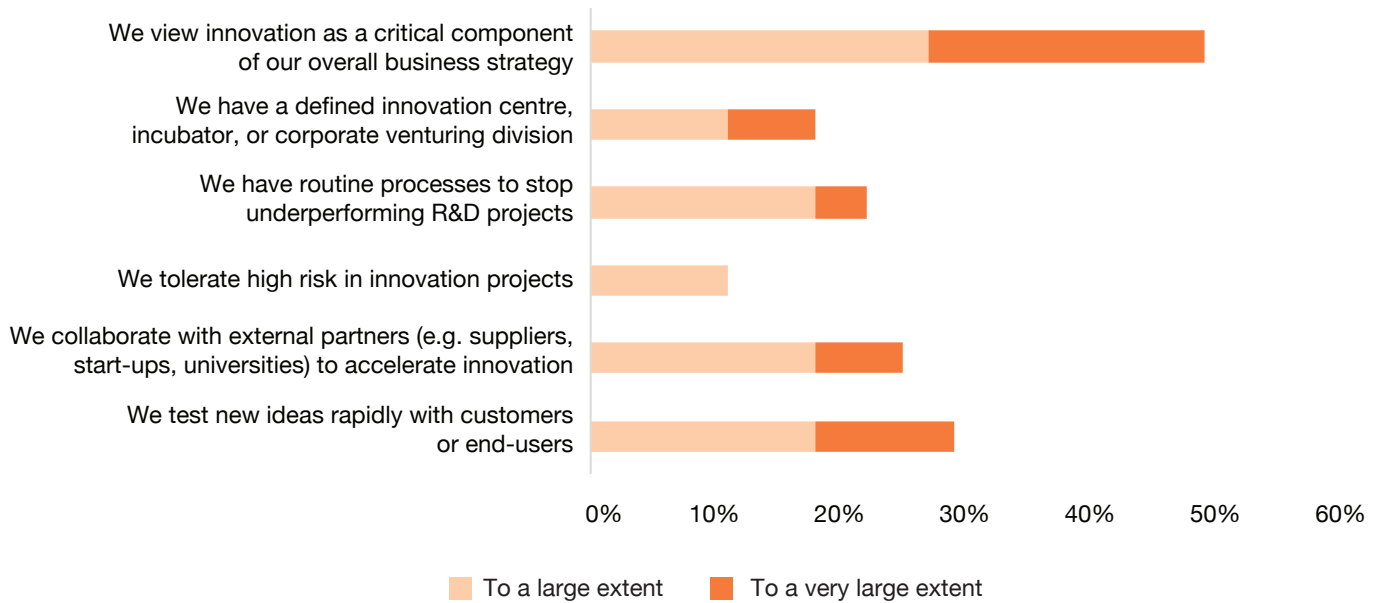
CEO

Grameenphone Ltd.

Finally, only 17.8% said they have a defined innovation centre, incubator, or corporate venturing division operating at a large or very large extent (Q26E), in contrast to the global rate of around 23%. However, compared to their Southeast Asian peers (~14%), Bangladesh CEOs seem to have a leg up in this aspect.

Extent to which each of the following statements characterise the company's approach to innovation

Base: Q.26: To what extent do each of the following statements characterize your company's approach to innovation?



The next move: Build innovation as a system

For CEOs in Bangladesh, the priority now is to turn innovation from a strategic ambition into a repeatable system. The goal is to guard against innovation theatre¹, where there are activities taken that resemble innovation but produce no tangible value. There should be a move towards market-connected innovation, where mechanisms are tested with customers and collaboration initiatives are undertaken with suppliers, start-ups, boards, and universities. Moreover, there should be a reset in risk appetite, with a ring-fence of a small but visible high-risk portfolio. Clear learning objectives and tolerance for failure will be established around this portfolio. Companies that treat innovation as an integrated system are best positioned to turn today's intent into tomorrow's growth.

¹ Note: Innovation theatre refers to situations where companies launch numerous initiatives that appear innovative but, in practice, add little tangible, long-term value to the business.

From climate risk to climate value

Though climate change is on the radar of Bangladesh CEOs, it has not yet been consistently integrated into the core decision-making processes that drive value.

On the risk side, 15.6% of CEOs felt their companies will be highly or extremely exposed to climate change over the next 12 months (Q6C). The majority perceive only moderate or lower levels of exposure, which may reflect a belief that climate risks are either longer term or less directly material than macroeconomic or geopolitical factors.

When we look at how climate considerations are embedded in day-to-day business decisions, integration continues to be at a nascent stage. In product design and development, 31.1% said their company has defined processes that account for climate-related opportunities and risks to a large or very large extent (Q10A). This compares favourably to the global average of 24% and indicates that organisations are beginning to consider climate as part of how they shape their offerings.

However, the integration is weaker in other key areas. In supply chain and sourcing, only 17.8% reported having such climate-related processes to a large or very large extent (Q10B), as opposed to the global average of around 25%. In capital allocation, including mergers and acquisitions, the proportion is again 17.8% (Q10C), compared to the global average of around 20%. For most organisations, climate is not yet a systematic criterion in deciding where to source, where to invest, and which deals to pursue.



In the paints and chemicals industry in Bangladesh, climate risk to climate value is becoming very real. Our customers are increasingly asking for products that are more durable, more energy-efficient and less harmful to the environment. At Berger, we are rethinking product development so that climate considerations are built into the formula from the start, not added as a marketing line at the end. Over time, I believe our sector can turn low-carbon, climate-resilient solutions into a genuine source of differentiation—if we treat it as a business opportunity, not just a compliance burden.”

Rupali Chowdhury

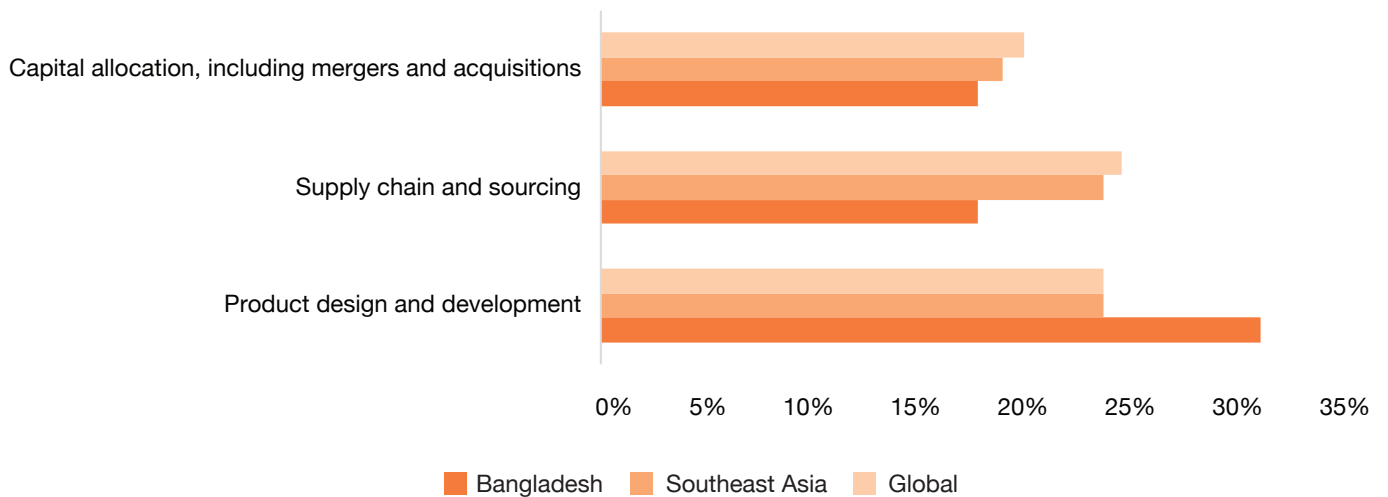
Managing Director

Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd.

Overall, 60% of responses across these three decision areas fall into the ‘not at all, limited, moderate, or don’t know’ categories (Q10 summary). That confirms that while a vanguard of companies is beginning to embed climate into their processes, the majority are still treating it more as a peripheral risk rather than as a central driver of supply chain strategy, product development, and capital deployment.

Extent to which the company have defined processes that account for the opportunities and risks associated with climate change

Base: Q.10: To what extent does your company have defined processes that account for the opportunities and risks associated with climate change in the following areas?



The next move: Turning climate risk into a core value lever

CEOs in Bangladesh are in a place to turn climate primarily as a risk to treating it as a driver of competitive advantage. The fact that one-third of the companies have started factoring in climate into their product offerings is a good starting point. The next step is to extend this mindset into supply chains and capital allocation. Over time, companies that consistently apply this lens are likely to access more lucrative financing, stay ahead of evolving regulations and buyer requirements, and uncover new growth opportunities in low carbon and climate resilient offerings.

Competing on trust

The survey also sheds light on how much pressure CEOs in Bangladesh are feeling from key stakeholders—boards, customers, regulators, investors, and employees—on issues of trust.

Over the past 12 months, only a small minority of firms have experienced heightened trust concerns to a large or very large extent. For example, 11.1% of CEOs said they have faced increased scrutiny of leadership decisions at this level (Q27A), a similar proportion to the global average of around 13%. 11.1% reported significant demands for greater transparency (Q27B) compared to global average of ~15%, and 11.1% have faced major questions about data use and privacy (Q27C) compared to global average of ~16%.

Concerns around AI safety and responsible AI are even less frequently cited. Only 4.4% reported experiencing them to a large or very large extent (Q27D), which is in stark contrast to the global average of 13%. Withdrawal of support or investment in the company is rare, with just 2.2% indicating this has occurred at that level (Q27E), as opposed to 9% for global. Meanwhile, 6.7% said stakeholders have raised substantial questions about the impact of climate change on business performance (Q27F) as opposed to ~11% for global. Overall, we can see that trust concerns are more prevalent in Southeast Asia and global arenas compared to Bangladesh.

Extent to which the company has experienced any of the following trust concerns from key stakeholder groups (To a large or very large extent)

Base: Q.27: In the past 12 months, to what extent has your company experienced any of the following trust concerns from your key stakeholder groups?

Extent to which the company has experienced any of the following trust concerns from key stakeholder groups (To a large or very large extent)	Bangladesh	Southeast Asia	Global
Increased scrutiny of leadership decisions	11%	9%	13%
Demands for greater transparency	11%	15%	15%
Questions about data use and privacy	11%	15%	16%
Concerns around AI safety or responsible AI	4%	9%	13%
Withdrawal of support or investment in the company	2%	5%	9%
Questions about the impact of climate change on business performance	7%	9%	11%

The next move: Build trust before it's tested

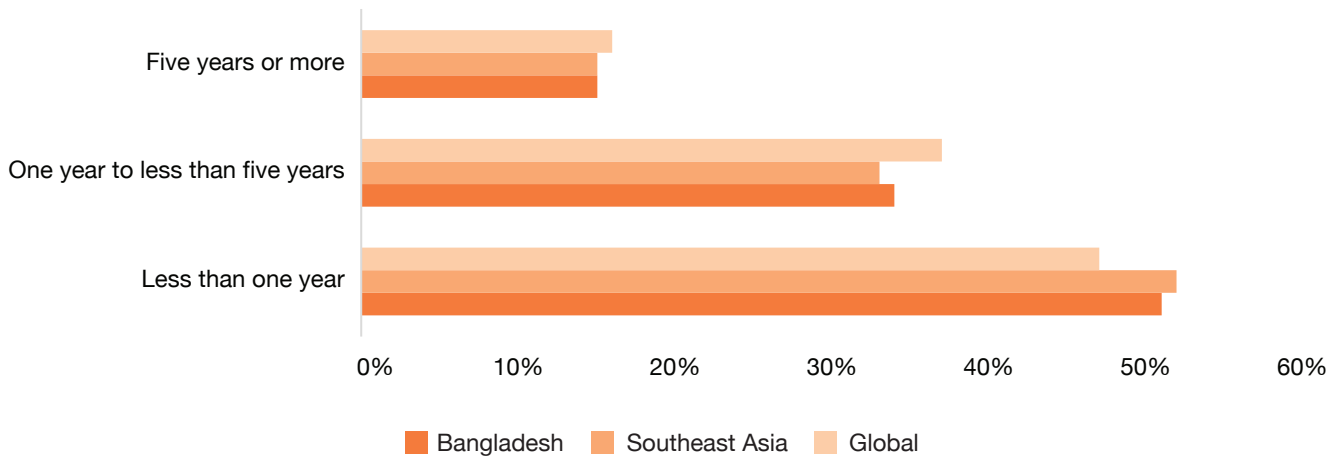
The relatively low levels of trust concerns should not be a reason for complacency. In fact, they present an opportunity to get ahead of issues before they escalate into media frenzy. As regulation tightens and global buyers raise ESG expectations, the intensity of trust-related scrutiny in Bangladesh is likely to rise. CEOs could formalise governance where expectations are clearly coming and build muscle in transparent communication. Trust could even serve as a differentiator in key relationships. Companies that adopt such mechanisms will be best placed when scrutiny eventually catches up.

From immediate priorities to future vision

On average, CEOs in Bangladesh devote just over half of their schedule, 51.2%, to issues with a time horizon of less than one year (Q12A). They spend 34.0% of their time on matters in the one to five-year range (Q12B), and 14.8% on issues >5 years into the future (Q12C). The global averages are slightly more skewed towards the longer terms, with 37% devoted to one-to-less-than-five-year range and 16% devoted to >5-year range. The distributions show that in Bangladesh, short-term demands dominate, but there is still a meaningful, if smaller, share of time reserved for medium- and long-term priorities.

Proportion of typical schedule of CEOs dedicated to activities

Base: Q.12: What proportion of your typical schedule is dedicated to activities associated with the following time horizons?



The next move: Rebalancing the CEO agenda towards the longer term

The survey data shows that CEOs in Bangladesh are allocating more time towards the near time horizon, as opposed to their global peers. These risks underinvesting in capabilities and bets that will determine future competitiveness.

One way forward could be to have a ceiling on CEO time allocation towards <1-year activities and then committing fixed blocks of CEO time every month on longer horizon priorities. More operational roles could also be delegated by using a stronger COOs or business units. Parallely, CEOs can institutionalise quarterly strategy sessions that focus on only longer-term issues. Over time, these small adaptations will translate into a stronger pipeline of long-horizon initiatives.

Dynamism or denial?

Despite the challenges and capability gaps, the survey reveals numerous signs that companies in Bangladesh are actively changing and not simply standing still.

On the AI front, while value creation is not yet broad-based, a meaningful subset of companies is already seeing tangible benefits. Overall, 20.5% of CEOs reported that AI has increased revenue in the last 12 months (Q17A NET increase), and 25.6% say AI has reduced costs (Q17B NET decrease). Although these gains are not significant enough, they indicate that some organisations are beginning to move beyond pilots into value-generating deployments.

Cultural and technological foundations for AI adoption are also relatively encouraging. 64.1% CEOs agreed that the culture of their organisation enables the adoption of AI (Q15E). A similar proportion, 58.9%, said their technology environment is enabling the integration of AI (Q15C). This suggests that for many firms, the 'soft' and 'hard' infrastructures for AI are already in place or taking shape—even if strategy, governance, and investment need to catch up.

Beyond AI, the data shows significant reinvention via new products and sector entry. A large majority, (73.3%), reported that their company has begun competing in new sectors or industries in the last five years (Q21). Many are also generating a substantial share of revenue from offerings introduced recently. More than half of the companies derived at least 10% of their current year revenue from products or services launched in the last three years (Q30). Nearly half also said their market share has increased moderately or significantly over the past five years (Q36).



In an era shaped by AI and escalating climate risks, trust is our most valuable currency. Over the past decade, Green Delta has earned that trust by protecting more than 1.6 million farmers across 50+ districts of Bangladesh. We are not merely issuing insurance policies—we are institutionalising shock-responsive safety nets for the nation’s most vulnerable producers. By replacing slow, manual loss assessments with automated, data-backed payouts, we deliver support after floods, severe monsoons, and climate-induced shocks, enabling farmers to remain productive amid volatility. At Green Delta, we are moving beyond risk management to create a resilience dividend that strengthens national food security, stabilises rural incomes, and protects Bangladesh’s economic backbone. In a disrupted world, data-driven resilience is the foundation of a secure, insured, and food-secure future for our nation.”

Farzanah Chowdhury

Managing Director and CEO
Green Delta Insurance PLC

Alongside these positive indicators, there are signs that some risks and structural shifts may be underappreciated, creating the potential for denial or inertia.

In the technology and cyber realm, perceived exposure is surprisingly low given global trends. Only around 9% of CEOs felt their companies will be highly or extremely exposed to cyber risks such as hacking, surveillance, or disinformation in the next 12 months (Q6G). In Southeast Asia. This figure is around 26%, and globally it is around 31%.

8.9% felt highly exposed to technological disruption, including advances in AI (Q6H). In Southeast Asia, this figure is around 19%, and globally it is around 24%. This data could mean that some businesses genuinely have limited exposure, but it may also reflect blind spots or incomplete risk assessments—particularly as digitalisation accelerates.

When asked to choose the question that concerns them most these days, 46.7% of CEOs selected: “Am I doing enough to ensure my company remains viable in the medium- to long-term?” (Q33). This is the single most frequent concern, highlighting an acute awareness of long-term viability risks in a changing environment. A large share, 42.2%, also worried about whether they are transforming fast enough to keep up with the scope and pace of technological change, including AI (Q33). 35.6%, questioned whether their company’s innovation capability is adequate for an uncertain future (Q33).

Taken together, these responses highlight a stress point: CEOs are aware of the need to transform, innovate, and build resilience, but many are not fully convinced that their current capabilities and infrastructures are up to the task. This tension is at the heart of the ‘dynamism or denial’ question. The companies that resolve it in favour of action—investing in AI foundations, strengthening innovation systems, embedding climate and trust into decision-making, and upgrading leadership capabilities—are likely to be the ones that shape, rather than simply endure, the next phase of growth in Bangladesh.

Methodology

PwC surveyed 4,454 CEOs in 95 countries and territories from 30 September through 10 November 2025. The global and regional figures in this report are weighted proportionally to country nominal GDP, so CEOs' views are broadly representative across all major regions.

The Bangladesh figures in this report are based on unweighted data from the full sample of Bangladesh CEOs. Total 45 CEOs from Bangladesh participated in this survey. Furthermore, PwC conducted verbal interviews with CEOs from different industries in Bangladesh, including manufacturing, telecom, paints, and chemicals to gain a more in-depth understanding of their business and economic outlook.

All interviews were conducted on confidential basis. The survey data collection was also conducted globally on confidential basis. Among the CEOs who participated in the survey:

2% lead organisations with revenues of \$25 billion or more

4% lead organisations with revenues between \$10 billion and \$25 billion

22% lead organisations with revenues between \$1 billion and \$10 billion

35% lead organisations with revenues between \$100 million and \$1 billion

30% lead organisations with revenues of up to \$100 million

60% lead organisations that are privately owned.

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Sharif Zahir—Managing Director, Ananta Apparels Ltd

Yasir Azman—CEO, Grameenphone Ltd

Rupali Chowdhury—Managing Director, Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd

Farzanah Chowdhury—Managing Director and CEO, Green Delta Insurance PLC

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