Special Interview
Helena Helmersson
Head of Production, H&M group, Hong Kong

New Horizon
PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Cover Story
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MESSAGE FROM

BGMEA PRESIDENT

Dear Valued Members,

The RMG industry of Bangladesh has faced numerous challenges over the course of its development but bounced back stronger every time. And you were witness to the epic journey of our apparel sector. We collectively overcame the hurdle like child labor elimination in early 1990s, the MFA quota phase-out in 2004, the global recession etc. and have so far been successful in retaining the growth. Our RMG industry has stepped into a new era with massive transformation that started in 2013 with multi-stakeholders collaboration. The remediation progress is quite satisfactory. Given the remediation progress already made it is reasonably expected that 100% remediation will be carried out well before June 2018. We highlighted our achievements before the delegation of the International Trade Committee (INTA) of the EU Parliament who came to Bangladesh in November 2016 to evaluate progress in the implementation of the “Sustainability Compact”. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress the industry has made.

Apart from dealing with everyday problems, BGMEA is also engaged in various development activities to facilitate our RMG industry. Arrangement of BGMEA-BUFT Journalism Fellowship is a part of our endeavors. We believe this fellowship program will help journalists to enhance their professional skills. They will be able to contribute to the sector through valuable reports with professionalism. We from BGMEA recently visited Hungary which is a potential destination of our RMG exports. We held meetings with Hungarian businessmen’s to draw their attention on import prospects of RMG and other items from Bangladesh. We hope it will help expand our market in Hungary.

You will be happy to know that BGMEA has partnered with its friends from Denmark under a project “Step Up” to build capacity in Bangladeshi factories to increase productivity and improve CSR. The project is financed by Danish development agency, DANIDA.

It is my great pleasure to inform you that BGMEA is going to organize the second edition of the Dhaka Apparel Summit 2017 at Pan Pacific Hotel Sonargaon on 25 February 2017. The Summit will bring closer ties amongst stakeholders from home and abroad with a common goal of ensuring sustainable growth in Bangladesh RMG industry.

I have no doubt that the suggestions to be made by the innovative experts and doers in the 2nd Dhaka Apparel Summit will serve as illuminated guidelines for setting the priorities towards better RMG industry. I, on behalf of BGMEA, invite to this august event. It will be a true inspiration for us to see you in the Summit.

Md. Siddiquur Rahman
President, BGMEA
Have confidence that buttons, sequins and beads will stay attached

**Coats Secura - Fusible polyester/polyester corespun thread**

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- Buttons in children’s wear
- Decorative sequin & bead attachment
- Suits and blazers
- Workwear buttons

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EDITORIAL

Bangladesh is a bright example of a resilient nation who holds high its head overcoming a sea of problems and numerous limitations. Bangladesh has emerged as a development model in the world in terms of GDP growth and socio-economic parameters. The country is on her way to become a middle-income country by 2021. We have aspirations, so have firm determination to translate them into reality. After 45 years of independence when are we at the dawn of a new year it’s time to reflect what we have achieved and what is our vision to behold the future of Bangladesh. The Apparel Story makes its cover story on the impressive development of Bangladesh which is moving ahead to become a middle-income country by 2021 and developed one by 2041. This issue contains an analytical feature on Bangladesh’s opportunities to accelerate growth of the apparel industry through product diversification. The story highlights why Bangladesh should opt for a wide variety of apparel items and what strategies should the country take to make use of the opportunities. In ‘Behind the Brand’ readers will discover the promising local brand Texmart. This issue also contains an exclusive interview of the Director General of Bangladesh Industrial Police where he shares the importance of the special force in ensuring security and congenial atmosphere in the industrial areas. Beside, interview of Ms. Helena of H&M is included in the magazine where she talks about the H&M plans of business in Bangladesh.

This issue of the Apparel Story also contains photo feature, stories on Dutch Conference on sustainability and other regular features. Hope our readers will find all the contents worthwhile.

Editorial Board
The Apparel Story
Our New Innovation

- Economy Single System 12 GG - 44”
- Economy Single System 3-5-7 GG - 44”
- Economy Single System 3.5 GG - 44”

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UNSTOPPABLE BANGLADESH!

By Nasim Uddin

Elim Raihan is looking at his wrist watch again and again and takes a long swig of hot tea. He is in a hurry to attend a meeting to seal a big business deal with his foreign clients. So without more ado, he sets off for his office and soon dissolves into the humming forces of people moving forward. Every day streams of workaholic people like Mr. Raihan start flowing through the serpentine streets of Dhaka as if their life is an unending movement and constant unfoldment of potential and possibilities. This unstoppable movement is an incarnation of a Bangladesh with promises of prosperity.
Bangladesh has become the Lower Middle Income Country from an LDC based on GNI performance. Vision to graduate to a Middle Income Country by 2021. Becoming a Developed Country by 2041.

Bangladesh did not have a very auspicious beginning. Born out of a devastating war 1971, the country’s economy was in a shambles with damaged infrastructure, destroyed production process, almost no reserve of any foreign exchange. A pessimism grew among some cynics that the country would remain stuck in vicious cycle of poverty and depend on foreign aid. Things have changed a lot during the last 45 years proving wrong such pessimistic notions. One who saw Bangladesh in 1980’s might find it hard to believe his eyes if he visits the country in 2017. Increasing number of winding flyovers linking roads and highways, busy sea ports, cargoes carrying export goods, sky scrapers, shopping malls frequented by people of all ages, are few of the signs of prosperity shrouding the country. Bangladesh has established herself as a model of human and economic development in the world map.

The economic performance Bangladesh has demonstrated over the last couple of years really signals a glaring future for the country. Strong economic development supported by industrial growth, steady flow of export earnings and remittance, and record-high foreign currency reserve reveal that Bangladesh is on the right track of development. The forecasts by international organizations about Bangladesh also echo the same. Bangladesh has been listed in the “Next 11 after BRIC” in Goldman Sachs analyst reports, while JP Morgan has included Bangladesh in the “Frontier Five” economies. Credit rating agency Standard and Poor (S&P) and Moody’s have also placed Bangladesh ahead of all countries in South Asia, except India.
Things have changed a lot during the last 45 years proving wrong such pessimistic notions. One who saw Bangladesh in 1980’s might find it hard to believe his eyes if he visits the country in 2017.

Bangladesh has set a vision to be a middle-income country by 2021. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the incumbent government has been working on to achieve the Vision 2021. Already Bangladesh has made impressive development in a number of socio-economic fronts, which are seen as major strides towards making the vision a reality within the stipulated time. For example, the country has been lauded globally for its outstanding achievements in attaining Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said that many countries around the world have many things to learn from Bangladesh for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the country has made remarkable progress in different fields.

Business climate in Bangladesh is on the rise: the foreign direct investment (FDI) into Bangladesh was 960.5 million USD in 2009, which reached 2.24 billion in 2016, almost doubling in the last 7 years. Moreover, the government plans to establish 100 special economic zones with a view to encouraging rapid economic development through increase and diversification of industry, employment, production and export. Besides, Bangladesh is the third most peaceful country in South Asia as per Global Peace Index (GPI) 2016, which would help the country earn the confidence of foreign investors.

The people of Bangladesh are also hopeful about the future of their motherland. A global survey -- the WIN/Gallup International -- has found that Bangladeshis are the most optimistic people in the world.

Dr. Kaiser Haq, a noted Bangladeshi poet and academic, is one of them who believe in the indomitable spirit of Bangladesh. “It’s really encouraging to see Bangladesh in the position as it is now today. It is the outcome of our collective drives and initiatives;” he said in a note of pride.

Dr. Haq, a professor of English at the University of Dhaka, thinks that the development of Bangladesh is an ongoing process. He firmly believes that Bangladesh will soon become a middle-income country. “The development of Bangladesh is a miracle wrought by the people of this country; especially the efforts of our entrepreneurs and workers played a vital role in changing socio-economic status of the country. It is evident if we look at the way our garment workers have changed the sociological profile of Bangladesh,” said Kaiser Haq, a valiant freedom fighter who took arms in one hand and his life on the other hand in 1971 to liberate Bangladesh with a dream of economic emancipation and prosperity for his beloved motherland.

According to Nileema Khan, a Career Counselor at DPS STS School Dhaka, said that touch of development is visible in almost every sector in Bangladesh, including infrastructure, industry, agriculture, and education. “Our exports and remittance inflow has increased to a great extent. A massive development has taken place in Bangladesh in terms of participation of women in formal workforce. Parents now recognize the importance of education for both daughters and sons. Signs of socio-economic development is evident in the country.”

“I’m very optimistic about the future of Bangladesh especially because of her young and vibrant population which is a great blessing and asset for us. And we have ample of opportunities to utilize this power of youth. For that we need skills based education,” She said. She thinks that along with the development of industries, Bangladesh needs to focus on agricultural development through innovation and participation of youth.

“We have to prevent brain drain from our country. I studied abroad and returned and am now working with students so that they can understand that if you want to do something great, Bangladesh is a good place for you,” Ms. Nileema added.

AB Saleh is an Assistant Merchandising Manager at Zaastex Limited. His profession in the ready-made garment industry gives him a sense of pride. “My feelings cannot be expressed in words when I see my motherland heading towards prosperity and I’m part of the RMG industry which has been making enormous contribution to the development of Bangladesh.”

“My emotion runs high when I see the apparel ‘Made in Bangladesh’ is bringing name and fame for my country and makes my motherland known to the world,” he added. He believes Bangladesh’s march of development is inevitable.
By Apparel Story Desk

Different stakeholders from home and abroad gathered in Dhaka to attend a daylong conference on sustainable sourcing in the garment sector. The main objective of the event is to emphasize the need for advancing a common understanding on sustainable sourcing practices in the garment sector, through promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation and presenting best practices. It also focused on enhancing a mutual understanding of sustainable versus unsustainable sourcing, and to showcase new sourcing practices that will be beneficial for all stakeholders in the garment value chain.

The conference styled “Sustainable Sourcing in the Garment Sector (SSGS)” was organized by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka in partnership with the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the International Apparel Federation (IAF).

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, MP was present at the conference as the chief guest. Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen said that the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen said that the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen said that the Netherlands Lilianne...
A long-term outlook and commitment pertaining to sustainable sourcing will result in greater collaboration leading to mutually beneficial investments that promote sustainability, social conditions and compliance while at the same time improving business performance.

Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen attended the opening session. BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman delivered the welcome speech at the event. A number of dignitaries, delegates, buyers, factory owners from different parts of the world were present on the occasion.

In her speech, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen said that sustainable sourcing is not only the right way forward but also the only way forward. She requested the International Apparel Federation to develop a training model for sustainable sourcing which will show both buyers and producers how the purchasing process can contribute to greater efficiency and at the same time promote the achievement of sustainability target, including healthy approaches.

The conference featured three sessions - Global trends in garment sector and opportunities for Bangladesh, International framework for sustainable sourcing: setting the outline for future collaboration and Success factors for sustainable production and sourcing. The sessions highlighted the urge to replace the presence of so-called price and lead time squeezes with a fair model for pricing and transparency. It was asserted that ‘sustainable price squeezes’ need to be achieved through advancing technology, productivity and vertical integration. Hence, for Bangladesh to compete with other producing countries, more attention is needed on higher production quality and the diversification of the Bangladesh product basket, market and structure. Whilst suppliers should invest in developing the capacity of their workers and mid-level management, international brands and buyers should invest in better strategic partnerships by sharing their knowledge and expertise on innovation and fashion design.

The first session of the conference was on “Global trends in the garment sector and opportunities for Bangladesh”. It was chaired by Dhyana van der Pols from Nash International and the keynote speakers were Ton Wiedenhofl, International Apparel Federation (IAF) and Faruque Hassan, Senior Vice President, BGMEA. The panel discussants were -- Helena Helmersson, Global Head of Production H&M; Riaz Hamidullah, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka; Syed Mohammad Tanvir, Director, BGMEA and Managing Director of Pafic Jeans; and Mohan Seneviratne, Program manager of Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT).

In his keynote speech Ton Wiedenhofl encouraged Bangladeshi factories to diversify, invest in the education in mid-range local management as it has long term benefit. He suggested Bangladeshi producers to make it a one stop solution for buyers, and in this way, be in the steering wheel. The other keynote speaker, Mr. Faruque Hassan, presented a brief overview of the global trend in the apparel sector. He said that it is a wonder that not being a cotton producing country, Bangladesh still manages to export cotton products in such large scale and success. He also mentioned that Bangladesh is rapidly becoming a green industry in RMG and that Bangladesh is now one of the safest apparel industry that is jointly inspected and supported by government, ILO, brands and retailers.

Riaz Hamidullah said that Sri Lanka has training
“Whilst suppliers should invest in developing the capacity of their workers and mid-level management, international brands and buyers should invest in better strategic partnerships by sharing their knowledge and expertise on innovation and fashion design.”

institutions like Sri Lanka Institute of Textile Apparel (SLITA) which is proving to be very effective and Bangladesh should have such institutions too.

Syed Mohammad Tanvir compares the usage of water in the earlier times by saying while a pair of jeans used to take 70-80 litres of water for treatment, now it can be treated by only a glass of water and still be fashionable. He claimed that Bangladesh is the safest, most transparent, most compliant sourcing base in the world.

The topic of the second session was “International framework for sustainable sourcing: setting the outline for future collaboration”. Pierre Mayaudon, Ambassador and Head of European Union Delegation to Bangladesh; Roel Nieuwenkamp, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct; Mark Anner, Associate Professor of Labor and Employment Relations at Penn State University; Miran Ali, BGMEA Director and Managing Director, Misami Garments; and Peter Rinnebach: Senior Partner Kurt Salmon Associates attended the session as panelists while Srinivas B. Reddy, ILO Country Director Bangladesh, chaired it.

In his speech, Pierre Mayaudon pointed out that out of 49 least developed countries that European Union offered duty free, quota free market, Bangladesh is the only one that is capable of really making miracle.

Miran Ali pointed out that Bangladesh is now ahead of many supplying country in terms of work safety. He said that regional collaboration is necessary to learn from each other regarding the good practices.

The third session was on “Success factors for Sustainable Production and Sourcing”. This session had two parts and was moderated by Rubana Huq, Managing Director, Mohammadi Group. The discussants of the first part, “Road Map 1: Solutions and Collaborations Models” were -- Helena Helmersson, Global Head of Production H&M; Edward David Southall, Head of Global Sourcing at LC Waikiki; Mahmud Hasan Khan (Babu), Vice President, BGMEA; and Erica van Doorn, President, Fair Wear Foundation; and Mostafiz Uddin, Managing Director, Denim Expert Ltd.

Helena Helmersson stressed the need for addressing several issues in collaboration with each other, such as workers welfare, safety, water and renewable energy, more diverse products etc.mentioning the positive aspects and achievements in the garment industry, Mahmud Hasan Khan (Babu) said that branding is important for Bangladesh right now. He urged to all the stakeholders to keep faith in Bangladesh.

In the second part of this session, “Road Map 2: Financing Change”, the discussants were -- Jef Wintermans, Director Economic and Technical Affairs at Modint; Roel Messie, Director NL Business a FMO; Mohammad Nasir, Vice President (Finance), BGMEA; Rob Wayss, Executive Director at the Bangladesh Accord; and Mahmoodun Nabi Chowdhury, Head of Corporate Banking at BRAC Bank.

Jef Wintermans remarked that branding Bangladesh is very important. He also establishing universities and training centers for mid or top management people is a good idea to consider. Mohammad Nasir requested the governments to make it easy by simplifying the regulatory methods in financial matters, especially for obtaining foreign currency loan.

It is asserted in the conference that a long-term outlook and commitment pertaining to sustainable sourcing will result in greater collaboration leading to mutually beneficial investments that promote sustainability, social conditions and compliance while at the same time improving business performance.
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BANGLADESH RMG INDUSTRY
Product diversification for sustainable growth
By ANM Rasel and Nasim Uddin
Bangladesh has set a vision of increasing its export earnings from the RMG industry to US$ 50 billion by 2021. One of the key strategies to achieve the target, as outlined in the RMG Roadmap 2021, is product diversification which will play a significant role not only in reaching the vision but also in ensuring sustainable growth of the apparel industry.

Overdependence on a few products or on a single product is not a wise decision both for an industry and the country's economy. Looking for new products to exports to both old and new markets will help increase the foreign exchange earnings and at the same time will minimize the risks in business. Product diversification is needed not only for minimizing risks, but also for creating employment with new skills of workers. Products also for creating employment with new skills of workers. Products also for creating employment with new skills of workers.

Why Product Diversification Important:
- Product diversification is often viewed as a safety net against downturns in traditional markets for an industry. Fluctuation in prices and demand in markets of any product is normal. If an industry depends on a market with a few product categories, fall in prices or demand in the given consumer items will have huge impacts on the industry. In that case a broader range of products through diversification strategy will help minimize the risk of demand-supply fluctuation.
- Further Penetration into Existing Markets: Chances are little for items being produced and exported to a market for a long time to further penetrate the market. Hence, newer product categories which are in demand will help to further explore opportunities in the market.
- Sustainable Growth: If an industry continues to limit its products to limited categories, growth of the sector at one point is set to become stagnant or may take negative turn. So product diversification is imperative to sustain growth of the industry.
- Best Use of Limited Resources: Opting for valued-added products will help ensure best use of limited resources. For example, production of a 10-dollar product requires a certain amount of resources like water an energy. A 50-dollar product, either a value-added item or higher segment category, can be produced using the same amount of resources. Product diversification through upgradation gives an opportunity to ensure the best use of available natural resources.
- For Value Addition: With socio-economic development of Bangladesh living standard of the people is increasing in the country. In line with improvement in living standards wages also gradually increase. To cope with the increasing wages, the industry needs to opt for higher valued apparel items.

China is a good example of how product diversification helped its apparel industry to boom and take the leading position in the global market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL NO.</th>
<th>HS Code &amp; Product Description</th>
<th>2000 (Value in million USD)</th>
<th>2015 (Value in million USD)</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>CAGR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61102020 Sweaters, pullovers and similar articles, knitted or crocheted, of cotton, nesoi</td>
<td>194.44</td>
<td>2844.79</td>
<td>1363.03%</td>
<td>18.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>62046240 Women's or girls' trousers, breeches and shorts, not knitted or crocheted, of cotton, nesoi</td>
<td>99.54</td>
<td>1880.27</td>
<td>1788.94%</td>
<td>20.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61103030 Sweaters, pullovers and similar articles, knitted or crocheted, of manmade fibers, nesoi</td>
<td>193.15</td>
<td>1576.96</td>
<td>716.46%</td>
<td>14.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>62121090 Brassieres, not containing lace, net or embroidery, containing under 70% by wt of silk or silk waste, whether or not knitted or crocheted</td>
<td>117.86</td>
<td>988.01</td>
<td>738.28%</td>
<td>14.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>62034240 Men's or boys' trousers and shorts, not bibs, not knitted or crocheted, of cotton, not containing 15% or more by weight of down, etc</td>
<td>135.21</td>
<td>979.66</td>
<td>624.55%</td>
<td>13.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>61159690 Stockings, socks, etc. nesoi, knitted or crocheted, of synthetic fibers (not containing lace or net)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>940.30</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>62044340 Women's or girls' dresses, not knitted or crocheted, of synthetic fibers, nesoi</td>
<td>160.85</td>
<td>847.68</td>
<td>427.01%</td>
<td>10.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>62052020 Men's or boys' shirts, not knitted or crocheted, of cotton, nesoi</td>
<td>83.28</td>
<td>705.46</td>
<td>747.12%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>61112060 Babies' garments and clothing accessories, knitted or crocheted, of cotton, nesoi</td>
<td>52.69</td>
<td>680.36</td>
<td>1191.31%</td>
<td>17.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>61044320 Women's or girls' dresses, knitted or crocheted, of synthetic fibers, nesoi</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>601.73</td>
<td>8486.04%</td>
<td>32.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart shows the top 10 apparel items USA imported from China in 2015 and their compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the period of 15 years. In 2000, China export earnings from sweaters, pullovers and similar articles, knitted or crocheted, of cotton (HS Code 6102020) were USD 194.44 million which touched USD 2.8 billion in 2015, with CAGR of 18.26%. Similarly, China’s exports of women's or girls' trousers, breeches and shorts, not knitted or crocheted, of cotton, nesoi grew by 1788.94% to reach more than USD 1.8 billion in 2015 from a meagre USD 99.54 million in 2000. The remaining 8 items also registered CAGR between 14% and 32%. It clearly indicates that product diversification immensely benefitted China to expand its apparel export basket.

Product diversification is an area of opportunity for Bangladesh whose majority (around 77%) of apparel export items are concentrated in five basic products – trouser, t-shirt, sweater, shirts, and jackets. Most of the products are made of cotton.

### Chart-1: Share of five basic products in Bangladesh's total RMG Exports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SHIRTS</th>
<th>TROUSERS</th>
<th>JACKETS</th>
<th>T-SHIRT</th>
<th>SWEATER</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart-1 shows comparative share of the five basic products -- trouser, t-shirt, sweater, shirts, and jackets -- in the total apparel exports of Bangladesh over the period of 21 years. It is seen from the chart that that export concentration on the five basic products has increased from 60% in 1995-96 to 77% in 2016. The share of shirt exports has fallen from 32% in 1995-96 to only 8% in 2016 while exports of trousers and T-shirt have witnessed significant increase to reach 22% from 4% and 14% respectively over the same period. The share of the five products has remained almost same (around 80%) since 2003-04 until 2013-14. In the last fiscal year the share slightly decreased to 77% as other apparel items are being include in export list.
### Bangladesh's Top 35 Garment Products Export to World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610910: T-shirts, singlets and other vests, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>2,937.80</td>
<td>4,430.17</td>
<td>4,490.12</td>
<td>4905.63</td>
<td>5594.62</td>
<td>5766.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610942: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>2,385.32</td>
<td>3,298.30</td>
<td>3,664.08</td>
<td>4905.63</td>
<td>5594.62</td>
<td>5766.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610942: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of other textile materials, knitted</td>
<td>847.32</td>
<td>1,200.25</td>
<td>1,433.02</td>
<td>1784.34</td>
<td>1986.47</td>
<td>2065.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620520: Mens/boys shirts, of cotton, not knitted</td>
<td>617.73</td>
<td>1,024.51</td>
<td>1,109.86</td>
<td>1326.19</td>
<td>1509.43</td>
<td>1648.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611090: Pullovers, cardigans &amp; similar articles of other textile materials, knitted</td>
<td>1,114.74</td>
<td>1,551.30</td>
<td>1,494.20</td>
<td>1565.91</td>
<td>1523.24</td>
<td>1311.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611020: Pullovers, cardigans and similar articles of cotton, not knitted</td>
<td>531.60</td>
<td>730.50</td>
<td>665.96</td>
<td>601.21</td>
<td>615.23</td>
<td>568.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620462: Womens/girls trousers and shorts, of synthetic fibres, not knitted</td>
<td>121.79</td>
<td>152.40</td>
<td>140.25</td>
<td>198.02</td>
<td>315.93</td>
<td>315.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611030: Pullovers, cardigans and similar articles of man-made fibres, knitted</td>
<td>617.73</td>
<td>1,024.51</td>
<td>1,109.86</td>
<td>1326.19</td>
<td>1509.43</td>
<td>1648.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610510: Mens/boys shirts, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>617.73</td>
<td>1,024.51</td>
<td>1,109.86</td>
<td>1326.19</td>
<td>1509.43</td>
<td>1648.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610342: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>104.93</td>
<td>127.97</td>
<td>142.27</td>
<td>163.90</td>
<td>202.52</td>
<td>256.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610711: Mens/boys underpants and briefs, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>531.60</td>
<td>730.50</td>
<td>665.96</td>
<td>601.21</td>
<td>615.23</td>
<td>568.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610711: Mens/boys underpants and briefs, of other textile materials, knitted</td>
<td>71.61</td>
<td>100.67</td>
<td>132.21</td>
<td>172.86</td>
<td>207.55</td>
<td>214.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610463: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of synthetic fibres, not knitted</td>
<td>45.37</td>
<td>48.35</td>
<td>46.37</td>
<td>64.56</td>
<td>144.65</td>
<td>199.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61021: Womens/girls briefs and panties, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>109.50</td>
<td>172.64</td>
<td>188.22</td>
<td>207.15</td>
<td>210.76</td>
<td>244.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621040: Mens/boys garments, made up of impregnated, coated, covered, etc., textile woven fabrics</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>26.87</td>
<td>105.90</td>
<td>200.58</td>
<td>194.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611120: Babies garments and clothing accessories of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>43.52</td>
<td>41.14</td>
<td>60.09</td>
<td>84.58</td>
<td>147.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610422: Womens/girls dresses, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>52.22</td>
<td>81.32</td>
<td>85.05</td>
<td>110.57</td>
<td>136.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610422: Mens/boys garments nes, made up of impregnated, coated, coated, cotton or other textile materials, knitted</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>13.02</td>
<td>47.05</td>
<td>78.04</td>
<td>129.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620333: Mens/boys jackets and blazers, of synthetic fibres, not knitted</td>
<td>114.37</td>
<td>158.05</td>
<td>136.31</td>
<td>151.08</td>
<td>157.09</td>
<td>173.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611120: Babies garments and clothing accessories of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>43.52</td>
<td>41.14</td>
<td>60.09</td>
<td>84.58</td>
<td>147.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610422: Womens/girls dresses, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>52.22</td>
<td>81.32</td>
<td>85.05</td>
<td>110.57</td>
<td>136.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621210: Brassieres and parts thereof, of textile materials</td>
<td>57.87</td>
<td>95.16</td>
<td>132.44</td>
<td>164.30</td>
<td>165.15</td>
<td>235.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610342: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of synthetic fibres, not knitted</td>
<td>176.75</td>
<td>273.62</td>
<td>299.77</td>
<td>198.25</td>
<td>170.34</td>
<td>124.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610831: Mens/boys underpants and briefs, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>54.17</td>
<td>89.81</td>
<td>79.45</td>
<td>90.64</td>
<td>103.16</td>
<td>123.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620432: Womens/girls jackets, of cotton, not knitted</td>
<td>32.73</td>
<td>49.27</td>
<td>52.46</td>
<td>75.38</td>
<td>103.91</td>
<td>120.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610610: Mens/boys shirts, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>51.07</td>
<td>119.91</td>
<td>130.87</td>
<td>112.07</td>
<td>113.63</td>
<td>113.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610690: Mens/boys shirts, of other textile materials, not knitted</td>
<td>93.35</td>
<td>135.51</td>
<td>118.20</td>
<td>122.85</td>
<td>116.15</td>
<td>112.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610422: Mens/boys garments nes, made up of impregnated, coated, covered, etc., textile woven fabrics</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>13.02</td>
<td>47.05</td>
<td>78.04</td>
<td>129.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610342: Mens/boys trousers and shorts, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>89.55</td>
<td>103.50</td>
<td>111.28</td>
<td>163.48</td>
<td>126.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610821: Womens/girls briefs and panties, of cotton, knitted</td>
<td>109.50</td>
<td>172.64</td>
<td>188.22</td>
<td>207.15</td>
<td>210.76</td>
<td>244.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>163.48</td>
<td>126.07</td>
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</table>
However, scenario has started changing in Bangladesh as in recent years export is being expanded to other higher-end apparel items like suits/blazers, lingerie, active-wear and outerwear, and non-cotton items. The country is also exporting denim of basic, mid and high-end segments to all major markets. Renowned buyers of high-end products are already placing higher volume of orders in Bangladesh. Now Hugo Boss, Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, Adidas, Puma, G-Star, Diesel, Ralph Lauren, DKNY, Mango, Calvin Klein, and Benetton have increased their presence and sourcing from Bangladesh.

Share of high-end apparel products in the present exports volume is still insignificant. But there is an ample opportunity for Bangladesh to work on to tap the potentials. Experts suggest that participation in the renowned and effective overseas expositions will help manufacturers to gain knowledge about high-end products. Besides, research for diversification of the products is needed to understand market demand and trends. They opine that it is high time Bangladesh take the issue of production diversification into consideration and accordingly devise strategies to make use of the opportunities in this area.
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The best way to improve the present condition of underprivileged people is to provide them with employment. The RMG sector has been taking care of that since the last two decades through high employment opportunities, currently employing around 4.4 million people among which 80% are women. But what can be done to secure their future? Well apart from high-level policies which takes years to implement, the best possible way is to educate these workers' children so that they can stand on their own feet and later take better care of their parents. Keeping that in mind BGMEA has been running five free schools for the children of the garment workers at its own finance in Dhaka and Chittagong since 1994.

The first school which was initiated in 1994 is situated in Malibagh Dhaka. There are three other schools in Dhaka and its outskirts, located in Mirpur, Ashulia and Gazipur. One of the schools are located in Chittagong, the port city of Bangladesh and the second biggest apparel-making hub after Dhaka in Bangladesh. These schools provide primary education from Class I to Class V and have around 650 students in total in the five branches. Though it provides only primary education, but this works as a trigger point of initiating education for the children of the RMG workers, as often poor people avoid enrolling their children in schools for...
the best way to improve the present condition of underprivileged people is to provide them with employment. The RMG sector has been taking care of that since the last two decades through high employment opportunities, currently employing around 4.4 million people among which 80% are women. But what can be done to secure their future? Well apart from high-level policies which take years to implement, the best possible way is to educate these workers’ children so that they can stand on their own feet and later take better care of their parents. Keeping that in mind BGMEA has been running five free schools for the children of the garment workers at its own finance in Dhaka and Chittagong since 1994.

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VERTEX GROUP: A TRUSTED NAME IN APPAREL INDUSTRY

By Omar Glas

Vertex Group is one of the leading enterprises in Bangladesh, which has been in apparel business for more than two decades. Vertex stepped into RGM manufacturing in 1992 on a small scale with only 6 production lines. With years of hard work and dedication the Group expanded both vertically and horizontally to presently have apparel productions units comprising of –Vertex Wear Ltd, Dress World Ltd, and Neo Fashion Ltd -- with annual capacity of 14 million pieces of shirts. Today Vertex Group is a trusted name to world-famous brands and buyers, including H&M, C&A, Inditex, LIDL, Tesco, G-Star, Esprit, EL Corte Ingles, Carrefour, JCPenny, and Asda to name a few.
Understanding its commitment to customers and acting accordingly is a key behind the success of the Group. “We have achieved sustainability in terms of business relationship with reputed customers due to our adherence to the commitments to them. We are fully aware what commitments we make and know very well how to keep them,” explains Md. Osman Ghani Talukder, Managing Director of the Vertex Group. “Our reputation is based on the reliability and customer satisfaction that has always been a strength of our company,” he adds. Vertex Group places utmost importance to strong team work to achieve goals of the company. “We have always been sincere in making appropriate investments in HR and other resources to build a balanced team which can make concerted efforts in a planned and determined way to drive the company forward,” says the Vertex Group Managing Director. Adoption of customer-centric strategies to be fitted with operation is another strength that has helped Vertex to come to the position as it is today. Besides, the company has established a dynamic and fair price model for its business.

To bring dynamism in the factory activities Vertex Group follows the strategy of placing right persons in right places. “We have a talented workforce who are committed to the company. We always give importance to continuous development of their professional skills. Their talent combined with strong leadership qualities of the top management helps to steer the Vertex Group in the right direction,” says Mr. Talukder.

Vertex Group considers workers as its integral asset, hence is engaged in a number of CSR practices to ensure their welfare. The Group has set up fair price shop to provide workers essential consumer goods at affordable prices. Besides, it provides transport facility, attendance bonus, and leave for education purpose. Giving stipend to the workers’ children who obtains GPA-5 in public examinations is a unique CSR activity of the company. The Vertex Group aspires to go far away on the road to progress and prosper. It has a plan to set up a state-of-art denim bottoms manufacturing and modern laundry plant having capacity of 15 million pieces annually.

Our reputation is based on the reliability and customer satisfaction that has always been a strength of our company.

Md. Osman Ghani Talukder
Managing Director, Vertex Group
“WE ALSO SEE A NEED TO GROW PRODUCTION IN OUR EXISTING SOURCING MARKETS AND WE STAY COMMITTED TO BANGLADESH.”

Helena Helmersson, Head of Production, H&M group, Hong Kong
H&M is one of the biggest buyers for Bangladesh for quite a long time. Recently we have heard about H&M’s sourcing from Ethiopia. What are the future plans of H&M for sourcing from Bangladesh?

We are constantly looking for new sourcing markets because we expand a lot as a company. We also see a need to grow production in our existing sourcing markets and we stay committed to Bangladesh. And we have certain areas of course that we together with the suppliers and other stakeholders have to address to enable that growth for example the security in the factories, competency in the country so in future we can develop the garments.

The RMG industry of Bangladesh has witnessed a lot of safety initiatives since the tragic incident in 2013. What changes have you noticed in terms of safety and working environments?

Yes. I feel the Accord is a collaboration where we can see true progress and I think after securing those factories we should with all other stakeholders and BGMEA make sure that it goes for the whole industry in Bangladesh. And I believe as a supplier that you must make sure that the building where the workers go every day is safe and secured. So I think it’s a collaboration that has given improvements and I think we have to work on that and it needs constant follow up and it has to be one of the most basic requirements and we have to see that is just working in the factories in the future.

There are lot of discussion about living wage in the apparel sector. But manufacturers are often heard to complain that prices of their products are not enough to offer living wage to their workers. What role do you think can brands and buyers can play so that living wage can be ensured for the workers?

For me the living wage is for the workers and it’s a simple human right and that should be the basic requirement and it’s only the workers who know what a living wage is. So I would like to see in near future that management work together within this but also make sure that the workers have a voice so that they can negotiate their own wage and that there are right management systems in the factories to make sure that the workers are getting a fair wage, that they have those methodologies in the factories. This is where we are helping right now to implement in a number of factories where we can also see many benefits. So I do believe that this is a question where we with some experience together with our suppliers also need to be bit vocal about what are the benefits that we are into this. This is not only about higher prices and higher costs, this can also deliver better efficiency and productivity.

There is no standards in terms of living wage. For example, the living wage offered in Bangladesh can be nominal wage in Germany. That’s can be issue, what do you think? I think that those who knows if that they can live on that wage or not are mostly the workers that is why the method we use is we do assessments with the workers to see what their wage covers and that should cover their basic requirements. So I really do see that the way forward in this is to make sure that the workers have their voice and there are systems in place for them to be able to negotiate.

You know Bangladesh has already set a target of achieving 50 billion dollar by 2021. It means almost doubling the export volume in a period of 4 years. How much optimistic are you about the target. Is there any plan of H&M increasing its sourcing from Bangladesh?

This depends on how well we collaborate together to improve in certain areas in future and like I said, we see a need to grow production in both new and existing sourcing markets including Bangladesh. But that also comes with certain responsibilities and demands but we are also here to give our hand to help.
TEXMART: A BLENDING OF FASHION AND QUALITY

By Mehnaj Kabir

Texmart is one of the top most home brand of Bangladesh. It has brought brands like Marksman, Occult, Ethnic Evo and many more under one roof. They have a wide range of products which include children’s wear, men’s wear, women’s wear, shoes and various other products.

Texmart is a part of the Giant Group and it has been manufacturing high quality readymade garment for the top brands of Europe and North America since the 1980’s. Later they thought of providing the same export quality of products to their own local market and that’s when Texmart was born. Initially it started with the idea to provide fashionable export quality garments at a reasonable price to the local consumers. Today Texmart offers a
Texmart is one of the top home brands in Bangladesh. They have brought brands like Marksman, Occult, Ethnic Evo and many more under one roof. They have a wide range of products which include children’s wear, men’s wear, women’s wear, shoes and various other products.

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Texmart has a team of young designers who are constantly innovating and working towards enriching the product line. Texmart spends a lot of time researching on trends that people are following worldwide. “We also consider the various seasons, traditional festivities, the weather and the changing lifestyle of the customers” says the chief stylist.

The brand has been accepted from the very beginning and has a loyal customer base and for this they have been able to come this far. Many of the product lines in the store are Indo Western, Ethnic wear which is a market trendsetter. However, apart from the children’s line Texmart attracts younger age group and middle to upper middle-income group who are looking for something trendy yet reasonable.

“When we started there were not many fashion stores that were offering the kind of product that we were offering. So we are lucky in that perspective” - Ms. Tanzila. However, there is a lot of competition in the market today but they are doing well and feel secure about what they are achieving with their current business. The strength of the store is their product line from which they are getting a wide range of customers.

There is still time for Texmart to go international as their main focus is the local market. Nevertheless, they are selling their products to individual customers abroad, mainly NRIs through ecommerce websites. Currently, Texmart has 15 outlets all in main areas of the city. As the economy grows, the purchasing capacity of the consumers grows as well. In the coming 5 years, they wish to be a major brand retailer with over 50 stores nationwide. They have a lot more to achieve and create a positive impact on the industry says Tanzila Shirin.
EU DELEGATION UPBEAT ABOUT BD GARMENT INDUSTRY

The European Union is the single largest market for Bangladeshi RMG products thanks to the duty-free trade privileges granted by the EU under its Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP). EU imports from Bangladesh are dominated by RMG, accounting for over 90% of the EU’s total imports from Bangladesh. The EU is a valued development partner which has been extending cooperation and support especially for the betterment of the apparel industry.

The Government of Bangladesh, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Union and the United States engaged in a joint initiative known as “Sustainability Compact”. A delegation of the European Parliament’s Committee on International Trade (INTA) came to Bangladesh in November 2016 to evaluate progress in the implementation of the “Sustainability Compact” that aims to promote labour rights in the country’s export-driven garment industry.

The delegation of the European Parliament was led by Bernd Lange, Chair of the Committee on International Trade. Jean Lambert, Chair of the delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia, Aengs Jongerius, Hannu Takkula, Adam Szejnfeld and Boleslaw Piecha are the other members of the delegation. Between 14-18 November, the INTA delegation visited factories and held meeting with Bangladeshi Ministers, trade unions, businesses and civil society organisations to assess progress and identify remaining challenges.

The EU delegation also held a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). They had discussion on different issues pertaining to the RMG industry. Their discussion highlighted issues like workplace safety, workers’ rights, and responsibilities across different stakeholders of the supply chain including governments, market access, etc.

In the meeting BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman appraised the EU delegation of the progress made by Bangladesh in safety and remediation in the RMG industry. He said that over the last three and half years Bangladesh’s ready-made garment (RMG) industry has undergone a remarkable change in terms of safety compliance. Building, fire and electrical safety inspections in over 3700 factories have been completed under three initiatives -- Accord, Alliance and National Action Plan. Accord and Alliance have already completed inspection of their listed factories. As they have reported, 70% of the findings in the Accord affiliated factories and 63% of the findings in Alliance factories have already been fixed, he added.

The BGMEA President also mentioned that a notable change in mindset of the entrepreneurs regarding safety compliance has taken place. Both employers and workers are now more aware about the importance of workplace safety than ever before. The industry’s green initiative was discussed in the meeting. Garment factories are adopting green practices and eco-friendly technologies to meet a growing global demand for green products.

To date a total of 67 garment factories in Bangladesh have achieved LEED certifications from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) of which 13 are Platinum rated and 20 are Gold rated. Moreover, as many as around 280 more garment factories have already been registered with the USGBC. The EU delegation expressed their satisfaction with the achievements the industry has made. They also reiterated the EU’s support for the development of Bangladesh’s RMG industry.

Former BGMEA Presidents Md. Shafiul Islam and Md. Atiqul Islam, BGMEA Senior Vice President Faruque Hassan, Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Vice President (Finance) Mohammed Nasir, Vice President Mahmud Hasan Khan (Babu) and BGMEA Directors also took part in the meeting.

By Apparel Story Desk
STEP UP TO ADDRESS PRODUCTIVITY & CSR IN RMG

The RMG sector is a dynamic growth engine for Bangladesh. The enhancement of productivity in factories is one of the ways to reach the target of raising the export volume to 50 billion dollars in 2021, set by Bangladeshi apparel makers. Bangladesh has come a long way till now due to the development of RMG sector. It has a contribution of 28.09 billion (FY 2015-16) which is 10.42% higher than the previous FY exports. It is expected that this trend of export performance will help RMG sector to reach its goal.

The productivity level of factories is something that should be taken into account. The factories of Bangladesh are going through a low level of efficiency compared to other neighbor countries. Vietnam, for example, is exporting almost the same volume of apparel items but with half of the workforce that Bangladesh has, riding on their skill and productivity.

However, this provides a huge room of opportunities for the development of RMG sector. To stand out in this competition, Bangladesh needs more productive and skilled labors to cover up the fall in the price of apparel. Thus, with the help of local and international organizations Bangladesh is trying to increase the productivity in the RMG sector.

With that in mind, BGMEA has partnered with its friends from Denmark to build capacity in Bangladeshi factories to increase productivity and improve CSR. The Danish textile and fashion employer associations – Dansk Fashion & Textile (Lead), Danish Chamber of Commerce / WEAR and Danish Fashion Institute – have merged forces with the employers’ association Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to run the project Step Up – Responsible Production as a Business Driver. The local CSR expert, the CSR Centre will partner as an advisor to the Step Up project in Bangladesh.

The project is financed by Danish development agency, DANIDA. Under the direct supervision of ‘Danish Fashion & Textiles’ and with the help of DANIDA, BGMEA has undertaken this project that will be effective throughout 30 months. The team led by Ms. Sofie Pedersen, Step Up Project Manager at Dansk Fashion and Textile, took responsibility to implement the project Step Up in the coming months.

The garments industry has experienced fall in prices. At the same time, the manufacturing cost is on the rise. Competitive capabilities are hurt due to the strong stance of BDT and the fall in the price of EURO/Pound Sterling. Hence, improving productivity is the only way to minimize manufacturing cost and maintain competitiveness in the international market. On the other hand, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is also a great factor in today’s world. Through CSR activities Bangladesh will be able to achieve this target faster as no country can move forward leaving its society backward.

The Step Up Project will serve to increase the productivity of our factories and with the effective promotion of Industrial Engineering, improve the productive capacity of those factories. Training, demonstrations and business cases will serve the project to achieve its goals. This project enhances the efficiency in the industrial facilities and in the meantime social and environmental difficulties are tackled.

Through a key approach blending profitability upgrades and CSR, the Step Up Project creates action strategies and underpins execution of management system, along these lines reinforcing the organizations and bettering the primary concern.

By Sameya Karim
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Digital textile printing currently occupies only 5% of the world’s total textile printing market. But the technology is showing the growth which has been unprecedented in recent textile history. The reason behind the increased adoption of the digital printing by the textile and knit manufacturers is that although digital printing is a bit expensive, it is still profitable it enables easy and quick design and product development, eliminates the uncertainties at the beginning of sample approval process and thus shortens the lead time.

“To meet the export target of $50 billion by 2021, the ready-made-garment sector of Bangladesh needs lot of workers efficiency and value-added...
The readymade-garment sector of Bangladesh needs lot of workers efficiency and value-added products. By digital printing we can add value to our products,” said Md. Atiqul Islam, former President of BGMEA.

The maiden printing studio of Dhaival Color Chem (DCC) Print Vision LLP, which conforms international standard, has been set up in Dhaka with a vision to reinforce the capacity of Bangladesh textile printing industry.

A number of garments industry owners, textile industry leaders including BGMEA, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and Federation, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, diplomats from different countries in Bangladesh, leading buying houses and experts on textile printing from home and abroad participated at the launching and discussion.

During the panel discussion all speakers opined that the inauguration of DCC in Bangladesh will set up a milestone in textile printing industries.

DCC Print Vision LLP is one of the most trusted names in the textile printing industry with a wide distributing network having 40 years of proven experience in this sector with one stop solution in Asian countries. Through the achievement of rapid expansion, DCC group is striving forward by transforming Bangladesh textile printing market for the digital age. DCC brings one stop printing service solution in Dhaka with the capacity building and after sales service that will be absolutely free, said Dhaval Dadia, the Managing Director of the DCC.

Representing the young generation of business leaders, Mr. Dhaval is looking to strengthen the DCC brand globally by adopting new age technology and business models. “Due to continuous request of Bangladesh textile industries DCC has decided to launch their operation in Bangladesh which includes the international standard printing studio”, said the Managing Director of DCC.

It’s true that digital printing will never able to replace the traditional printing. Because volume customers will always seek volume textile printers often forsaking the quality. But to cater to the niche markets and higher brand, there is no alternative to go for digital textile printing. The establishment of DCC Studio in Dhaka will compliment the efforts of Bangladeshi apparel manufacturers to penetrate the niche markets.
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ARCHITECTURAL SPLENDORS
Bangladesh is considerably rich in archaeological wealth having many architectural monuments dating back thousands of years. The ancient structures are still standing declaring a glorious past of rich cultural heritage of the country. Ancient society is beautifully engraved in the walls with terracotta, giving it a form of a living history of their time. These historical structures have aesthetic appeal to the visitors who are inquisitive and lover of grandeur.
Shahid Zakirul Hoque Chowdhury is a Teacher by profession and a Freelance Photographer by passion.
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- Thermal & Barcode Labels
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Sustainable Energy Supply: A PREREQUISITE FOR STEADY RMG GROWTH

By Mohammad Monower Hossain

It is an established fact that a country with strong industrial base have shown more economic growth. Countries like America and Japan have reached the peak of development riding on the back of industries. Industrialization plays an important role in improving various socio-economic conditions in a country mainly through employment creation and foreign exchange earnings. Besides, industrialization lead to higher national income which, in turn, contributes to increase in per capital income, thus improving living standard of people.

Bangladesh has also attached importance to industrialization to spur its economic growth. The country is now on the transitional phase of development, moving from agrarian to manufacturing-based economy. Contribution of industry to GDP is increasing. As per Bangladesh Economic Review, the GDP growth picked up around half percentage point to 7.11 percent in FY 2015-16 from 6.55 percent in FY2014-15 and the growth was underpinned by robust performance in industry. In FY 2015-16, the share of agriculture, industry and service sectors stood at 15.35 percent, 31.54 percent and 53.12 percent respectively.
The government of Bangladesh has set a planned target ‘Vision 2021’ to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021. Strong and steady industrial growth is required to materialize the Vision.

In Bangladesh, the ready-made garment (RMG) sector is the flagship industry, with more than 80 percent of share in the country’s total export earnings. The apparel sector has been making substantial contribution to the socio-economic development in Bangladesh through employment generation, poverty alleviation and women empowerment. As part of the government action plans to materialize the Vison 2021, the government has set an export target of US$ 60 billion exports, of which around US$ 50 billion is expected to come from the apparel industry.

The RMG industry of Bangladesh has huge opportunities of growth. Energy is an absolute prerequisite to tap the potentials because more development requires more energy. Natural gas is still the main source of primary energy, accounting for around 75.4% of the total primary energy consumption in Bangladesh in 2014-15. (BP Statistical Review of World Energy). But the reserve of natural gas is limited and depleting gradually. According to Petrobangla, the remaining reserve of gas in the country at present is about 15 TCF. In the face of increasing gas demand in the country, this reserve would run for about 10 to 12 years, unless new gas fields are discovered. Over the past ten years the country’s gas demand has increased to about 7%. The demand may reach 4023 MMSCFD in 2019. Growth in the RMG sectors is set to increase in coming years as the industry aspires to achieve its target of US$ 50 billion by 2021. This, in turn, will increase the demand for energy in this sector which is already suffering from gas problem. While existing apparel manufacturing units in certain areas are hit by low pressure in gas supply, on the other hand many factories cannot relocate to purpose-made buildings due to complexity regarding gas line transfer permission. It also is creating a significant impediment to new investment in the sector.

In these circumstances, experts suggest short-, medium- and long-term actions to address the energy problem in the garment sector. Setting sector-wise priority in providing gas connection can be a short-term solution to the problem. Here the government can set the priority on the basis of employment generation and value addition capacity of an industry to the economy. Besides, improvement in gas distribution lines is needed to increase the pressure in the existing gas connections. On the other hand, the government must draw a clear plan for energy supply for the industries so that entrepreneurs can take their decision of investment beforehand.

To meet this rapidly increasing demand for primary energy, the country needs to undergo a major change from its existing dependency on domestic natural gas to various sources of energies including LNG, coal and renewable energy. Getting a more economic and sustainable fuel mix for electricity generation is imperative for the country.
Industrial sector is playing a vital role in the development of Bangladesh. The contribution of industry to the GDP is around 28%, which is on the rise. About 81% of total export earnings come from the ready-made garment industry. There was a demand for a specialized police force to maintain law and order and ensure security in the industrial areas. “Industrial Police” started its journey in Bangladesh on 31 October 2010. Abdus Salam, ppm, Director General of the Industrial Police in an exclusive interview with the Apparel Story shared his experience and views on different aspects of the Industrial Police, including importance of the specialized law enforcing unit and ways of enhancing their professional efficiency.
Our police personnel are always on duty to provide safety and security in the industrial areas and also in workers’ residential areas.

What’s the purpose of establishing Industrial Police?
Industrialization is crucial for fostering development of a country while keeping pace with the today’s world of free-market economy. It is very difficult to accelerate economic growth in our country without development of industries which play a vital role in boosting export earnings and creating employment for thousands of people. It is really encouraging to see that industries are being developed in Bangladesh and contribution of the sector to our national economy is on the rise. To maintain order and ensure congenial atmosphere in huge industrial areas of the country is a daunting task. With the development of industry in the country the need for specialized security force with adequate skills and knowledge was felt to perform this challenging task. Against this backdrop, the Honorable Prime Minister announced establishment of the Industrial Police in the Parliament. With the inauguration by Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina the Industrial Police started its formal operation on 31 October 2010.

What are the functions of Industrial Police?
As I mentioned previously, the main function of the Industrial Police is to maintain law and order in the industrial areas. The members of this police force always remain alert and active to no one can plan or carry out criminal or subversive activities to damage peace and congenial atmosphere in the industrial areas. When any dispute arises or attempts are made to create chaotic situation in the areas, our police personnel take legal actions to restore law and order. The Industrial Police perform their task of maintaining law and security in two ways – through detective work and operational activities.

What is the present size of manpower of Industrial Police?
Presently the total size of manpower in the Industrial Police is 2732. The police personnel of different ranks are divided into four units under the Headquarters and performing their responsibilities with diligence. Industrial Police unit 1 is in Dhaka, unit-2 in Gazipur, unit-3 in Chittagong and unit-4 is in Narayanganj.

What are the challenges for Industrial Police?
Creating a peaceful relation between the owners and workers is a challenge which is addressed by the industrial police with professional skills. It is seen that sound industrial relations help avoid disputes created from misunderstanding between the two parties – employers and workers. Our police personnel are always on duty to provide safety and security in the industrial areas and also in workers’ residential areas.

How efficiency and skills of Industrial Police can be enhanced?
Industrial police is not the regular police we see every day on the streets of Dhaka. After joining the Department they are provided with special trainings and have to sign up for courses like Intelligence Aspects of Industrial Police, TOT, Training and Accounting course, International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), Brand Training and many more. Efficiency of the industrial police can be enhanced further by setting up training centers with modern facilities, enhancing their investigation abilities, and increasing units of industrial police, networking and many more.
MOBILE MEANS A LOT FOR APPAREL WORKERS

By Mehnaj Kabir

Gone are the days when mobile phones were considered to be a matter of luxury. This amazing device which once was meant for only connecting people without wire is not just limited to communication purpose. Mobile phones are extensively used by people of all professions, including businessmen, doctors, engineers, service men, jobbers, students and common people in their everyday activities. It is becoming even more indispensable than it is now. While the mobile phones have huge impacts on everybody’s life, this marvelous innovation of modern day has far-reaching effects on the way garment workers live their life in Bangladesh. Mobile phone penetration is significantly high among the garment workers in Bangladesh. Around 86% of the garment workers have mobile phones, reveals a survey conducted by Asian Center for Development titled “Garment Workers in Bangladesh: Social Impact of the Garment Industry 2015”. Use of mobile has brought an uplift in their socio-economic life and at the same time helped them to update themselves with demand of time and technology.

DIGITAL PAYMENT

For a number of factories, the scene of workers queuing up for taking their salaries has become a rare: it kills valuable time of both factories and workers. This traditional method of salary disbursement is being replaced by digital payment. It helps factories to reduce time and hassle of salary disbursement among a huge number of workers and at the same makes the life of workers easier and comfortable.

ACCESS TO BANKING SERVICES

Traditional banking is out of reach for many garment workers either due to their pattern of office hours, their fear to go to banks or their lack of education. To date, Bangladesh financial institutions have offered very limited services to the RMG workers and low income markets, but mobile phone has brought them into the financial system in droves. Mobile financial services provider bKash has launched a mobile wallet enabling the workers to encash and transfer money via text message to both the unbanked and the banked friends and relatives who are miles apart. There are other mobile wallet systems followed like Ucash, Mcash, Rocket etc. in the country.

EASY MONEY TRANSFER

Since mobile phone network has spread to cover almost all rural areas, making big changes to how RMG workers handle their money. Generally apparel workers migrate to rural areas to get employment in the RMG factories. Their families and relatives live in areas far away from their workplaces. Hence prior to launch of mobile banking services, apparel workers find it difficult to send money to their families as there was no convenient modes of money transfer for them. “People like us usually don’t have bank accounts that’s when mobile banking services like Bkash, Rocket etc. come in handy. I send money to my parents every month through Bkash. It’s safe, simple and easy to operate” says Liza Aktar who works in a garment factory on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka.

UPLIFT IN LIFESTYLE

Some garment factories with cooperation from local banks have introduced ATM cards for their workers. This card has given workers the freedom to withdraw money anytime. They can also use them for buying products at superstores, thus avoiding the hassle carrying cash all the time.

SAVING FOR FUTURE

Apparel workers could not think of their future life due to lack of knowledge and availability banking facilities. Hence all the money that get is spent. However, access to banking services makes them interested in saving money to secure future of their children and themselves also.

ENTERTAINMENT

Workers use mobile phones for their entertainment purposes. After day’s work they listen to FM radios for news and songs. While they update themselves with latest happenings of the country through news and songs refresh their mind. “Apart from conducting all my chores through phone, I like taking photos of myself and friends. I also upload them on Facebook,” said Farzana, an apparel worker. “A simple mobile phone brings the world within our reach,” she added.
Gone are the days when mobile phones were considered to be a matter of luxury. This amazing device which once was meant for only connecting people without wire is not just limited to communication purpose. Mobile phones are extensively used by people of all professions, including businessmen, doctors, engineers, service man, jobbers, students and common people in their everyday activities. It is becoming even more indispensable than it is now. While the mobile phones have huge impacts on everybody’s life, this marvelous innovation of modern day has far-reaching effects on the way garment workers live their life in Bangladesh.

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Bangladesh is well known as the second largest apparel exporter in the world. The country is also an emerging player in international denim market. The growing demand of denim globally has created new opportunities for the country. Besides, capacity of Bangladeshi manufacturers in quality denim production has been increased to a considerable extent. Showcasing Bangladesh’s strengths in denim production in the international market is essential because it will help global buyers to come across Bangladeshi manufacturers’ expertise in quality denim production.

Denim expositions are held in different parts of the world. Some of the fairs which are important from the perspective of denim industry are as follows...
Bangladesh Denim Expo

Bangladesh Denim Expo is a perfect platform for manufacturers and buyers of denim to derive maximum business benefits through direct trade interactions. Starting its journey in 2014 the show has proved has already proved its mettle among the denim community at home and abroad. So far four editions of the Bangladesh Denim Expo have been organized, each show attracting more number of denim makers and lovers from different countries. Two editions are held annually. The next edition of Bangladesh Denim Expo will be held on 17 and 18 May 2017 at International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka in Bangladesh. In the last edition of the expo, 100 exhibitors, including readymade garment manufacturers and denim fabric mills from Bangladesh and 17 other countries, displayed their products. About 8000 visitors, including buyers and denim connoisseurs, from across the attended the expo.

Bangladesh Denim Expo
Upcoming Event:
17 and 18 May 2017
Address:
International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka in Bangladesh
Website: www.bangladeshdenimexpo.com

Denim Premiere Vision

Since its creation in 2007, Denim Premiere Vision has affirmed itself as a driving force for the international denim community. Each season for the last 10 years, the show has reinvented itself to better meet the needs of a demanding and versatile industry, and the expectations of brands and of consumers in the constant quest for what’s exclusive and inspiring.

Upcoming Shows
DATE
APRIL 26 & 27, 2017
LOCATION
Paris Event Center
20 avenue de la porte de la Villette
75019 Paris, France
T: +33 (0)4 72 60 65 00
exhibitors@denimpremierevision.com
Website: denimpremierevision.com
**Munich Fabric Start**

The Munich Fabric Start is an international fabric trade fair, which takes place right on time for the start of the season semi-annually in Munich, in the MOC event center and the Zenith hall. The fair has its origins in the representative exhibition "Stoff München". The portfolio ranges from women-, men- and childrenswear to denim-, street- and sportswear. By now, the exhibition includes eight different areas, which makes the division into two exhibition venues necessary: Collections - fabric collections from basic to haute couture, Additionals - accessories and trimmings for the fashion industry, Bluezone - denim, street and sportswear, Showrooms - full packaging solutions, Asia Salon - Asian suppliers, Design Studios - fashion prints and patterns, Organic Selection - sustainable fabrics and accessories. This fair is a compressed exhibition by leading exhibitors from around the world. Here colors, patterns, prints, materials and accessories of the coming season are shown. Over 950 suppliers from 35 countries take part in the expo where textiles and accessories for all relevant apparel categories are displayed. Around 19,500 international visitors attend the expo with eight distinct exhibition spaces across five halls, spread over two adjacent locations.

**Upcoming Munich Fabric Start Shows**

**DATE**
April 19 – 20, 2017

**LOCATION**
Westergasfabriek
Gashouder Building
Klöneplein 1
1014 DD Amsterdam
The Netherlands

**For General Inquiries & Booth Sales**
Vivian Wang
Managing Director
Email: vivian@munichfabricstart.com
Website: www.munichfabricstart.com

**Kingpins**

Kingpins started out in 2004 as a tiny denim supply chain show in New York for like-minded members of the denim tribe. The show gradually earned fame in the global denim community. You can now find Kingpins shows in New York, Amsterdam and Hong Kong. The show is invitation-only and its exhibitor list is a highly-edited selection of vendors that include denim and sportswear fabric mills from the U.S., Japan, China, India, Morocco, Mexico and Europe, wash houses, full package manufacturers, trim providers and business solutions.

**Upcoming Kingpins Shows**

**DATE**
April 19 – 20, 2017

**LOCATION**
Westergasfabriek
Gashouder Building
Klöneplein 1
1014 DD Amsterdam
The Netherlands

**For General Inquiries & Booth Sales**
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BGMEA Leaders congratulated Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for being elected the President of Bangladesh Awami League for the eighth term. BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman, Vice President S.M. Mannan (Kochi) and Vice President (Finance) Mohammed Nasir greeted the AL President at her residence with a specially designed boat-shaped bouquet yesterday. Newly elected AL Presidium Member Dr. Abdur Razzaque, Finance and Planning Affairs Secretary and former President of BGMEA Tipu Munshi, and AL Publicity and Publication Secretary Dr. Hasan Mahmud were also present on the occasion.

Md. Siddiqur Rahman and Senior Vice President Faruque Hassan are seen with a 12-member delegation of trade union leaders from Germany headed by Stefanie Nutzenberger, Member of the Federal Executive, Verdi, who called on BGMEA leaders at BGMEA office. They had a discussion on different issues related to the RMG industry of Bangladesh, including achievements in ensuring workplace safety, planning of health insurance and social welfare activities of BGMEA for the garment workers.

BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman attended a workshop on ‘Reducing Water & Recovering Heat’ which was organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to disseminate expert knowledge on how to reduce water and recover heat in production process in the clothing industry.
State Minister for Labour and Employment Mujibul Haque Chunnu, BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman, Canadian High Commissioner H. E. Benoît-Pierre Lararée, and ILO Country Director Srinivas Reddy are seen at the launching of an occupational safety and health (OSH) training program. The training is being delivered by the Bangladesh Employers Federation with the support of the ILO with funding from Canada, the Netherlands and United Kingdom. BGMEA and BKMEA are also supporting the program.

BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman is seen addressing Hungarian businessmen’s in the Hungarian National Trending House drawing their attention on import prospects of RMG and other items from Bangladesh. The BGMEA President was a member of the business delegation who accompanied Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit to Hungary.

BGMEA Vice President (Finance) Mohammed Nasir is seen moderating a panel discussion on “$50 billion by 2021: ‘Innovation’ the business driver” which was held in the fifth edition of the Bangladesh Denim Expo. German Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr. Thomas Prinz, Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh Johan Frisell, former BGMEA Director and Chairman of Tushuka Group Arshad Jamal (Dipu), Country Manager and Dress Director, PVH Bangladesh Najeeb Sayed, and Program Manager, RMG Sector, ILO Tuomo Poutiainen took part as speakers.
BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman addressing a program titled “Contributing to Inclusive Economic Growth in the Textile Sector for Sustainable Development”. German development agency GIZ, the Center on Disability and Development (CDD) and The Daily Star jointly organized the program on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2016 in Dhaka.

BGMEA President Md. Siddiqur Rahman is seen at the press briefing on the International Fire, Safety and Security Expo 2016. Electronics Safety and Security Association (ESSAB) and ELEVATE – organized the expo in Dhaka where 30 exhibitors showcased innovative and high-quality building, fire and, security and electrical safety equipment and services.

H.E. Asfaw Dingamo Kame, Ambassador of Ethiopia to India, paid a courtesy call on First Vice President of BGMEA Moinuddin Ahmed. They exchanged views on the possibilities of mutual cooperation between both countries. BGMEA Directors Md. Ashikur Rahman (Tuhin), Miran Ali, Md. Atiqul Karim Khan and Anwar Kamal Pasha were also present on the occasion.
IFC, VF Corp to help textile sector

International Finance Corporation and VF Corporation are working together to enhance the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of the textile wet processing sector in Bangladesh by reducing excessive groundwater extraction and surface water pollution, energy and chemical use.

The project will be carried out by IFC’s Bangladesh Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT) programme, said IFC in a press release. VF Corporation joins 12 other brands in the PaCT family bringing the total partner brands to 13.

The programme has contributed to water and energy savings of 14.4 billion liters and 1.23 million MWh per year, respectively, reduced GHG emission by 188,000 tonnes carbon-di-oxide equivalent per year and resource saving worth US$10 million annually in 162 partner factories.

“Resource efficiency is a core facet of VF’s Responsible Sourcing programme. Through investments and continuous support from VF, we aim to assist our strategic suppliers in reducing their water, energy, waste, and chemical use, while simultaneously reducing the cost of production,” said Brad van Voorhees, senior manager of Environmental Practices and Sustainable Operations at VF.

IFC Program Manager for PaCT Mohan Seneviratne said, “Water is a key input in the textile sector and large quantities are consumed in the direct operations and supply chain. Current groundwater abstraction rates in Bangladesh are close to their limit and growth projection of $50 billion by 2021 can only be achieved with the development of sustainable water supplies, effluent treatment facilities and resource efficient practices. We welcome VF Corporation joining PaCT to partner with us in this mission”

In Bangladesh, IFC is providing both investment and advisory support and working along with other stakeholders, to help the garments sector become globally competitive and safe for its employees.

As part of this move, PaCT will engage with VF Corporation’s supplier factories in three ways- awareness building, basic cleaner production (CP) assessment and in-depth CP assessment. Major activities will include factory-level advice on basic CP measures, technical assessment of resource efficient textile processing, facilitating implementation through user groups, strengthening corporate water and energy management systems, and investment facilitation in technologies with significant water sustainability benefits.

Multi-billion-dollar Chinese investment to boost economy

Business leaders said the multi-billion-dollar Chinese investments pledged by a number of China companies during the visit of Chinese president Xi Jinping would put a significant positive impact on the Bangladesh’s economy.

They said once the pledged funds are injected into the economy of Bangladesh, the existing trade gap between the two Asian countries would be narrowed and huge employment opportunities would be created.

On the first day of the two-day Dhaka visit of the Chinese president, 13 Chinese companies signed investment agreements involving $13.60 billion with 13 Bangladeshi companies in the area of infrastructure, construction, power and information technology sectors. Of the 13 Bangladeshi companies, 11 are private sector companies and the rest two state-owned firms.

Seven other Chinese firms inked investment and import agreements worth $186 million with 13 Bangladeshi companies. Businessmen are very much optimistic that the agreements of Chinese companies with the private sector companies in Bangladesh would be a landmark for trade and investment. They think this is an opportunity for Bangladesh and if Bangladesh can negotiate properly to implement the agreements, huge employment scope will be created and the existing trade gap between the two countries would be narrowed.
BD RMG accessories vibrant in the globe

Bangladesh’s readymade garment (RMG) accessories sector is now having a sound growth in the globe for its competitive price and standard, industry insiders said.

They also said local companies have attracted the international buyers by spirited price, maintenance of global standards and improvement of workplace environment to import garment accessories from Bangladesh. “For better quality and competitive price many buyers are shifting to Bangladesh from China, India and other countries; so demand for local garment accessories is growing in the international market,” the President of Bangladesh Garments Accessories and Packaging Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGAPMEA) said.

He said, “If we can continue the existing growth, the Bangladeshi RMG accessories export will be worth US$ 12 billion by 2018.” The sector is showing a 10-15 per cent growth year-on-year basis for last ten years. Local businesses fetched export worth US $ 3.5 billion in the last financial year (FY’16) 25 percent growth compared to that of FY’15.

However, the BGAPMEA has set a target of exporting apparel accessories and packaging products worth US$4 billion billion in FY’17. The plastic accessories manufactured locally are corrugated cartons, poly bags, buttons, zippers, and labels etc. which are an integral part of RMG export.

The products manufactured in Bangladesh include several types of extrusion materials, PVC pipes, shopping bags, moulding products, garment bags, woven bags, PET/PE bottles, laminated packages, rigid sheets, household products, cosmetics, medicine packs etc. The destinations of Bangladeshi products are EU, US, Latin America, Middle-East, China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and many other countries.

RMG exports to Russia, China soar in Q1

Country’s apparel-export earnings from Russia, China and Chile registered a colossal growth in the first quarter of the current financial year of 2016-17 while the earnings from most of the non-traditional markets including India, Turkey, Brazil and Australia suffered a negative growth in the period.

Readymade garment export to Russia in the July-September period of FY17 registered a whopping 61.67 percent growth to hit $49.10 million from $30.37 million in the same period of FY16, according to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data.

Apparel export to China in the first quarter of FY17 grew by 42.35 per cent to $82.71 million from $58.10 million in the same period of FY16.

To Chile, RMG export in the July-September period of FY17 grew by $38.84 per cent to $13.79 million from $9.93 million in the same period of FY16, the EPB data showed.

Exporters said that RMG export to Russia registered an encouraging growth as the country reduced its import from Turkey due to political and other reasons and Bangladeshi suppliers were gaining the market share.

They also said that China’s shifting from the production of basic garments to high-end products was the reason for the strong growth in Bangladeshi RMG export to China while the export to Chile witnessed a robust growth due to duty-free market access.

According to the EPB data, RMG export to Brazil fell by 56.11 percent to $17.67 million in the July-September period of FY17 while the export to South Africa decreased by 24.46 percent to $15.80 million.

RMG export earnings from Australia in the first quarter of FY17 declined by 12.30 percent to $142.81 million while the earnings from Turkey fell by 10.63 percent to $102.44 million.

RMG export to India in the July-September period of FY17 fell by 2.04 per cent to $26.41 million from $ 37.17 million in the same period of FY16, the data showed.
Bangladesh’s success in women’s contribution to economy lauded

The Asian Forum of Parliament on Population and Development (AFPPD) has lauded Bangladesh for its outstanding success in the field of women’s contribution to the country’s economic development.

The appreciation came at the 11th women ministers and members of parliament conference held in Thailand. National legislative assembly of Thailand organised the two-day long conference. A total of 60 ministers and members of parliament from 28 Asian and Asia Pacific countries took part in the conference. A Bangladeshi delegation comprised of Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Finance Forhad Hossain, MP and Advocate Umme Kulsum MP, from the Gaibandha constituency.

Mika Marumoto, AFPPD Executive Director and Prof. Keizo Takeni, AFPPD Chairperson, also took part at the conference.

Jetn Sirathranont, secretary general of AFPPD said that 60 percent women of the world are living in the Asia and Asia Pacific countries. At the same time, 70 percent of total poor people are living in this region whose per capita income is less than $1.25. “Progress of the world’s economy depends on the development of women in these regions. Bangladesh and some other Asian countries are doing well in terms of the economic development of women”, she said. Forhad Hossain said, “We have presented the initiatives of the Bangladesh government for increasing women participation in socio, economic and political arena. Evaluating the progress of women of different countries, the conference praised Bangladesh for its tremendous development”.

Forhad Hossain also said that Bangladesh has reserved 20 percent seats for women in the National Parliament. Excluding the quota, women are also being elected directly as Members of Parliament. According to the research of the Center for Polity Dialogue (CPD), the participation of women in jobs, trade and business is increasing gradually. Women’s participation in the total workforce was 15.8 percent in 1995-1996 which stood at 39.1 percent in 2011-12.

The number of women government employees was less than one percent during the 80’s which now stands at 10-15 percent. A research of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) cited that the number of women workforce excluding household work was 1.13 crore in 2006 which stood at 1.62 crore in 2010.

Women are involved in the export earning sectors like RMG, frozen foods, leather, handicrafts and tea. 80 percent out of 40 lakh garment workers are women. Forhad Hossain said that women of Bangladesh are moving forward fast and doing good in empowering women. The government is conducting multi-modal tasks for ensuring adequate security and proper workplace for women.
### BANGLADESH’S RMG EXPORTS TO WORLD, FY 2015-16 & 2016-17

#### Value in Million US$

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**Total:** 13064.61

Source: EPB & compiled by RDTI Cell, BGMEA
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আপনি কি জানেন, স্টিম আয়রনে জি-ট্রাপ সংযোজন করে ৪০% পর্যন্ত স্টিম সাশ্রয় করা সম্ভব।

* ৫০টি স্টিম আয়রনে জি-ট্রাপ সংযোজনের মাধ্যমে বার্ষিক প্রায় ৬,২৪,০০০ বেজি স্টিম সাশ্রয় করা যায়।
* এতে এককালীন প্রচন্ড হয় মাত্র ৩.৬ লক্ষ টাকা, কিন্তু এর বছর প্রায় ৪.৪ লক্ষ টাকা সাশ্রয় হয়।
* অর্থ মাত্র ১০ মাসেই বিনির্মাণ অর্থ ফেরত পাওয়া যায়।
* ভুত তাই নয় এর মাধ্যমে বার্ষিক ১৫০ টন কার্বন নিষেধ করা যায়।

আপনার ছোট একটি পদক্ষেপ আপনার ব্যবসায় টেকসই প্রসার নিচ্ছিল করে।

trees Toward Resource Efficiency & Environmental Sustainability. An initiative of BGMEA.
### Flight Schedule

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