

The Apparel Story

গ্যাপারেল স্টোরি

March-April 2023

LDC GRADUATION

*Turning
challenges into
opportunity*



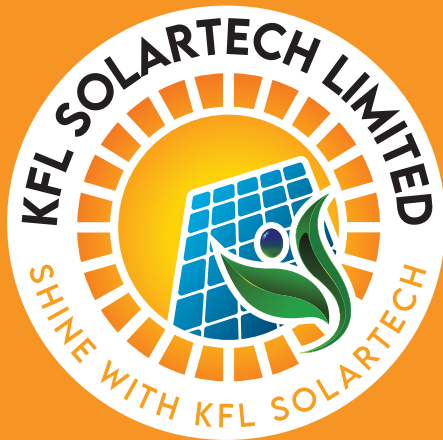
BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (BGMEA)

বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানীকারক সমিতি

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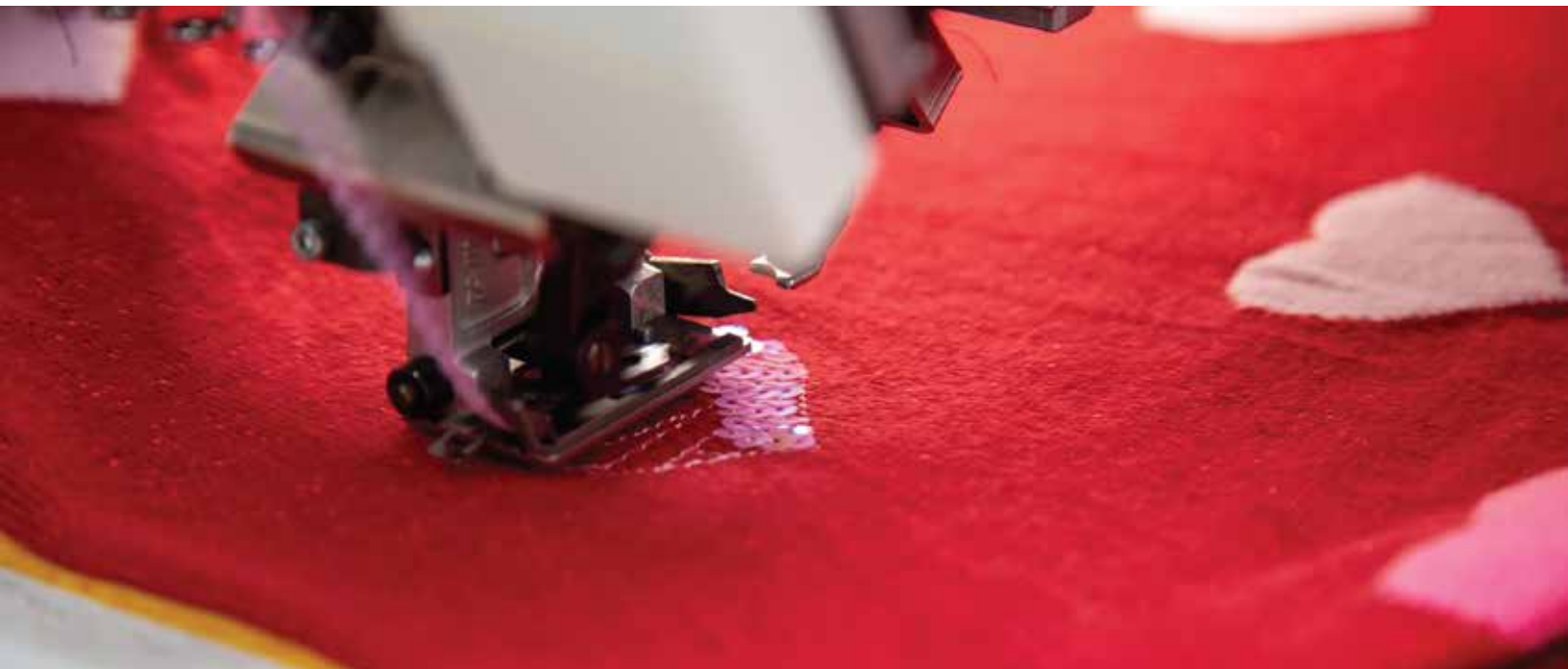
Bangladesh, a young country born just a little over 50 years ago, is viewed as a development success story and applauded for its economic triumph achieved in such a short period defying various mountainous odds. Once was labelled as a country of poverty and natural disaster, Bangladesh is now on the cusp of economic expansion with steady strides towards development. The stellar economic rise of Bangladesh makes us not only proud and happy but also more optimistic about our country. Bangladesh's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category is a key milestone its development progress and a historic achievement. However, LDC graduation will bring opportunities while posing new challenges for Bangladesh, especially in terms of changes in tariff regime. With the graduation, international support measures associated with LDC status will phase out and present challenges for Bangladesh in its efforts to continue the development momentum.

Bangladesh's readymade garment exports had immensely benefited from LDC-specific trade preferences under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme. The trade support measures in terms of preferential market access has contributed significantly to boosting exports to the European Union. The growth of the RMG industry has significant contribution to socioeconomic development of Bangladesh, especially poverty alleviation through employment creation and empowerment of women who make up the 60% of the total RMG workforce. Hence, the loss of preferential market access in terms of tariff margin and rules of origin will have major implications on the export sector of Bangladesh including the RMG sector.

Given the challenges ahead of us, we have to prepare for a smooth transition so that our development journey continues in the post-LDC era. We have to focus on diversification of the economy, technological upgradation, and skill development. The RMG industry is already giving high priority to transition from basic to high-value products, especially those made from manmade fibre and technical textiles in order to pursue higher growth vision. Alongside, we are also giving emphasis on upgrading technology and improving productivity in the industry and also skilling, re-skilling and upskilling of the workforce.

We have to make well-panned and concerted efforts to prepare for smooth graduation so that Bangladesh's economic growth can be sustained after LDC graduation and translated into development of the country.

The Editorial Board
The Apparel Story





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The Apparel Story



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Bangladesh

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70
PLATINUM



113
GOLD



10
SILVER



BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (BGMEA)

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LDC Graduation Turning Challenges into Opportunity

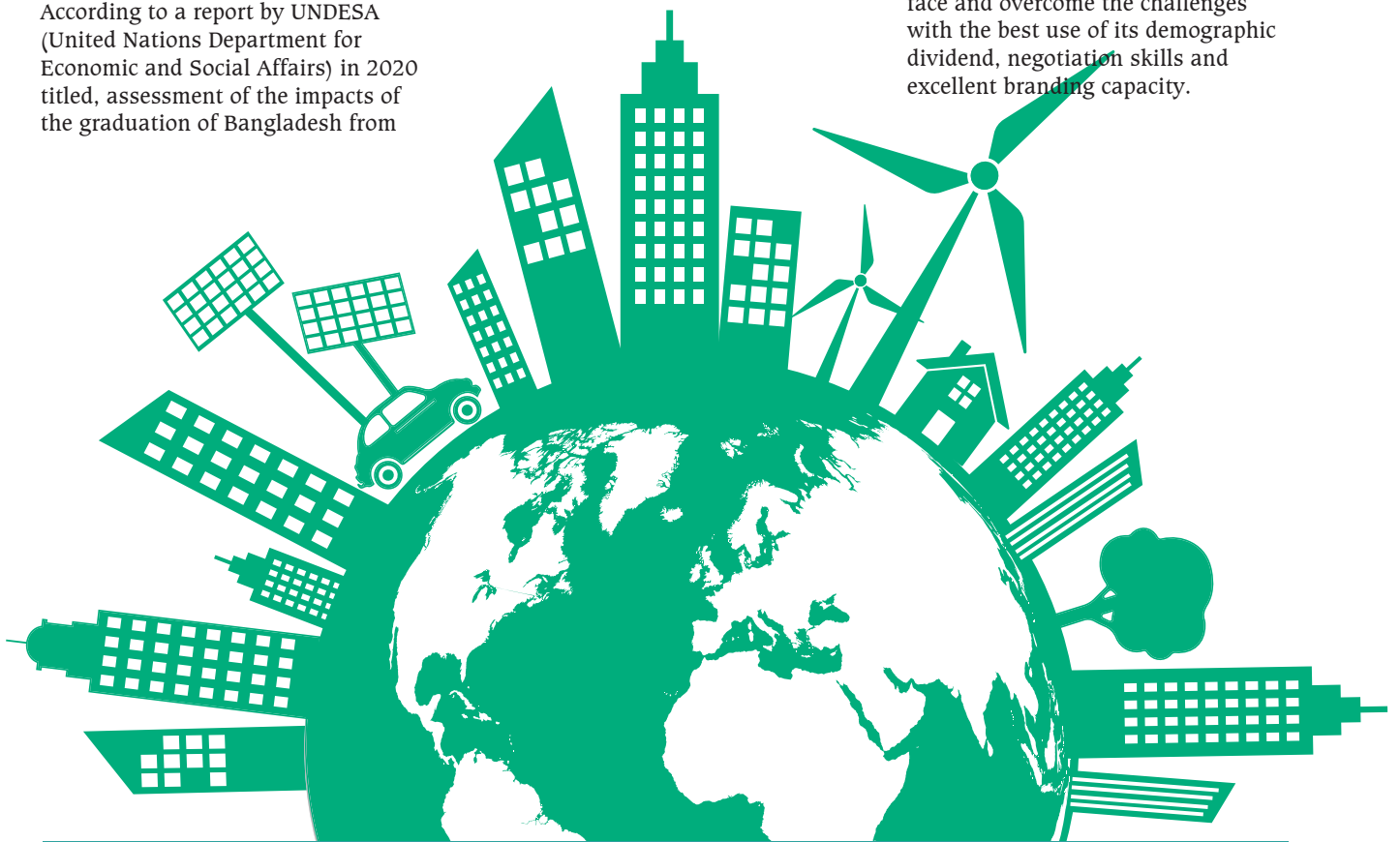
In the year 2021, when Bangladesh celebrated 50 years of its independence, the same year also came bearing the news that United Nations Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP) has recommended Bangladesh to graduate from least developed country to middle income country. Bangladesh's transition will be effective in 2026 and we have only a few years in our hand to deal with the challenges of transitioning and sustain the momentum it has achieved in the last few decades.

Bangladesh's Graduation from LDC and possible consequences:

According to a report by UNDESA (United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs) in 2020 titled, assessment of the impacts of the graduation of Bangladesh from

the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs); some of the major changes that Bangladesh will face includes: Loss of DFQF and LDC specific rules of origin, Withdrawal of LDC specific special and differential treatment under WTO agreements, Contributions to UN system and travel supports. Bangladesh will lose access to LDC-specific duty-free quota-free schemes and LDC-specific preferential rules of origin and this may significantly impact on the business of RMG industry in the EU, Canada, Japan and other markets. In the WTO, Bangladesh will lose

certain facilities related to dispute settlement, different priority trainings and capacity building opportunities. Bangladesh will have to pay higher contributions to the United Nations system with no financial support for travel to attend meetings organized by the UN or its bodies abroad. Bangladesh will also lose access to the LDC fund constituted under UNFCC (United Nations Framework on Climate Change) to mitigate the effect of climate change after the smooth transition period. So, we can assume that, RMG industry is among the vulnerable sectors in terms of LDC graduation, unless Bangladesh prepares itself to face and overcome the challenges with the best use of its demographic dividend, negotiation skills and excellent branding capacity.



Possible consequences in RMG Industry after LDC Graduation:

Export markets to be affected: The loss of preferential market access in terms of tariff margin and rules of origin will be the main challenge for Bangladesh after graduation.

According to the Least Development Country Report 2016, the total export will be reduced by 5.5% to 7.5% which amounts to two billion dollars. To be mentioned here, RMG contributes to 83% of Bangladesh's total foreign earning; where 73% of our export enjoys duty free benefits as LDCs. In the EU itself, RMG sector oriented foreign earnings will face serious challenges with the loss of market access as the EU accounts 61% of our exports under the EBA (Everything but Arms) scheme.

Impact on Competitiveness: Without DFQF Bangladesh will have to pay 9.6% duty under standard GSP. Bangladesh will lose competitive advantage in production and price, moreover the minimum wage in Bangladesh has gone up by 381% in

the last 10 years. Cost of production is continuously increasing, in the last 5 years 7% cost increased. Moreover, in this time of the post-pandemic world, we are experiencing the increase in yarn price; freight and container prices are also increasing. Considering all these issues, loss of market access after LDC graduation will definitely impact on the competitiveness of Bangladesh RMG products in the world apparel market.

Over dependency on selected items: The bitter truth about our export concentration is, 82.40% of our export is limited within 5 basic items which are the top traded items in the world, i.e. \$9.86 billion T-shirt, \$14.51 billion Trousers, \$5.64 billion Sweaters, \$2.77 billion Shirts & Blouses, \$2.34 billion underwear is exported in FY 2021-22. An interesting fact is, price of these products is highly competitive and profit margin is very low. After graduation, adding 8%-10% tariffs on the price would only lead the demand curve of these products downwards. It will impact on the country's overall economy as well as in the earnings of the workers

engaged in apparel production.

Probable impact on Human and Social Development: Over the 40 years journey, this industry achieved extraordinary growth of USD 45 billion export. In terms of workplace safety and sustainability, significant progress has been made and is now considered to be one of the safest apparel manufacturing countries in the world. This sector has made tremendous progress in terms of social and environmental sustainability as well. The contribution of the RMG industry in human and social development is also remarkable. This sector provides the livelihood of 4 million people where more than 60% are women. As the industry grows and creates more employment, there is a positive link with human and social development as early marriage and early motherhood being dropped over the years, primary education enrolment has increased, child and women mortality rate has significantly dropped.

After the LDC graduation, the benefits received by the country will be worn out, it will also take a hit on human and social development.



A delegation led by Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, met with Mr. Steven Collet, Director for Sustainable Economic Development and Ambassador for Business and Development at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Dirk Klaasan, Head of Department of Department of International Trade Policy and Economic Governance, in The Hague.

Apparel Diplomacy : BGMEA's continuous effort towards strengthening multi lateral relationship

Netherlands support sought for extension of transition period

A delegation led Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, met with Mr. Steven Collet, Director for Sustainable Economic Development and Ambassador for Business and Development at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Dirk Klaasan, Head of Department of Department of International Trade Policy and Economic Governance, in the Hague on April 1.

Other members of the delegation were BGMEA President Faruque Hassan, Commerce Secretary of Bangladesh Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands M. Riaz Hamidullah, former President of MCCI Nihad Kabir. The meeting was also attended by Netherlands Ambassador to Bangladesh Anne van Leeuwen. They had discussions about the economic progress made by Bangladesh, its vision for higher growth, challenges, particularly LDC graduation and its possible impacts on the trade competitiveness and the overall economy.

The delegation sought the support of the Netherlands government in continuing Bangladesh's development journey in the post-LDC era, citing that the economic growth momentum is essential to combat climate change impacts on the country, improve further the lives of people in Bangladesh, and empower women more.

They requested the Netherlands government to consider an extension of the transition period of GSP (EBA) to 6 years instead of 3 years, saying that it would contribute to ensuring



The delegation from Bangladesh also met with Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director "Asia and Pacific Department" at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan met with H.E. Mr Joost Korte, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission in Brussels.

smoother graduation. He urged the Dutch government to support the industry with knowledge, technology and funds in becoming more energy and resource efficient, recycling and other environmental areas.

Dutch investment sought in driving sustainability in Bangladesh

The delegation met with Wies van Leeuwen, Business Development

Coordinator, India and Bangladesh at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Joost Oorthuizen, CEO of Invest International at the meeting held in the Hague, Netherlands. The delegation apprised the Dutch government high-ups of Bangladesh's progress in the direction of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while spotlighting potential of investment in sustainability in the country. Speaking at the meeting, BGMEA President Faruque Hassan stated how Bangladesh's garment industry is making continuous strides towards going green, and is already the global leader with the highest number of green factories. He urged the Dutch government to support the industry especially in the areas of environmental sustainability – circular fashion, recycling, energy efficiency. Faruque Hassan also called on the Netherlands government to extend its cooperation in developing knowledge and skills of the students of BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) in textile, apparel, fashion, design and business through collaboration with leading Dutch fashion universities and institutes.

EU support sought for sustainable growth of RMG sector

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan met with H.E. Mr Joost Korte, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission in Brussels on March 30.

The meeting was also attended by Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Commerce Secretary of Bangladesh while Jordi Curell, Director of Labour Mobility at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, and Daniel Klein, International Relations Officer, Unit for International Affairs at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, were also



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan presented a coffee table book on the RMG industry to H. E. Mr. Bernd Lange, Member of European Parliament, and also Chair of European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) in Brussels.



The delegation from Bangladesh also called on Mr. Maximilian Krah, Member of European Parliament, in Brussels.

Bangladesh's transition will be effective in 2026 and we have only a few years in our hand to deal with the challenges of transitioning and sustain the momentum it has achieved in the last few decades.

present. They had discussions various issues including the progress made by Bangladesh on the labour conditions and national action plan and road map to achieve the parameters towards obtaining GSP Plus. The issue of EU's support for smooth transition of Bangladesh's LDC graduation also got due importance in the meeting. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan apprised Joost Korte of the vast progress in Bangladesh's apparel industry, especially in maintaining labour



The delegation paid a visit to Heidi Hautala, Vice-President, European Parliament, in Brussels.

standards and workers' welfare. He also requested for the EU's support for Bangladesh in attaining GSP Plus, especially for apparel sector in getting benefits under the scheme, which would contribute to its sustainable development.

EU support sought for sustainable economic growth of Bangladesh

The support and cooperation of the European Union would remain vital for Bangladesh in its pursuance of sustained economic growth in the post-LDC era. The EU is an indispensable trade and development partner of Bangladesh, and its trade preference under GSP scheme helped Bangladesh to secure big export share in the EU countries, which has contributed a lot in achieving the threshold requirement for LDC

graduation. The continued trade preferences under the EU's GSP would contribute to making the LDC graduation smooth and sustainable. With regard to that, the delegation team met H.E. Helena König, Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues, European External Action Service (EEAS) and Monika Bylaite, Deputy Head of Delegation, South Asia, EEAS, in Brussels on March 30. They discussed issues of mutual interests, especially LDC graduation, its possible implications on Bangladesh's trade and economy and Bangladesh-EU relations in the post-LDC era. The continued trade preference after LDC graduation would help the industry of Bangladesh to pursue its sustainable development vision and prepare for the next phase of development, Faruque Hassan further said.

Bangladesh seeks EU support to continue economic growth momentum

The delegation team also met Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director "Asia and Pacific Department" at the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels on March 30. They discussed further deepening of ties between European Union and Bangladesh, Everything But Arms (EBA), labour welfare and rights and other issues of mutual interests. The delegation apprised Ms. Paola Pampaloni of Bangladesh's impressive achievements in terms of economic performance and huge progress in terms of key socio-economic fronts where industrial sectors, especially the RMG industry, have significant contribution.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said the EU accounts for about 60% of Bangladesh's exports, of them more than 90% are textile and clothing items.

"We thank the European Union for allowing Bangladesh preferential market access to its market that has helped our industry to come to today's position. Given the industry's massive impacts on the lives of millions of people and the economy as a whole, we need to have continued support of the EU, especially in terms of preferential market access for the export sectors including the RMG industry, even after graduation from LDC for sustainable development of Bangladeshes

EU urged to waive textile threshold criteria in GSP+ for Bangladesh

The delegation team met with Bernd Lange, Member of European Parliament, and also Chair of European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA), in Brussels on March 30. They discussed various issues including trade and investment, Everything But Arms (EBA), Bangladesh relations with the EU in the post-LDC era, and other issues of bilateral importance.

They highlighted the importance of specific trade preferences under EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) for the development of Bangladesh.

Expressing thanks to the EU for allowing Bangladesh duty-free access to the European market, BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said the trade preference under EBA facility had helped the country to have considerable RMG export share in the EU.

Since the GSP is very much important for Bangladesh's trade competitiveness, the extension in transition period would help the country to prepare better for the smooth graduation and continue the growth momentum, he added.

Bangladesh will lose access to LDC-specific duty-free quota-free schemes and LDC-specific preferential rules of origin and this may significantly impact on the business of RMG industry in the EU, Canada, Japan and other markets.

In the meeting, the Bangladesh side called on the EU to consider waiving the EU's safeguard textile threshold criteria or redesigning the mechanism for Bangladesh in the proposed GSP scheme for 2024-2034 so that Bangladesh could benefit from GSP Plus after the LDC graduation.

Bangladesh seeks EU's continued support for smooth LDC graduation

The delegation team paid a visit to Heidi Hautala, Vice-President, European Parliament, in Brussels on March 30. tressing the significance of EU's continued support for Bangladesh's smooth LDC graduation, the delegation urged the EU to take the extension of transition period from 3 years to 6 years into consideration.


In the meeting BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said apparel export from Bangladesh had immensely benefited from LDC-specific trade preferences under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme. That is why such trade preference from the EU remains extremely important and relevant for Bangladesh even after LDC graduation so that the country's development journey could sustain, he added. They expressed hope that the EU would consider the issues and would continue support to

Bangladesh so that the momentum behind Bangladesh's economic growth continues after LDC graduation.

Bangladesh delegation urges EU to extend transition period to six years

The delegation called on Mr. Maximilian Krah, Member of European Parliament, in Brussels on March 30. They had discussions about different trade-related issues including challenges of Bangladesh, especially the graduation of the country from the LDC category, its possible implications on the trade competitiveness and the overall economy. In the meeting, Faruque Hassan apprised Mr. Maximilian Krah, MEP of the present situation of the RMG industry including its progress in workplace safety as well as in social and environmental compliances.

Terming the EU a longstanding friend of Bangladesh, BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said the EU has assisted the country to boost its trade especially through granting GSP and also to address various challenges on the way to development.

He expressed hope that the support would continue for Bangladesh in the coming days. 

Rising Seaport Capacity Raises Hope



Matarbari Deep Seaport in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies globally, presently being the 35th largest economy in the world and expected to become the 24th largest by 2036. In its pursuit of achieving this ambitious economic goal, the importance of expanding and modernizing seaports cannot be overstated, because over 90 percent of its international trades take place through these ports. Moreover, Bangladesh has the potential to become a hub of connectivity and trade in the Bay of Bengal region by providing neighbouring countries access to its seaports and facilitating maritime commerce through the bay. By leveraging its unique position in a strategic location, Bangladesh can

earn a significant amount of profit from transit cargo to further boost its economy.

So, in order to cater to the growing demand of local businesses as well as with the aim of turning the country into a regional transshipment hub, the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is implementing a number of projects to modernize and expand the existing seaports and to build a deep-sea port.

For example, terminal depth and infrastructure in and around the existing three ports – Chattogram, Mongla and Payra– are being enhanced significantly so that larger and deeper draft vessels can berth at the ports and congestion can be eased.

Besides, construction work of the country's first deep seaport is going on in full swing at Matarbari in Cox's Bazar district in cooperation with Japan. The port, expected to become operational from 2026, will take a major load off of the Chattogram port.

Bangladesh pins high hope on Matarbari deep seaport because with 18 meters berth depth it will be on par with the Port of Colombo in Sri Lanka or Port of Singapore. As a result, Bangladeshi freight consignments will no longer have to wait at the ports of Singapore, Colombo or Malaysia for transshipment. Moreover, Matarbari Port will be able to compete with Port of Colombo to become a regional transshipment hub.



Construction work of the country's first deep seaport is going on in full swing at Matarbari in Cox's Bazar district in cooperation with Japan. The port, expected to become operational from 2026, will take a major load off of the Chattogram port.

Deeper draft at Chattogram Port

Chattogram Port, considered to be a gateway to the country, has recently witnessed a major leap forward with further deepening of the port channel and berthing depth. Direct container vessels with 10 metres draught and 200 metres length can now berth at the port carrying more goods. Earlier the ships of that size would have to wait at the outer terminal for transporting goods with feeder vessels.

Chattogram Port is one of the busiest ports along the Bay of Bengal coastline and is also among the busiest in the world, ranking 64 in Lloyd's List Intelligence 2022 assessment of 100 ports.

The enhanced capacity will significantly reduce transportation costs and ease congestion at the seaport that handles around 90 percent of Bangladesh's 135 billion annual trades.

Earlier ships with a maximum 9.5-metre draught and up to 190 metres in length could berth at the port's main jetties. Now, thanks to the new draught and length limit, larger vessels are able to berth carrying at least 500 TEUs to 700 TEUs more goods.

As vessels would be able to carry more containers, freight costs would be reduced, which will lead to a

substantial decrease in import and export costs. The turnaround time of vessels would also come down.

To further modernize the country's principal port, a Bay terminal is being built at the port. Under the Bay Terminal project, scheduled to be completed by 2026, three container terminals and 13 jetties are being developed. It will further deepen the berthing depth to 12 meters and allow 24-hour shipment by creating a breakwater that will significantly increase the port's capacity.

Once the Bay Terminal comes into operation, it is expected that the port's container handling capacity will be increased to six million TEUs yearly from the existing 4 million TEUs.

Direct shipping service to Europe opens new horizon

In a major development to cut shipment costs and lead times, Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) launched direct shipping services to numerous routes in Europe with the help of local and foreign shipping companies. The first direct shipping started in February 2022 in the Chattogram-Italy route. So far the same service has also been introduced from Chattogram to ports in France, Spain, the Netherlands,

Turkey, China and the United Kingdom.

Efforts are also underway to launch direct shipping with different ports of the USA, Portugal, Slovenia and the UAE. Introduction of more direct shipping service to European and other long-haul destinations is certainly a milestone for the country's foreign trade.

The service will hugely benefit the country's export-oriented sectors, especially the ready-made garment sector since Europe is their one of the biggest export destinations. Currently, goods-laden vessels en-route to Europe from Chattogram port need to avail transshipment service from different ports in Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia or China, which is both time consuming and costly.

For example, previously it took at least 40-45 days to reach destination countries through transshipment ports. Now frigates from Chattogram Port can reach Europe within 15-20 days. Besides, direct shipment will almost halve the transport cost. Importers, too, can expect to get their goods faster. Overall, enhancement of port services and direct shipment to long-haul routes are significant milestones for Bangladesh and a shot in the arm for export-oriented sectors which are navigating a challenging time. **A**

Bangladesh Readymade Garment Industry:

A Glimpse at a Decade of Transformation

The readymade garment (RMG) industry of Bangladesh is different from what it was a decade ago. In a short span of 10 years, the industry has transformed from a trouble-stricken sector to a global role model for safe workplace and green manufacturing, thanks to unprecedented initiatives involving the government, ILO, brands, buyers, and manufacturers. The transformation brought forth significant positive impact for the industry, helping it to consolidate its position as the world's 2nd largest apparel exporter and become a key driver for Bangladesh's impressive economic growth.

A decade ago in an unprecedented collaboration of brands, manufacturers, ILO, government of Bangladesh and local and global unions two landmark deals were signed in 2013, namely the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. The story of transformation into a safer and more sustainable industry began. Under the safety initiatives, Accord and Alliance inspected all export-oriented garment factories in Bangladesh to identify safety risks, which were fixed by factories. The industry spent millions of dollars largely without any external support to carry out the remediation activities. Besides, inspection and remediation reports of all factories were made publicly accessible through websites, which made the process uniquely transparent and credible. The initiative has radically improved safety standards in thousands of garment factories in Bangladesh. Non-compliant factories were closed.



The industry has come a long way since then. Fire safety measures, electrical lines and foundations of factory buildings have been improved radically. As a result, industrial mishaps, deaths and injuries have dropped dramatically in the sector in the last one decade. Besides, wages have been raised and labour rights have been improved.



Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director, ILO

Tuomo Poutiainen, Country Director, ILO, told The Apparel Story: “The RMG industry has come a long way in the last ten years and continues to expand, diversify, and grow with impressive energy and vigour. Going forwards the industry needs to ensure long-term competitiveness and diversify the product range by incorporating value-added products, new materials and innovative designs. Side by side, continued investments are needed in higher and advanced level skills, given the extent to which automation and technology will drive the growth of the industry going forward. This includes providing training and upskilling opportunities for workers, supervisors, and managers to enhance their technical skills, managerial expertise, and industry knowledge.”



He thinks that the industry also needs to prepare for technology-enabled supply chain solutions, such as real-time tracking systems and digital platforms, that can collectively contribute towards improving transparency, productivity, innovation, and overall competitiveness.

“Maintaining good industrial relations, industrial safety and good working conditions and promoting ethical and sustainable business practices must be maintained and continuously improved. Global competitiveness will continue to need to address expectations on due diligence and compliance requirements that are being put in place ahead of LDC Graduation – especially from European markets, which comprise a significant share of Bangladesh’s RMG exports. It will be crucial to prioritize worker safety, good labour practices, accident protection through employment injury scheme (EIS) and environmental sustainability and embed these practices in the overall fabric of the industry at all levels,” the ILO Country Director added. To carry forward the achievements in the area of workplace safety, the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) was formed to build local capacity as a national safety monitoring regime, involving an equal number of representatives from government, industry bodies, brands and unions in its governance.

In order to keep tabs on factories, RSC conducts regular safety checks at the manufacturing facilities and fixes any problem it finds. It also keeps an online database of safety records in factories, making the whole issue of workplace safety up to date and transparent.



Abdul Haque, Managing Director of RSC

Abdul Haque, Managing Director of RSC, said: “The RMG Industry has come a long way in Bangladesh through thick and thin, by focusing on the important issues, such as safety, productivity, management of buyers, working with the government, keeping its labor force protected, creating environmental sustainability but mainly through highly committed leadership and extreme resilience of Bangladesh People and Entrepreneurs.” He also said: “The industry that was 15/16 billion only a few years back is now about a 40-billion-dollar export industry; and it will soon, say by 2030, be 100 billion dollars industry. Our market share in European market is neck to neck to that of China, and Globally, we are bridging gap between us and China. This industry contributes to more than 83% of the country’s exports, employs more than 4 million people directly and contributes to the livelihood of at least about 14 million people, contributing to more than 11% of the GDP of the country.” “RSC is an integral part of the RMG sector’s journey as it is mandated to turn and keep industry safe by working along with the factory owners, brands, union, BGMEA/BKMEA, govt etc. RSC is now focused on improving the productivity of its engineers through Reengineering the processes, Digitizing the processes, and ultimately linking everything through ERP system. It will reduce

inspection, report writing, and remediation time significantly. We are preparing our people for the “EU due diligence”, planning to train selected engineers in Environment and waste management and preparing the Training and Complaint department accordingly. Thanks to our Board, as they envision RSC as a one stop service/solution organization for Bangladesh RMG sector,” Abdul Haque added.

In order to create a culture of safety in the industry, regular training, fire safety drills, awareness building initiatives such as campaigns and dialogue on occupational safety, good health and industrial relations are conducted. Each factory has a mandatory safety committee consisting of certified safety trained workers. Also, the Labor Law has been amended making it mandatory to have the safety committee in every factory to engage and empower workers.

Thanks to these unprecedented strides over the years, McKinsey&Co. termed Bangladesh’s RMG industry as “a frontrunner in transparency regarding factory safety and value-chain responsibility, thanks to initiatives launched in the aftermath of the disasters”.



Khaled Mahmud, Associate Professor IBA, University of Dhaka

Khaled Mahmud, Associate Professor, IBA, University of Dhaka, said: “The Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry in Bangladesh has



undergone notable improvements in terms of safety standards, which has the potential to positively impact the perception of "Made in Bangladesh" apparels among global consumers. Measures such as factory inspections, structural assessments, fire safety protocols, and worker training programs have been implemented to enhance workplace safety. The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety were two significant initiatives that brought together global brands, retailers, industry associations, and trade unions to collaborate on improving safety conditions in garment factories." He thinks the commitment shown by the industry and the government of Bangladesh to enhance safety standards has started to yield positive results. "Many factories have undergone renovations, structural

improvements, and safety training programs. These efforts have the potential to brand the country in a positive way and boost the confidence of global consumers. Ethical and responsible manufacturing practices are increasingly important to consumers worldwide, who are concerned about the welfare of workers and the environmental impact of the products they purchase. By upholding and further improving safety standards, Bangladesh can brand itself as a responsible sourcing destination and boost the confidence of global consumers in its garments," he added. Thus a decade ago, industrial tragedies brought the issue of improving safety procedures in garment factories to the global limelight, and the industry stakeholders, instead of being cowed by the enormity of the challenge, rose up to the occasion and made the

factories safe, secured and environment friendly. Today Bangladeshi garment factories are not only safer, but also a global leader in terms of environmental sustainability. Bangladesh is home to the highest number of green garment factories in the world with 197 factories certified as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), by US Green Building Council (USGBC). Among them 70 are LEED platinum-rated and 113 are LEED gold-rated units. Besides, 500 more factories are in the pipeline for certification. The RMG industry is now moving towards product diversification, manufacturing high-end products, recycling and circular fashion to pursue its growth in a more sustainable manner. Moreover, technological upgradation and skill development are some of its key priorities to enhance its capacity and competitiveness. **A**

Due Diligence Matters

The ready-made garment (RMG) industry of Bangladesh, encompassing thousands of factories, millions of workers and billions of dollars in investment, is undergoing a transformational change. Apart from adopting advanced manufacturing processes and cutting-edge technologies, the industry is also going through epochal change on several other fronts. For example, RMG factories in their growing numbers are investing hundreds of thousands of dollars to implement social compliance, maintain structural safety, install green buildings and embrace the use of eco-friendly technology and techniques. As a result, Bangladesh RMG sector is now considered a global role model in sustainable and ethical manufacturing.

The fact, however, is that the regulatory compliance issues are always evolving, with requirements constantly increasing. To ensure adherence to ever-evolving compliance issues, companies in the apparel manufacturing sector are required to continuously improve and adjust their compliance management mechanism.

Of late, the topics of human rights due diligence (HRDD) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) are rapidly rising up on the agenda of governments of the western and EU countries. Following the UN's guiding principles of business and human rights, governments are increasingly strengthening their



policy tools on HRDD and RBC to include legislation on human rights and environmental due diligence. These legislations would have direct impact in the long run on the businesses in countries such as Bangladesh.

As defined in the UN Guiding Principles, HRDD is a risk management tool for organisations to identify, prevent, mitigate, and

account for how they address actual and potential adverse human rights impacts in their operations, supply chains and business relations. And, under the purview of RBC it is expected that all businesses – regardless of their legal status, size, ownership or sector – would avoid and address negative impacts of their operations, while contributing to sustainable development in the

countries where they operate. Both of the concepts - HRDD and RBC – are key tools to ensure responsible business practices and enhance businesses' positive impact on the society and environment. The policies are primarily designed to ensure that workers are treated fairly, have freedom of association and are paid appropriate minimum wages, and steps are taken to curb



pollution and so on.

In some cases of the compliance issues, Bangladesh RMG industry is already ahead of other countries. For example, the apparel makers have been embracing the green manufacturing process proactively and voluntarily in accordance with SDG 8 and the UN Fashion Industry Charter for Climate 2018. So far, Bangladesh has 197 LEED certified green garment factories, while some 500 more factories are undergoing the certification process. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh hosts half of the world's top 100 green factories.

In order to mitigate environmental pollution and become more energy-efficient, a good number of factories are also installing a wide range of innovative and advanced technologies. For example, while some factories have installed rooftop solar power systems, some other factories installed rainwater harvesting facilities and introduced a circular economy etc. So, environmentally sustainable practices are reaching far and wide in the country's RMG sector. Moreover, the factories have invested tens of thousands of dollars to ensure structural integrity, workplace safety, improve labour standards and implement social compliance issues. The country's Labour Law has also been amended to give workers greater freedom to form unions.

The human rights and environmental compliance issues, therefore, should not be deemed as a burden. Rather it should be seen as an opportunity for RMG factories to remodel their business procedures to become more pro-people and pro-environment. Efforts, however, must be made to ensure that all RMG units have proper knowledge of human rights and environmental due diligence issues and access to practical tools to implement the same. If proper initiatives are taken, Bangladesh RMG industry has the potential to be a trendsetter in this field too for other sectors in the country and manufacturing countries across the globe.

a meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholders of the sector can go a long way in charting the right course to strengthen human rights and environmental due diligence practices.

What BGMEA is doing

BGMEA has teamed up with German development cooperation agency GIZ to develop an ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) Digital Data Reporting Platform for collecting and publishing data on the sustainability performance of BGMEA member factories.

BGMEA will establish a Due Diligence Unit for BGMEA member factories to assist them in getting ready for the Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) requirements. This unit will support factory management and mid-level management of RMG factories including, sustainability officers, social compliance officers, HR officers to integrate environmental and human rights due diligence in their operations and meet buyers' expectations regarding the implementation of risk mitigating measures.

The objective of the Due Diligence Unit at BGMEA is to provide a one-stop service for BGMEA members regarding the upcoming legislative changes related to due diligence and sustainability.


"Through this project we believe we will be able to take another giant leap towards sustainability, and represent the "Made In Bangladesh" tag to the entire world as a symbol of excellence," said BGMEA President Faruque Hassan.

Closer buyer-supplier collaboration is a must

A delegation of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has recently attended the OECD forum on "Global due diligence in the Garment and Footwear sector" and used the platform to voice some concerns from Bangladesh and other manufacturing countries regarding HRDD and RBC.

The concerns mainly arise from the fact that the manufacturers cannot even recoup the cost of adopting best practices in the manufacturing process from the sale of RMG products, let alone getting any incentive. Absence of fair price, therefore is a challenge for RMG sector to fully ensure social and environmental standards in the supply chain process.

We must remember that manufacturers are not the only party to the supply chain. Buyers, brands and retailers are also important parts of the supply chain, and all parties should play their due roles in maintaining social, labour, and environmental standards in the supply chain. Apart from providing fair prices, buyers can play a great role in capacity building initiatives, and to support small and medium RMG factories so that they can take the same path to adopting a sustainable and holistic supply chain.

Bangladesh is a staunch supporter of responsible business practices. But there is still a long way to go towards building factories capacity to implement HRDD and RBC and align their practices with expected international standards. Much more needs to be done to solve all the issues the factories face. But a meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholders of the sector can go a long way in charting the right course to strengthen human rights and environmental due diligence practices. 

Mithela Textile Industries Limited

An inspiring example of sustainable manufacturing



Bangladesh has earned global accolades for its impressive strides in the area of sustainability over the last decade. After stamping its prominence as the second largest apparel exporting country, Bangladesh is now the global leader with the highest number of green garment factories in the world. This glowing success is the culmination of committed efforts made by Bangladeshi factories. Mithela Textile Industries Limited (MTIL) is one such factory that stands out for its achievements in sustainability and contribution to cleaner and

greener earth. Established in the year 2002, Mithela Textile Industries Limited has emerged as a leader, revolutionizing the traditional manufacturing processes by adopting environmentally friendly technologies while giving utmost importance to the wellbeing of its workers. MITL became the first in the world to receive the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification in 2018. With its innovative approach and

commitment to sustainable practices, Mithela Textile has continued its endeavors to achieve more in the area of sustainability. Mithela is an export-oriented textile factory that is specialized in solid dyeing woven materials without emitting toxins that might hamper the environment surrounding the industry. The factory produces around 100,000 yards of woven textiles every day. The factory manufactures a variety of fabric weave that including Canvas, Voile, Matt Weave, Twill, Rib Stop, Poplin, Herringbone, Bedford Cord, Calico,



and various kinds of Dobby Optic fabrics for global renowned brands. The woven materials are sustainable as the factory extracts all the toxins out via a few technologically advanced machines imported from countries like Germany and Japan.

Mithela Textiles Industries Limited also produces dyed and printed fabrics that are made by the composition variation process. Fabrics that fall under this category are - Cotton, Cotton-Poly-Stretch, Cotton-Tencel, Cotton-linen, Cotton-Modal, Cotton-Viscose, Lyocell/Tencel, Viscose, and Cotton-Viscose. These fabrics are more likely to fall under the “Comfy fabric” category as they are super comfortable, and most garments like – Fashionable Pant, sportswear, shirts, formal pants, etc are tailored using this variant of fabric.

Mithela Textile has invested in cutting-edge technologies which significantly reduce water usage and energy consumption in the production process. The factory has also integrated energy-efficient

modern machinery which consumes less energy, thus contributes saving energy and reducing carbon footprint. Mithela uses sunlight whole the day in the production floors without using any electric lights. Besides, it strictly follows the USGBC guideline to keep the air quality of our factory safe for the workers. The factory has IE3 motor installed in every machine that helps to save almost 68% of energy from total equipment’s usage of the industry. Efficiency level of the machines used in the factory is almost 95%. The factory has installed a Caustic Recovery Plant (CRP) to recover caustic soda, a chemical used during fabric processing and harmful element for the environment. Mithela through its state-of-the-art CRP can recover at least 90% of the caustic soda, which is not very common in textile factories.

The factory is equipped with a condense recovery system and its efficiency level is 99% with 90 temperature. From condense recovery Mithela saves 1.72 million

cft natural gas round the year, which is equivalent to 326.04 tons co₂e.

Mithela has installed ETP to treat effluent or waste generated during dyeing, printing, and various other processes. The ETP used by Mithela is fully biological and it’s flow capacity is 100m³. With the PVA gel-based biological ETP, the factory processes the toxic water that remains after dyeing woven materials. This technology helps in processing 50% water for re-use in production process.

Mithela Textile has its own energy plant that produces heat from burn rice husk, a byproduct of rice mills. The rice husk comes from Khan Food and Auto Rice Mills Limited, which is owned by Mithela Group. This heat is then further transformed to steam energy to run the fuel-saving economizer boiler. By this, it saves almost 47% of natural gas from the total requirement of the factory that is used in dyeing and manufacturing clothes such as woven fabric chinos, non-denim wear, etc. Natural Gas




saving per year 5 million cft. Which is equivalent to 9357.277 tons co₂e. Mithela Textile Industries Limited has taken initiatives aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of its workers. The factory conducts regular health check-ups to make sure our employees are in their good health. It also installed the latest ventilation unit to protect the factory premises from various unhealthy issues.

Md. Azhar Khan, Chairman of Mithela Group, said: "We believe

Mithela Textile has invested in cutting-edge technologies which significantly reduce water usage and energy consumption in the production process. The factory has also integrated energy-efficient modern machinery which consumes less energy, thus contributes saving energy and reducing carbon footprint.

sustainable manufacturing is not just a choice but a responsibility. This has inspired us to pursue excellence in sustainability so that we can positively impact the environment and the lives around us while contributing to the economy of Bangladesh by earning foreign exchange through exports. Since the inception we have taken various measures in Mithela Textile to reduce its environmental footprint and minimize the impact on the surrounding ecosystem. From energy-efficient machinery and processes to waste management systems, Mithela Textiles has taken comprehensive steps to ensure a more sustainable operation." He also said: "We are committed to continuing our efforts to take Mithela Textile Industries to newer heights in the area of sustainability."

With strides in sustainable textile manufacturing alongside initiatives for workers' welfare, Mithela Textile Industries Limited serves an inspiration for others, encouraging them to follow the suit and collectively for a greener industry in Bangladesh. 



There is a huge untapped potential for further growth of mutual trade

H.E. Alexander MANTYTSKIY
Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh

Russia is one of the major trade and development partners for Bangladesh. In an exclusive interview with *The Apparel Story*, H.E. Alexander MANTYTSKIY, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh, shares his thoughts on the progress and prospects of trade between our countries, particularly within the scope of textile and clothing.

As the Ambassador of Russia to Bangladesh, you have been in Bangladesh for almost two years. During your stay in Dhaka you have witnessed Bangladesh making progress at socio-economic fronts. How do you see Bangladesh's journey towards economic development and what role does Russia see in supporting this project?

Indeed, even during this relatively short period of only two years, Bangladesh has been able to secure quite a number of remarkable achievements on the way to socio-economic progress. One can mention successful construction of Padma Bridge, Payra Power Plant and India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, to name a few. Despite all odds and limitations, your country managed to reasonably operationalize its financial resources to implement these critical energy and infrastructure projects. Simultaneously, Bangladesh remains a reliable and conscientious international borrower, who has never failed to pay its debts under the foreign loans. Approval of the country's graduation from the LDC category in November 2021 came as a logical recognition of your outstanding story of success by the international community. I am happy to note that Russia has also been contributing to this remarkable journey towards economic development for decades. Currently, the Russian State Corporation Rosatom is building Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant near Pabna. This crucial object will add 2.4 Gigawatt of installed capacity to the national grid of Bangladesh. Besides, the subsidiaries of the gas giant Gazprom are successfully drilling exploratory and development wells in the gas fields of the country. The recently concluded exploration works at Illisha-1 well indicate the discovery of a new gas field on Bhola island.

Dhaka International Film Festival and Moscow International Film Festival are the inspiring platforms for artists from Russia and Bangladesh to establish contacts, share their professional experience and familiarize the peoples of our countries with the national cinema industries.

The Russian companies are ready to participate in various joint projects, in both the energy sector and other fields, such as ICTs, space and geological research, maritime, railway and air transport.

In fiscal year 2021-22, the trade between Bangladesh and Russia totaled USD 1.12 billion, which is more than double of what was five years back. How do you think trade between the two countries can be enhanced further?

Actually, according to the Russian statistics, the figures of bilateral trade are way higher, as we take into account the country of origin of any exported/imported item. If calculated like that, the volume of our bilateral trade in 2021 reached an all-time height of almost 3 billion USD, while the year 2022 witnessed a decrease of 21.4%, down to 2.35 billion USD. Machinery, equipment, vehicles, metals and agricultural products (wheat, fertilizers, legumes, mustard, etc.) are the key items of the Russian exports to Bangladesh. Your country, in its turn, provided our market primarily with textile products. Of course, there is huge untapped

potential for further growth of mutual trade. Both sides should put their efforts in establishing direct links between the business communities in order to reduce dependence on any external factors. In this regard, local entrepreneurs are invited to visit the section of our Embassy's website titled "For Businessmen and Investors" (bangladesh.mid.ru/en/countries/Russia/entrepreneurs-investors/), which contains the contact details of the competent public and private entities of the Russian Federation. Since 2021, the Trade Representation of Russia in New Delhi (<https://ind.minpromtorg.gov.ru/en/>) has been given an additional charge to promote trade and economic ties between Russia and Bangladesh. This body may serve as a single window for assistance in identifying business partners in Russia and information on major fairs, exhibitions and trade forums in our country.

What are potential areas of trade and investment between Bangladesh and Russia? What opportunities do you see for further growth in these areas?

There is an obvious need for

diversification of trade, especially of the Bangladeshi exports to Russia. In this context, I am pleased to let you know about the recent signing of the MoU between Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation and the Russian company National Group LLC, which will ensure supplies of local potato and other food items to our country. Pharmaceuticals, jute, leather and seafood of Bangladeshi origin also possess sufficient potential to obtain its share of the Russian market.

Promising areas of bilateral trade are closely examined under the Russia-Bangladesh Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. On March 15, this crucial body held its 4th session via videoconference. Moreover, the Working Group on Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Government of Bangladesh is exploring the ways to extend preferential trade facilities by the Eurasian Economic Union's member states to Dhaka after its graduation from the LDC category, as well as to enhance communication at the level of business communities. These issues were discussed in detail during the 2nd session of the said Group, which took place online on March 29 this year.

In 2021, Russia's total apparel import from the world was US\$ 7.95 billion where the share of Bangladesh was 14.62%. How Bangladesh can increase its share in the Russian market?

Apparel is the key item of your exports to our market. Its share steadily exceeds 90% of total amount of supplies from Bangladesh to Russia. RMG produced here are very much welcome in Russia, as they are well-known for high quality, durability and affordable prices. I also would like to highlight the

prominent role of Bangladesh as the global leader in green apparel factories with around 190 LEED certified units being located in its territory.

As for the further promotion of Bangladeshi garments in the Russian market, I believe it would be instrumental for your companies to attend such specialized international exhibitions and fairs held in our country, as the Russian Week of Textile Industry, International Trade Fair "Fashion Industry", Child and Junior Fashion Salon, etc. Participation in some broader economic events would also provide local entrepreneurs with an opportunity to establish dialogue with their Russian counterparts, such as the Saint-Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, International Economic Forum "Russia – Islamic World: KazanForum".

What are the current challenges of trade between the two countries and how are they being addressed?

The illegal unilateral sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and its allies caused breach of the earlier existing production and supply chains. A number of Russian banks (though, naturally, not all of them) came under financial restrictions that hindered transactions in US dollars and euro, including the disconnection from SWIFT. The transit trade through the EU countries remains on hold. This, of course, created some problems for our trade with foreign partners, in particular, with Bangladesh. At the same time, both the governments and companies of the two countries are adjusting to the new reality. The competent agencies are elaborating on secure payment modalities evading the "toxic" currencies. Some progress has already been made in this regard. The exploration of new transportation routes (for instance, through the far eastern territories of Russia) is underway as well. I

believe that the time has come for us to increase frequency of cargo flights and to consider restoration of direct passenger air connection.

Bangladesh and Russia have strong cultural ties. How they can be further strengthened and promoted?

Our bilateral cultural cooperation has considerable potential, which could be further realized, for example, through organization of joint programs dedicated to the national holidays and memorable dates and creating conditions for learning Russian and Bengali language.

Besides, Dhaka International Film Festival and Moscow International Film Festival are the inspiring platforms for artists from Russia and Bangladesh to establish contacts, share their professional experience and familiarize the peoples of our countries with the national cinema industries.

The literary legacy by such Russian authors as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, Alexander Pushkin, Sergey Yesenin, Anton Chekhov translated not only to English, but also to Bengali language, is highly evaluated here. I guess the works of other Russian authors could also capture the hearts of local people.

The year 2022 saw concerts by the Alexandrov Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance of the Russian Army and the group of Moscow Choreographic School at the Moscow State Academic Dance Theater "Gzhel" in our Embassy, which received an enthusiastic response from the Bangladeshi audience. The Russian House in Dhaka welcomes the Bangladeshis to learn about Russian culture and history at its educational and cultural events. And our Embassy will remain a vital link in strengthening the friendly relations between our two countries. **A**

Redefining Bangladeshi Fashion with Style and Sustainability

MBRELLA



In the bustling world of fashion, where trends come and go, there is a rising star in the Bangladeshi fashion scene that is making waves with its unique blend of style and sustainability. Introducing "MBRELLA," a homegrown brand that is redefining fashion in Bangladesh and capturing the attention of fashion enthusiasts around the country. With a commitment to quality, ethical practices, and a fusion of traditional and contemporary aesthetics, Mbrella is poised to become a





prominent name in the fashion industry. With over 30 stores all across Bangladesh, Mbrella envisions to soon cover the nation in its entirety. Mbrella boasts a diverse product line

that caters to every member of the family, and they don't there. Mbrella draws inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of Bangladesh, infusing traditional elements with a modern twist. From

t-shirts, shirts, pants, dresses, and accessories for both men, women, and children of all ages, to home décor and leather goods at price range starting as low as BDT 399/-. Mbrella creates garments that not only reflect the cultural identity of Bangladesh, but is also on its way to cater to the global fashion market.

In an era where sustainable fashion is gaining momentum, Mbrella takes a conscientious approach to design and production. The brand prioritizes sustainability by employing eco-friendly materials, reducing waste, and promoting ethical practices. From using organic fabrics to implementing fair trade principles, Mbrella aims to minimize its ecological footprint



while ensuring the well-being of its workers and artisans. By making sustainability a core value, the brand paves the way for a more responsible and eco-conscious fashion industry in Bangladesh. Mbrella's designs are characterized by their effortless elegance and versatility. Whether it's a casual day out or a formal evening event, Mbrella offers a range of apparel that caters to various occasions. From flowy dresses with vibrant prints to tailored separates with exquisite detailing, every piece is carefully crafted to make a statement. With a focus on comfort and functionality, Mbrella seamlessly combines traditional

Mbrella's designs are characterized by their effortless elegance and versatility. Whether it's a casual day out or a formal evening event, Mbrella offers a range of apparel that caters to various occasions. From flowy dresses with vibrant prints to tailored separates with exquisite detailing, every piece is carefully crafted to make a statement.

aesthetics with contemporary silhouettes, appealing to a wide range of fashion preferences. As Mbrella continues to grow, its vision remains steadfast: to redefine fashion in Bangladesh and inspire positive change within the industry. With its dedication to sustainable practices, and commitment to creating fashionable designs, Mbrella is poised to become a force to be reckoned with in the fashion world. As consumers increasingly seek fashion brands that align with their values, Mbrella's ethos positions it at the forefront of the industry, offering a unique blend of style, sustainability, and cultural heritage. **A**



Is Bangladesh Ready for the Sustainable Industrialization?



Barrister Shehrin Salam Oishee

A bottomless basket transformed into a bustling exemplary role-model particularly in terms of its strongest sector, the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry. Bangladesh has risen like a phoenix from the ashes in the development of the RMG sector, didn't get blown by storms like Rana Plaza, COVID-19 etc, and turned back with hopeful prospects for a more sustainable, futuristic and developed industrialization. Sustainability compliance has become crucial in contemporary global trade for companies to thrive internationally. It is imperative for Bangladesh's RMG industry to

become sustainable and smart to carry forward its growth. Consulting firms like McKinsey have praised this sector for its sustainability set up. They further added that our suppliers can now offer lead times below the standard 90 days, which is a testament to our vertical integration progress. Turning to compliance, factory and occupational safety, and transparency, the RMG sector has shown enormous improvement. Factory buildings not only have become safer, Bangladesh now has more green garment factories than any other country.



McKinsey published a report titled 'Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments Landscape: The Challenge of Growth.' The conclusions in the report highlighted that due to the pandemic and the shifts in the global market trend and demand, Bangladesh's RMG industry must upgrade, innovate, and diversify in the days to come. To that end, there must be investments in flexibility, sustainability, worker welfare, and most importantly infrastructure. It must be understood that Bangladesh cannot afford to be complacent if it wants to remain a globally competitive leader in the

RMG production space. But is Bangladesh ready for the shift yet? Bangladesh stands as the shining example of adaptability. Since 2013, the world has made our nation the trying hub for all forms of good and prospective practices in the RMG sector. Starting from Accord and Alliance in collaboration with the National Action Plan (NAP) had made our industry the safest in the world, including the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, until very recently when the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) made its atrium, with the unanimous goal of altering the industry practices,

especially in accordance with the International standards of the buyers. Not just this, the present legal requirements of the individual governments, like the German regulations, recently enacted, shall also apply over the existing national regulations in motion. The million dollar question now concerns the ability of this sector to adapt all these changes given the existing infrastructure of this nation. Is the government initiatives enough to back this sector up in adapting all the new changes? As an optimistic person, I like to believe that this sector being able to

stand back despite the several blows will be able to bear this besides the very recent graduation from the LDC in the next years to come, but is this theoretical belief going to realise in reality? Infrastructure remains one of the biggest issues facing the RMG sector. For its apparel industry to prosper in the future, Bangladesh will need to strengthen transport, energy, and digitization infrastructure, and there is absolutely no alternative to this. In the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, Bangladesh dropped from 79 in 2010 to 100 in 2018 in the overall ranking. By comparison, Vietnam improved its ranking from 53 to 39 over the same period. Several major infrastructure projects that are under development could significantly improve Bangladesh's position. The inauguration of the Padma bridge has greatly accelerated the business growth of the nation, making the South Western regions a lucrative options for more business hubs. Bangladesh's first deep-sea port, Matarbari, which is expected to be functional by 2025, complete with a new container terminal, might bring in new hope too.

It is important to incorporate the changes of the 4th industrial revolution gradually, as it could create chaos in Bangladesh which has still not yet fully grasped the 3rd industrial revolution. In this light, some specialists argue that the garments sector will be the worst sufferer of the Industry 4.0 revolution as there is a possibility of 27 lakh, or almost 60% of jobs being lost. However, not everything is as bleak as it seems.

As we step into the 4th decade of the RMG sector, we can only ponder at the growth and be slightly sceptical of the future uncertainty that lures right after the LDC graduation, the wavering inflation, the changing purchasing practices, the imbalanced bargaining stand, etc. Encouragingly, sourcing executives of leading global apparel brands and retailers have partnered with their Bangladeshi suppliers,

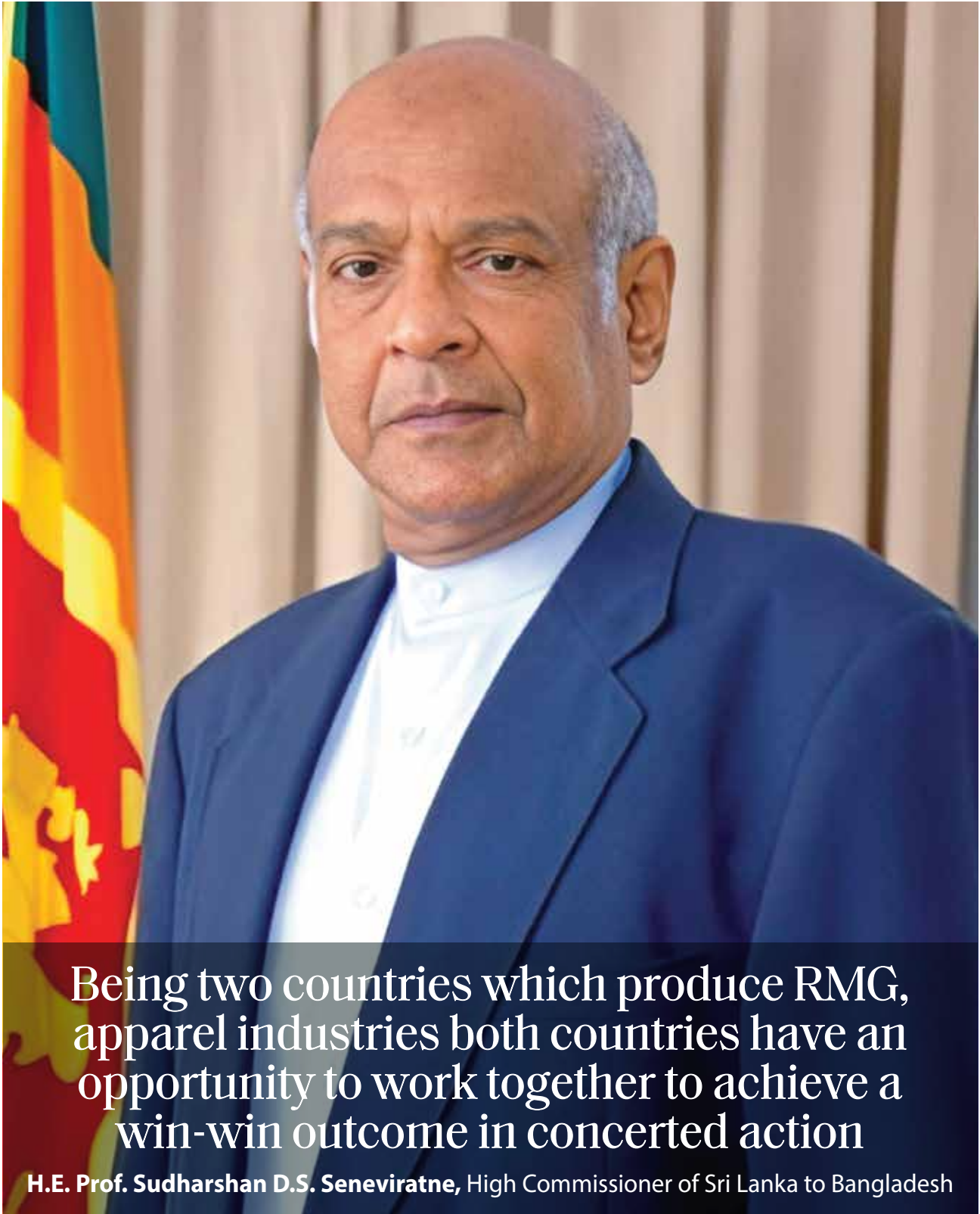
helping them to improve efficiency and sustainability. But the sector needs more. More incentives from the Government shall assist the sector to take the leap of faith in exploring the new opportunities, mainly the shift from cotton to non-cotton items, more clearly stated, the man-made fibre items. This shift is not just of items, but a battle against all odds to establish an entirely new industry, in which Bangladesh had very little exposure. In such a state, government support by means of incentives will diminish a great deal of fear for new start-ups and even experienced pioneers in RMG industries. Extended grace period support from local financial institutions shall give the much-needed courage to start new ventures targeting the new markets and products.

Intelligent and sustainable industries and business parks are the next best solutions. Such parks provide a major boon for inward investment, particularly green finance. This can translate to becoming a compulsory requirement to gain business and investment from countries that promote green practices. Developing smart and sustainable business parks in Bangladesh would be the preliminary step. Green investments would be encouraged to flow from regions like the EU and Canada where sustainability and compliance are significant factors across the supply chain. The RMG sector has begun its journey from the late 1970s and hence many establishments are still in the most traditional set-up. Hence it can be challenging to push futuristic technologies into existing factories or locations because of so many sustainability-related technology changes in the past decades. So it's imperative to begin with fresh building blocks. These renovated sustainable business parks can be realised with public-private partnerships and are characterised by many features. Furthermore, it is quintessential that we begin contemplating how we can bring

more stages of production under one roof in the country and benefit from economies of scale. Structuring building from scratch could be the right step in that direction.

Besides our national challenges, it's crucial that we consider the strength and standing of our competitive nations. While Bangladesh's RMG sector remains a strong exporter to Europe's fashion industry, and has grown its market share significantly over the past decade, this trend may not continue: the new preferential trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and Vietnam, launched in August 2020, could well lead to apparel exports from Vietnam outperforming Bangladesh's. Among US apparel importers, Vietnam has outpaced Bangladesh's RMG industry for some time; in 2020, Vietnamese apparel imports into the US were worth 2.5 times those from Bangladesh. As buyers from the US move sourcing out of China, Vietnam is proving to be the biggest winner. It is extremely crucial to ensure that when Bangladesh embarks in the new journey of development in the most lucrative new markets and products across the globe, that our nation is self-sufficient in backing our industries to rapidly settle up the infrastructure for the new industries and minimise hurdles in its realisation. Besides the energy scarcity in Bangladesh, with limited supply of gas, and electricity, the major running wheels of this industry, the government must ensure that other facilities are taken care of, starting from road and highways, custom services, port services, industry land availability, financial services, stabilising the labor settlements, etc. Unless we keep our present secured, we cannot expect the future to work according to our expectations. **A**

Barrister Shehrin Salam Oishee is a Director of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Director of Envoy Group and an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.



Being two countries which produce RMG, apparel industries both countries have an opportunity to work together to achieve a win-win outcome in concerted action

H.E. Prof. Sudharshan D.S. Seneviratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh

In an exclusive interview with The Apparel Story, H.E. Prof. Sudharshan D.S. Seneviratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh, shares his views about the potential areas of cooperation between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to strengthen economic relations and enhance mutual trade.

How do you describe the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka relationship? And, the prospects of cooperation particularly in trade and economy?

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka nurtured a strong friendship bond over two thousand years. The two countries have profound historical and cultural affinities and friendships strengthened by people-to-people contacts and socio-economic cooperation. Sri Lanka always considers Bangladesh as a close neighbour and kinsman. Over decades our countries have supported each other at various international fora. Around 40% of Bangladesh's exports, mainly apparel, which are destined for EU and US exports are transported from Chattogram using the port of Colombo. Sri Lanka literally pioneered the introduction of the Apparel industry to Bangladesh. Around 80 Sri Lanka investment projects (worth around \$1.2 million) are operating in Bangladesh making a huge contribution to the Bangladesh economy. Several investments have the potential for greater growth. They are Energy, tourism, investment, and maritime and aviation connectivity.

What were the fundamental weaknesses that led to the present crisis in Sri Lanka? What can Bangladesh learn from the Sri Lankan experience?

It is not easy to pinpoint the crisis that surfaced last year. One must understand that Sri Lanka is a small island (25,000 sq miles with a population less than that of Dhaka. Yet its limitation of production and also some natural and human-made events took its toll on this small island. It had a terrorist war spanning 3 decades, 2 revolutions, tsunami destruction, Easter Sunday carnage and finally Covid. For this small island, all these were negative impediments. But even with the

destruction of human lives, infrastructure, production and exports, we had the resilience to rise again and again from adversity. There were other issues that precipitated the crisis: Bad fiscal management and fiscal policies. Covid- 19 pandemic and the Russian – Ukraine crisis had a huge negative impact on Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Sri Lanka's economy is considerably dependent on tourism, which is seasonal and very risky. Further expected revenue could not be generated through some of the investments/ projects. Further, Sri Lanka has an oversized public service with 1.5 million Sri Lankans. Some of the state-owned enterprises in Sri Lanka are running at a loss. Until recently, the country did not have a mechanism to price fuel as it was subsidized. Subsidizing fuel, electricity and water, ran a high cost for the country. In addition, the decision of the government to reduce the taxes, our tax revenue, which was 14% of GDP, came down to 8.3%. The decision to change over to organic fertilizer made a huge negative impact on the agriculture sector, which employs 33% of the population. In addition, Sri Lanka's delayed action in seeking IMF assistance further precipitated the crisis.

When it comes to what Bangladesh can learn from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has already learnt much from Sri Lanka's situation. Identifying the possibility of having a crisis, Bangladesh sought IMF's assistance quite earlier. Although Sri Lanka started negotiations with IMF before Bangladesh, it was able to get the approval for IMF assistance before Sri Lanka (in January 2023) as Bangladesh's loans are not yet unsustainable. For Sri Lanka, IMF approved its assistance in March 2023, as the process was cumbersome because the country had to get debt assurances from various creditors.

You are aware that Bangladesh is the 2nd largest RMG exporter in the

world. Sri Lanka also has expertise in manufacturing and exporting apparel items. Currently, a good number of Sri Lankan experts are working in the apparel sector in Bangladesh. Also, many Sri Lankan organizations have invested in this sector. How do you think both countries can collaborate further to explore mutual business opportunities, especially in the areas of capacity building, innovation, efficiency and productivity in the apparel industry to reap mutual benefits?

We are pleased to note that Sri Lanka has contributed much to the development of Bangladesh's RMG sector through investments, expertise and technology. The leading Sri Lankan Apparel companies like Hirdaramani, MAS, and Brandix are well established in Bangladesh being part of the Bangladesh RMG industry. It sustains economic development providing thousands of employment to the Bangladesh people. Being two countries which produce RMG, apparel industries both countries have an opportunity to work together to achieve a win-win outcome in concerted action. It is obvious that Sri Lanka with 22mn people and around 300 garment factories could not achieve the "scale" in apparel manufacturing as Bangladesh nor its "cost advantage". As the brands/retailers increasingly require a faster response time, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have an opportunity to work together to capture especially some spaces occupied by European countries (eg: Germany: leading value-added apparel exporter in Europe, Italy: Jeans washing facility). Through collaboration, it could further scale up the production of Bangladesh's apparel industry by increasing the quantum of goods as "Made in Bangladesh".

Strengths and Challenges of Apparel industries in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

Country	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scale ➤ Low cost of labour ➤ Labour availability ➤ Large capacity ➤ Duty-Free to EU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speed ➤ Connectivity ➤ High-End value add (embellishments/ printing/ washing) ➤ Ease of clearances at the port in and out ➤ Duty-Free to EU
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speed ➤ Connectivity ➤ High-end value addition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited scale ➤ High Cost of Labour ➤ Labour availability

While Bangladesh offers the “Scale” and “Cost advantages”, Sri Lanka offers advantages in terms of “Speed to market” and “innovation” and therefore, the two countries have opportunities to leverage their collective strengths and improve their presence in the EU. The collective effort can be materialized by way of:

1. Jeans/Chinos produced in Bangladesh can be stocked in Sri Lanka. On customer orders, those can be washed/dyed in Sri Lanka and dispatched swiftly to the EU
2. T-shirt (blanks) could be stocked in Sri Lanka and printed/embellished in Sri Lanka and shipped to the EU

Shipment consolidation and supply into the EU from Colombo could be supplied within 16 days. Bangladesh's RMG industry has an opportunity to reduce the lead time to the fast fashion customers in the EU by dropping lead time from 28 days to 16 days by using Colombo as a hub by exploiting its logistics advantages.

Further, Sri Lanka is ready to welcome Apparel manufacturers from Bangladesh to establish joint ventures or wholly-owned entities in Sri Lanka for product finishing. Eravur Textile Zone, in Batticaloa Sri Lanka has especially been designed to attract high-value-added apparel Manufacturers. This specialized zone is to become the “World's most ethical apparel sourcing destination US\$ 1 Bn + opportunity by 2025”.

As part of the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement, Sri Lanka has offered duty-free and quota-free (DF-QF) market access to Bangladesh. Certain issues are causing difficulties in trade on our end, and we are working with our government on these issues. Looking at the post-LDC perspective, how should we proceed with an exclusive economic partnership between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to retain our market access?

Under the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA), Sri Lanka is offering duty concessions for a number of tariff lines for other partners. When analyzing the performances of SAFTA, the utilization of the rate cannot be satisfied. Lack of awareness about SAFTA concession and customs red tape can be identified as the main reasons for this situation. LDC graduation will also create a lot of challenges for Bangladesh as an example as most of the clothing sector is not in India's tariff liberalization schedule for non-LDC members of SAFTA. Thus, Bangladesh will have to export to India under the applied rate of duties. Under SAFTA rules of origin, LDC participants are allowed up to 70% of non-originating material, compared to 60% for

non-LDC parties. Graduation from LDC status would therefore not allow graduating LDCs to avail of such liberal treatment. Therefore, it is essential for Bangladesh to come up with some proposals to tackle challenges which are amicable for other members as well, i.e. as all members of SAFTA are in developing countries and not developed countries.

In general, it is necessary to revisit the sensitive lists of each member as well as create a mechanism on how to implement SAFTA effectively allowing cooperate sector of the member countries to harness maximum benefits. That is to work as a team having trust and work on similarities rather than focusing on differences, for the future of SAFTA and SAARC.

Anything else you would like to add?

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka need to be strategic partners as two countries need to prosper together both need to take care of each other in a newly evolving globalized world. Both countries are members of SAARC, BIMSTEC and IORA. Two lands hold an equally important role at the two strategic ends of the Bay of Bengal representing the ‘gateway’ entry and exit points to the larger World systems. The Bay of Bengal essentially is an Oceanic highway. As such, the futuristic staying power and sustenance of our two countries revolve around the protection of the seascape of the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. The Bay of Bengal is one of the richest resource areas in the world, hence the highly competitive premium placed on its natural and human wealth. Our two countries can work toward Maritime Safety and Security, Trade & Investment, Fisheries Management, Disaster Risk Management, Academics, Science & Technology, Tourism and Cultural Exchange and gender Empowerment. It is also important to focus on promoting a blue economy which envisages the sustainable harvesting of our oceanic resources. ^A

The Pioneer of Women's Emancipation

Begum Rokeya

No discourse about establishing Bengali women's right to education will be complete without recognising the contribution of **Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain** (1880-1932), popularly known as Begum Rokeya. In the early eighteen century when Bengal society was mired in religious superstition and male chauvinism, Begum Rokeya fought for women's liberation from patriarchal social norms that had confined them within the four walls. As a fierce advocate of gender equality, she pushed for an equal society through her writing, activism, action and strategy.



Considered as the pioneer of women's awakening in undivided Bengal, Begum Rokeya wrote many thought-provoking and inspiring short stories, novels, poems, satire and essays, calling for resistance against social stereotypes. She showed how male dominated society was misinterpreting religion to subjugate women, denying them access to education and other human rights. Rokeya said, "Men and women were created differently, but equally ... the subjugated position of women was not due to Allah's will, but due to men's immorality."

To resist the idea that women were created inferior to men, she argued, "Had God Himself intended women to be inferior, He would have ordained it so that mothers would have given birth to daughters at the end of the fifth month of pregnancy. The supply of mother's milk would naturally have been half of that in case of a son. But that is not the case. How can it be? Is not God just and most merciful?"

Rokeya fought for women's emancipation at a time when Muslim women in colonial India were excluded from public spheres and their rights were totally ignored. She came to conclude that education for women would be their lifebuoy, the key to their liberation. So, she dedicated her life to helping Bengali women to gain access to education. She inspired them to extricate themselves from the bondage of slavery and seclusion and live with their heads held high.

Early life

She was born on 9 December, 1880 to an aristocratic Muslim family at Pairabond village in Rangpur. She grew up under a strict veiling system where women were not allowed to receive any formal education. Her brothers attended school, but she and her sister did not. Only Arabic was thought informally to girls so that they could recite the Quran and perform Islamic religious rites.

Her brother Ibrahim Saber, however, taught her Bangla and English in secret after realising her insatiable interest in receiving education. In 1898, Rokeya married Syed Sakhawat Hossain, a Deputy Magistrate of Bhagalpur in Bihar. Having studied in England, Hussain was a liberally minded person, and encouraged his wife to learn both Bengali, English and also inspired her to read literary works from home and abroad. She took the fullest advantage of the liberality of her husband. Apart from reading the existing literature in Bangla very extensively, she also took to writing.

Foundation of a school

Unfortunately, Rokeya's husband passed away early in their conjugal life. She had two daughters but they too died at their infancy. Moreover, she was facing resistance from society for her writings and activism to change attitudes towards women. Despite her personal grief and bitter opposition, Rokeya did not surrender to fate. She pursued her quest to liberate women from the shackles of dogmatism. She founded a school for Muslim girls at Bhagalpur on 1 October 1909 and named it Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School in honour of her husband. For this she used the Rs 10,000 her husband had left her in his will, and the rest she collected from her own resources. However, for domestic reasons, she could not continue the school at Bhagalpur and shifted it to Kolkata in 1911. Despite opposition from the local community, she ran the school for 24 years. Nursing, sewing, home economics, Bangla and English were among many subjects taught at the

Men and women were created differently, but equally ... the subjugated position of women was not due to Allah's will, but due to men's immorality.

school. She believed it was very important for women to be strong physically, so she focused heavily on physical activity. Rokeya personally oversaw all the affairs of the school and took an active part in training teachers. Defying severe criticism and obstacles, she went door-to-door to convince parents to send their daughters to school. This she continued to do till her death. Over a century later, the school continues to run, managed by the state government of Kolkata.

Beyond women's Education

In 1916, Rokeya also founded the Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam organization (Muslim women's society) to create greater awareness about women's rights. The society played a leading role in the fight for women's education, employment and their legal and political rights. It also shouldered the cost of education for a large number of girls and arranged marriages for many of them. It gave food and shelter to orphans and the destitute and extended financial help to widows. It also established some business enterprises for women to earn economic independence.

Literary works

Apart from being a pioneer in social reforms and the empowerment of women, she was also a prolific writer. She took up pen with a mission to change social prejudices, religious bigotry and ignorance. She started writing in the Nabanoor


magazine from about 1903.

Throughout her career, she wrote regularly for the Saogat, Mohammadi, Nabaprabha, Mahila, Bharatmahila, Al-Eslam, Nawroz, The Mussalman, Indian Ladies Magazine etc.

Some of her famous writings include: Motichur (Two volumes), Sultana's Dream, Pipasha (Thirst), Padmarag (Essence of the Lotus), God Gives, Man Robs etc. She faced severe resistance from the society for her writings and activism to change its attitude towards women. She attempted to inform women of the world outside of their homes, kitchens, of things other than clothes and jewellery. She inspired them to wake up from the patriarchal slumber and accept their individualities. In her long struggle for women's emancipation, she had also created a slogan, "Jago Go Bhogini" (Wake Up Sisters).

Legacy

Begum Rokeya died on 9 December, 1932, long before the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh. In order to commemorate her contribution, Bangladesh celebrates 9 December as 'Begum Rokeya Day'. A university was established in her name in 2008 and a national award named after her is given annually to women for their exceptional work to promote women rights.

Those who hold the opinion a single person cannot bring change to the world should find all the inspiration they need just by bringing the achievements of Begum Rokeya to mind. 



National Parliament Building – an architectural masterpiece

Located at the heartland of Dhaka in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, the National Parliament building of Bangladesh is one of the largest legislative complexes in the world. Designed by world-renowned American architect Luis I Kahn, the parliament building is internationally recognized as one of the architectural wonders of modern world. Sprawled over 200 acres of land, the complex includes the main parliament building, hostels for members of Parliament, ministers and secretaries, hospitality halls and community buildings all linked by roads and walkways and surrounded by attractive gardens and lakes.

According to Banglapedia, the main characteristic of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban is its monumentality. Moreover, there is not a single column in the whole building. Light from the roof illuminates different spaces as if ambient glows are showered from heaven.



TSC's Greek Church – A Slice History

Tucked away in a corner inside the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University is a small yellow structure that arouses enormous curiosity among passers-by. It is a Greek memorial church built in the first quarter of the 19th century in commemoration of some of the Greek merchants who died while in Dhaka.

At the entrance of the church it is written in Greek, "Happy are those whom you chose and took with you." A stone bears the names of the three Ellias brothers, one of whom was killed by a tiger while he was hunting in Mirpur. Thus the Church presents a slice of history from 18th and 19th century.



Aparajeyo Bangla and Bengalis' indomitable character

Sculptures are an important part of Bangladesh's cultural heritage. Located on Dhaka University Campus, Aparajeyo Bangla is the embodiment of the Bengali youths' sheer courage and determination to fight for the cause of freedom. This 18-foot sculpture is virtually an eye-catcher. Designed by renowned sculptor Syed Abdullah Khalid, the sculpture was inaugurated on 16th December 1979.

Three dynamic figures of Aparajeyo Bangla depict three people from different social backgrounds. On one side, a statue of a young woman holding a first-aid box symbolizes women's caring role in the Liberation War. The middle statue represents rural youth carrying a rifle on his right shoulder and a grenade in his left palm. And the other statue portrays an urban youth with a rifle in his hands. Together the statues represent the combined effort of the entire nation during the Liberation War.


Baitur Rauf Mosque – A Breakaway from tradition

In the capital's Fayedabad area in Uttara, there stands a place of worship for Muslims called Baitur Rauf Mosque. This is different in various ways from traditional mosques and every account of its distinctive features is endearing in their own way. Designed by architect Marina Tabassum and inaugurated in 2012, the mosque can boast of its environment-friendly design as well as elegant and eternal look. In recognition of its architectural excellence, the terracotta mosque received prized Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2016. The Agha Khan jury in its citation said, "The quality of construction frequently raises the quality of life. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Baitur Rauf Mosque, which contains an intricate geometric layering of space – a square prayer chamber contained within cylindrical walls."



Curzon Hall- A symbol of splendour

One of Dhaka's most iconic structures, Curzon Hall stands tall on Dhaka University Campus as a testament to the architectural legacy of the British Raj in Bangladesh. The foundation stone of Curzon Hall was laid in 1904 by the then Viceroy of India Lord Curzon. In the following year, Bengal was partitioned and Dhaka was made the capital of the newly created province of East Bengal and Assam.

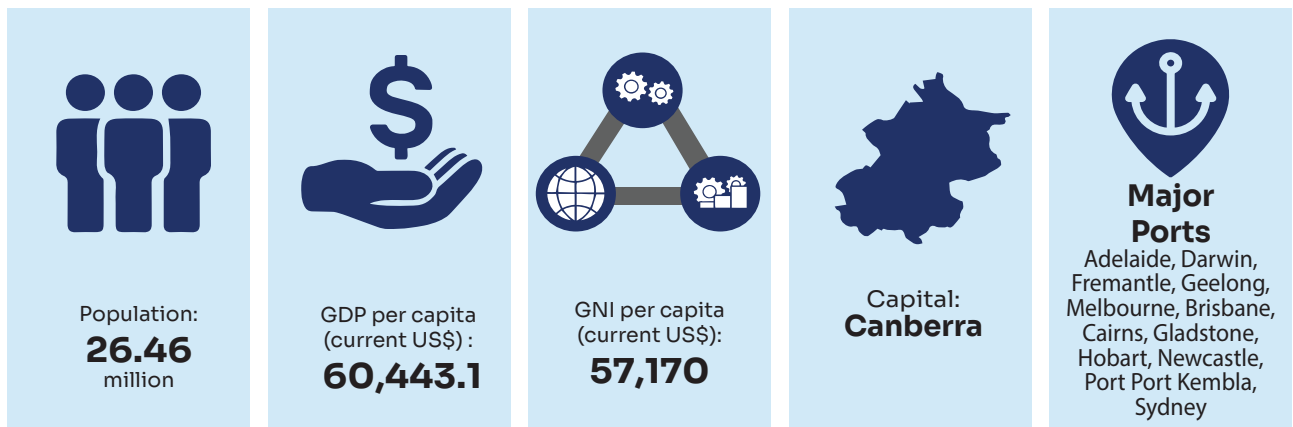
Curzon Hall was originally built as a town hall for the new colonial administration. But once the partition of Bengal was rebuked in 1911, the facility was given to Dhaka College and then to Dhaka University when it came into being in 1921. Since then this magnificent redbrick edifice with innovative planning and brilliant architectural design has been used as science faculty of Dhaka University. 



Tapping the Emerging Market: Australia

Australia is a highly developed country with a mixed economy. It is the 13th-largest national economy with USD 60,443.1 nominal GDP. Australia is one of the potential markets for Bangladesh apparel industry. Considering the size of the population, growing per capita income and consumption of fashion items, Bangladesh has a high prospect of increasing trade relations with Australia.

Demographic and Economic Overview of Australia



Source: The World Factbook – CIA & World Bank

Bilateral Trade:

Year	BD's Export to Australia	BD's Import from Australia	Trade Balance
2017-18	712.92	851.20	-138.28
2018-19	804.63	596.72	207.91
2019-20	678.19	649.30	28.89
2020-21	834.05	750.27	83.78
2021-22	916.24	1239.01	-322.77

Source: Bangladesh Bank and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)

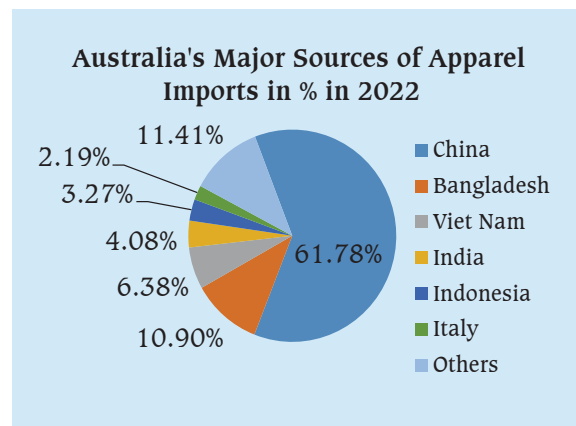


Australia's Clothing Import from the World:

Though Bangladesh is the second largest apparel sourcing country of Australia, the share of Bangladesh in Australia's total RMG import is only 10.90%. In 2022, Australia imported USD 897.98 million apparel from Bangladesh. China tops as a supplier with 61.78% share.

Exporters	2020	2021	2022	Share in 2022
World	6310.68	7391.91	8238.45	
China	4164.81	4639.92	5089.31	61.78%
Bangladesh	645.45	794.69	897.98	10.90%
Viet Nam	299.44	408.02	525.34	6.38%
India	203.31	288.62	335.84	4.08%
Indonesia	203.92	252.05	269.07	3.27%
Italy	124.07	150.16	180.71	2.19%
Others	669.68	858.45	940.20	11.41%

Source: ITC Trademap



Bangladesh's Clothing Export to Australia:

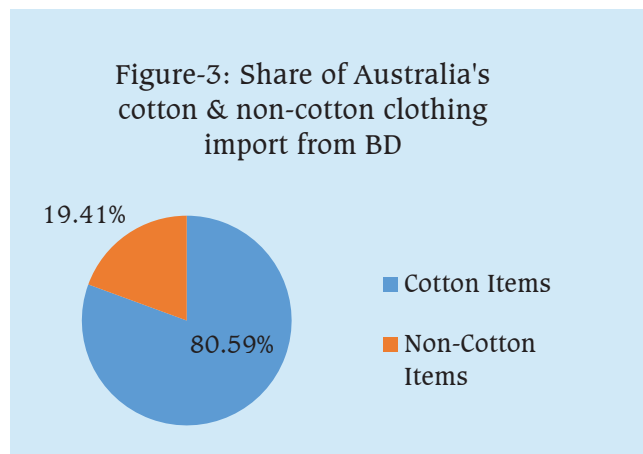
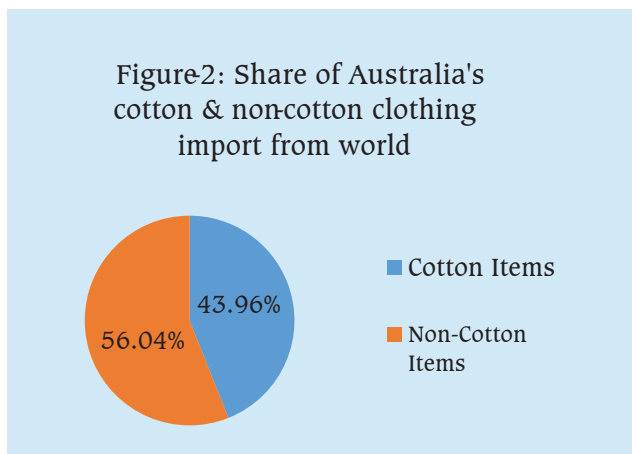
Australia is the 2nd largest nontraditional markets for Bangladesh RMG industry. Bangladesh's RMG export to Australia reached US\$ 812.24million in FY2021-22 with 11.09% year-on-year growth.

Year	Knit	Woven	Total	Growth
2012-13	295.98	132.46	428.44	39.31%
2013-14	288.24	142.52	430.76	0.54%
2014-15	346.13	187.50	533.63	23.88%
2015-16	406.97	229.31	636.27	19.24%
2016-17	371.55	210.47	582.02	-8.53%
2017-18	391.16	242.85	634.01	8.93%
2018-19	406.71	313.07	719.78	13.53%
2019-20	340.81	260.33	601.14	-16.48%
2020-21	430.38	300.74	731.13	21.62%
2021-22	500.18	312.06	812.24	11.09%

* Data may differ between EPB and ITC Source: Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)

Australia's cotton & non-cotton clothing import share in 2022

Australia imported USD 8.23 billion worth of apparel from the world where the share of cotton made items was 43.96%. On the other hand, the share of non-cotton items by Australia from Bangladesh was 19.41% only of total apparel imports while the share of cotton items was 80.59%.



Australia's Major Clothing Items Import from Different Countries in the World

Following Table-4 shows the top 20 clothing items imported by Australia from Bangladesh and competitor countries of Bangladesh in 2022 and the Compound Average Growth Rate (CAGR) of those clothing import by Australia from the world during 2017-2022.

HS Code	Items	World	China	BD	Viet Nam	India	Indonesia	Italy	Cambodia	CAGR of SA's import from world (2017-2022)
'610910	Cotton knitted T-shirts	640.54	256.57	215.78	31.29	58.21	3.70	5.72	8.25	6.62%
'611020	Cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	428.73	268.65	49.69	17.44	14.66	5.68	9.07	14.11	13.24%
'620342	M/B cotton woven trousers	403.80	217.45	105.42	18.94	5.49	9.34	2.83	2.09	3.58%
'611030	MMF Knitted Jerseys & pullovers	341.91	249.25	32.17	15.69	0.51	4.45	4.37	6.67	4.99%
'620462	W/G cotton woven trousers	339.10	161.75	95.73	10.42	7.74	16.90	4.60	3.98	3.14%
'620520	M/B cotton woven shirts	237.91	133.73	33.81	21.40	13.62	13.31	2.16	2.10	1.60%
'610990	Non cotton knitted T-shirts	222.43	137.04	16.58	16.93	1.92	8.20	1.29	5.86	-0.77%
'621210	Non cotton woven Brassieres	202.73	118.50	3.97	12.86	4.27	40.33	0.25	1.44	3.03%
'620443	W/G synthetic woven dresses	199.11	160.22	0.82	5.26	7.73	4.53	3.38	0.05	3.59%
'610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	197.74	125.22	14.18	20.87	1.05	10.80	0.75	8.13	14.02%
'611120	Cotton knitted Babies' garments	173.86	107.03	31.79	2.89	18.47	1.87	0.38	8.99	5.45%
'620343	M/B synthetic woven trousers	167.78	87.67	14.62	26.86	2.07	14.15	0.60	7.46	8.06%
'620442	W/G cotton woven dresses	159.45	105.85	3.65	1.80	30.54	2.38	4.01	0.19	19.53%
'620240	W/G MMF woven overcoats, car-coats, capes	133.62	74.56	6.18	27.00	0.19	8.96	4.20	1.50	#DIV/0!
'610462	W/G cotton knitted trousers	132.30	72.01	29.10	4.42	12.44	4.83	0.55	3.29	7.29%
'620449	W/G non cotton woven dresses	130.35	95.17	0.30	1.30	14.06	1.21	7.86	0.27	23.78%
'620140	M/B MMF woven overcoats, car-coats, capes	127.41	72.46	9.53	23.96	0.30	5.90	2.89	2.44	#DIV/0!
'620463	W/G synthetic woven trousers	122.36	73.62	5.55	19.09	1.70	6.26	1.65	2.56	4.66%
'611430	MMF knitted sporting & special garments	118.28	89.87	6.34	8.09	0.68	1.90	1.54	0.51	-0.62%
'611595	Knitted Full or knee-length stockings	117.46	88.05	0.00	17.93	0.09	0.37	0.60	0.09	4.82%

Source: ITC Trademap

Table-5 shows the major apparel items imported by Australia from the world which had positive annual growth in the last 5 years (from 2017-2022). But the shares of Bangladesh in these items are comparatively less. So Bangladesh has the potential to export those items to Australia as they have high demands for those products.

HS code	Items	Australia's import from world	Australia's import from BD	BD's share in Australia's total import	CAGR of Australia's import from world during 2017-22*
'611030	MMF Knitted Jerseys & pullovers	341.91	32.17	9.41%	4.99%
'620443	W/G synthetic woven dresses	199.11	0.82	0.41%	3.59%
'610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	197.74	14.18	7.17%	14.02%
'620343	M/B synthetic woven trousers	167.78	14.62	8.71%	8.06%
'620463	W/G synthetic woven trousers	122.36	5.55	4.53%	4.66%
'620630	W/G cotton woven blouses & shirts	98.68	8.49	8.60%	5.96%
'610443	W/G synthetic knitted dresses	90.95	1.17	1.28%	8.04%
'610520	M/B MMF knitted shirts	88.02	3.05	3.46%	7.63%
'620433	W/G synthetic woven jackets & blazers	78.44	1.32	1.69%	6.37%
'620530	M/B MMF woven shirts	58.70	4.23	7.21%	8.54%

Market Access

As a LDC, Bangladesh enjoys duty free market access in Australia. [A](#)

News in Pictures



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan addressed a seminar on “Promoting circularity for a sustainable RMG sector in Bangladesh ” as a special guest. Salman F Rahman MP, Private Industry and Investment Advisor to the honorable Prime Minister; H.E. Ms. Winnie Estrup, Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh, H. E. Alexandra Berg von Linde, Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh; Silje Fines Wenebbo, Charge the Affairs of Norway Embassy, and Tahrin Aman, President, Nordic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also spoke at the seminar organized by NCCI and Nordic embassies in Dhaka.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan spoke at a seminar on “50 Years of EU-Bangladesh Partnership: Charting Ahead on A Legacy of Success” organized by Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) in Dhaka. Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the honorable Prime Minister, attended the seminar as chief guest while H.E. Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh was present as special guest.



The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and German development cooperation agency GIZ joined hands in a bid to strengthen human rights and environmental due diligence in the RMG sector of Bangladesh. As part of the collaboration, BGMEA with the support of GIZ will develop an ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) Digital Data Reporting Platform for collecting and publishing data on the sustainability performance of BGMEA member factories. In this regard, BGMEA and GIZ signed a Cooperation Agreement. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan and Project Manager, GIZ Dr. Michael Klode inked the agreement on behalf of their respective sides. BGMEA Director Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan and Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Sustainability Sheikh M. Mustafiz were also present.



A delegation of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) led by TEXPROCIL Chairman Sunil Patwari paid the visit to BGMEA President Faruque Hassan to discuss challenges and opportunities to pave the way to more trade between the two neighboring countries.

Zhang Tao, Vice Chairman, Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT-TEX paid a call on BGMEA President Faruque Hassan. They discussed how both sides could work together to identify areas of mutual collaboration and make use of the opportunities that lie ahead.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan met with Commissioner of Customs Bond Commissionerate, Chattogram A.K.M. Mahbubur Rahman in Chattogram. BGMEA First Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Vice President Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, former First Vice Presidents Nasir Uddin Chowdhury and Moinuddin Ahmed Mintu and current Directors Md. M. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, A.M. Shaful Karim (Khokon), M. Ahsanul Hoq, Mohammed Meraj-E-Mostafa (Kaisar) and former directors were present at the meeting held at BGMEA Chattogram office. The BGMEA leaders urged the Customs Bond Commissionerate to streamline customs and bond related procedures and provide faster services for the RMG industry.



A delegation of BGMEA led by First Vice President of BGMEA Syed Nazrul Islam met with Honorable Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan MP at the Ministry of Home Affairs. The delegation included BGMEA Senior Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Vice President Md. Nasir Uddin and BKMEA Executive President Mohammad Hatem. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, BPM (Bar), PPM; DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq, BPM (Bar), PPM; Industrial Police Chief (Additional IGP) Md. Mahabubor Rahman, BPM (Bar), PPM and senior officials of Bangladesh Police and the Ministry of Home Affairs were also present at the meeting.

A delegation of Jack, a leading Chinese sewing machine manufacturer, called on BGMEA President Faruque Hassan at BGMEA Complex in Uttara, Dhaka. The delegation included Qiu Yangyou, Vice President of Jack Group; Li Fengzhi, Marketing Director of Asia; Allan Chan, Marketing Manager of Bangladesh; Feng Lidong, Sales Manager of Bangladesh; Chen Yue, Vice GM of Product Solution Department and Ying Zhenhua, Director of Lockstitch Products. They discussed potential collaboration to enhance the competitiveness of Bangladesh's RMG industry through innovation and technology upgradation.



A delegation of Oxfam comprising members from Oxfam Australia and Canada met with BGMEA President Faruque Hassan at BGMEA Complex in Uttara, Dhaka. The delegation members were Nayeem Emran, Economic Justice Advisor, Oxfam Australia; Bella McMahon, Policy Advocacy and Campaigns Support Officer, Oxfam Australia; Mwangala Matakala, Campaigns and Outreach Officer, Oxfam Canada; and Md Razu Ahmad Masum, Programme Officer, CJNRR, Oxfam in Bangladesh. They discussed possible avenues of working together for the sustainable development of the apparel industry in Bangladesh. Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Foreign Mission Cell Shams Mahmud was also present.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan addressed the opening ceremony of the “1ST DRMC National Business Carnival 2023” as chief guest in Dhaka.

A meeting was held between a WaterAid delegation and BGMEA President Faruque Hassan in Dhaka to discuss sustainable water management in the RMG industry of Bangladesh. The delegation included Ruairidh McCarthy, Senior Strategic Partnerships Manager, Hannah Kennedy, Strategic Partnerships, WaterAid, Azman Ahmed Chowdhury, Head of Business Development and Fund Raising, WaterAid Bangladesh, and Solveig Berntsen, Strategic Partnerships Manager, WaterAid Sweden. Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh H. E. Winnie Estrup Petersen hosted the meeting at her residence.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan addressed the opening plenary of the 4th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum in Dhaka. Honorable Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, MP attended the program as chief guest. H.E. Peter D. Haas, US Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh, Salim Rahman, Managing Director, KDS, Ranjan Mahtani, Executive Chairman, Epic Group, Naureen Chowdhury, Head of Labour Rights Programme, Laudes Foundation also spoke at the session as guests of honor.



H&M Group, a globally renowned multinational retail-clothing company, has contributed books and dressmaker mannequins to the Centre of Innovation, Efficiency and Occupational Safety and Health (CIEOSH) and BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) to support the education and skill development of the next generation of RMG professionals in Bangladesh. Ziaur Rahman, Country Manager of H&M Group, presented the books and mannequins to Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA at BGMEA Complex in Uttara, Dhaka. The ceremony was also attended by Miran Ali, Vice President of BGMEA.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan had a view exchanging meeting with UGC Chairman Professor Dr. Kazi Shahidullah at UGC office in Dhaka. Former President of BGMEA Engr. Kutubuddin Ahmed and current Director of BGMEA Asif Ashraf were also present on the occasion. The BGMEA leaders urged the University Grants Commission (UGC) to create more opportunities for Bangladeshi students to pursue higher studies in fashion and textile related subjects.



Noted artist and fashion designer, Ms. Kuhu Plamondon, presented a painting on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to BGMEA President Faruque Hassan as a token of her appreciation of BGMEA's efforts and contribution to the development of Bangladesh and branding the country internationally. BGMEA Director Neela Hosna Ara and Director of Giant Group Sharmeen Hassan Tithi were also present at the event held at BGMEA Complex.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan spoke at a validation workshop on proposed module for training Bangladeshi fashion designers and RMG workers in producing high-end garments. The WTO Cell of the Ministry of Commerce organized the workshop which was attended by Senior Secretary of the Commerce Ministry Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Commerce Nusrat Jabeen Banu, Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on SDG Wasim Zakariah, Designer and Founder of Neval Ms. Anadil Johnson, faculties and students of BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan paid a visit an old age home, Apon Bhubon, where he spent some time with its residents, listened to their stories and shared happiness together. During the visit, he made financial contribution to Apon Bhubon for the well-being of the inmates of the old age home and presented them with clothes, foods and other gifts.



The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has come forward with financial donation to help destitute and underprivileged people with iftar in the holy month of Ramadan. BGMEA donated a part of the money budgeted for an Iftar program for its members to the Mastul Foundation to distribute iftar items among 25 thousand destitute people. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan handed over a cheque of donation to Founder and Executive Director of Mastul Foundation Kazi Reaz Rahman. BGMEA Vice President Miran Ali was also present at the the cheque handover ceremony.



BGMEA hosted a business networking evening followed by iftar which was attended by foreign diplomats posted in Dhaka, buyers and heads of financial institutions.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) made financial donation to help underprivileged people with foods in the holy month of Ramadan. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan presented Eid gifts and food items to disadvantaged people, and people with disabilities in Mirpur, Dhaka. BGMEA Director Asif Ashraf and Director of Giant Group Sharmeen Hassan Tithi were also present at the program.



The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) paid tribute to those who lost their lives in the Rana Plaza collapse. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan laid floral wreaths on the graves of the victims at the Jurain graveyard in Dhaka on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the tragic accident. BGMEA Vice President Shahidullah Azim and officials of BGMEA were also present on the occasion. **A**

Statistics

Bangladesh's RMG export to world

Value in Million USD

Month	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022-23 VS 2021-22	2022-23 VS 2020-21
July	3244.94	2887.22	3366.91	16.61%	3.76%
August	2468.02	2753.38	3745.76	36.04%	51.77%
September	2413.42	3418.84	3161.67	-7.52%	31.00%
October	2323.72	3561.71	3678.00	3.27%	58.28%
November	2444.59	3235.05	4378.94	35.36%	79.13%
December	2650.87	4044.50	4665.41	15.35%	76.00%
January	2862.16	4084.58	4421.33	8.24%	54.48%
February	2625.29	3511.72	3943.87	12.31%	50.23%
March	2454.91	3931.40	3890.55	-1.04%	58.48%
April	2516.98	3934.18	3325.07	-15.48%	32.11%
May					
June					
Total	26004.90	35362.58	38577.51	9.09%	48.35%

Source: EPB

Knitwear

Value in Million USD

Month	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022-23 VS 2021-22	2022-23 VS 2020-21
July	1750.28	1658.45	1854.15	11.80%	5.93%
August	1364.50	1600.44	2061.53	28.81%	51.08%
September	1348.88	1905.29	1733.78	-9.00%	28.53%
October	1338.22	2045.89	2075.66	1.46%	55.11%
November	1334.47	1775.50	2388.53	34.53%	78.99%
December	1389.82	2176.06	2546.03	17.00%	83.19%
January	1462.94	2112.41	2300.70	8.91%	57.27%
February	1352.64	1795.68	2099.95	16.94%	55.25%
March	1312.43	2050.18	2077.15	1.32%	58.27%
April	1341.77	2122.69	1830.25	-13.78%	36.41%
May					
June					
Total	13995.95	19242.59	20967.73	8.97%	49.81%

Source: EPB

Wovenwear

Value in Million USD

Month	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022-23 VS 2021-22	2022-23 VS 2020-21
July	1494.66	1228.77	1512.76	23.11%	1.21%
August	1103.52	1152.94	1684.23	46.08%	52.62%
September	1064.54	1513.55	1427.89	-5.66%	34.13%
October	985.50	1515.82	1602.34	5.71%	62.59%
November	1110.12	1459.55	1990.41	36.37%	79.30%
December	1261.05	1868.44	2119.38	13.43%	68.06%
January	1399.22	1972.17	2120.63	7.53%	51.56%
February	1272.65	1716.04	1843.92	7.45%	44.89%
March	1142.48	1881.22	1813.40	-3.61%	58.72%
April	1175.21	1811.49	1494.82	-17.48%	27.20%
May					
June					
Total	12008.95	16119.99	17609.78	9.24%	46.64%

Source: EPB

Bangladesh's RMG Export to World

(July-April 2021-22 & 2022-23)

Export Value in Million USD

EU Countries	Woven			Knit			Total		
	July-Apr 2021-22	July-Apr 2022-23	Growth %	July-Apr 2021-22	July-Apr 2022-23	Growth %	July-Apr 2021-22	July-Apr 2022-23	Growth %
Austria	10.11	9.87	-2.38	26.10	35.80	37.17	36.20	45.66	26.13
Belgium	188.88	196.02	3.78	412.24	441.94	7.21	601.11	637.96	6.13
Bulgaria	0.27	0.12	-57.13	0.98	0.56	-43.48	1.25	0.67	-46.43
Denmark	323.87	332.66	2.71	617.50	677.60	9.73	941.37	1010.25	7.32
Finland	4.13	8.02	94.46	23.67	37.25	57.39	27.80	45.28	62.89
France	696.25	872.92	25.37	1273.58	1534.47	20.48	1969.83	2407.39	22.21
Germany	2534.85	2186.15	-13.76	3437.04	3347.89	-2.59	5971.89	5534.04	-7.33
Greece	9.43	17.93	90.05	37.03	46.01	24.27	46.46	63.94	37.62
Italy	414.03	650.29	57.06	886.57	1201.81	35.56	1300.60	1852.10	42.40
Ireland	65.27	77.70	19.05	117.78	126.07	7.04	183.05	203.77	11.32
Netherlands	506.56	616.03	21.61	698.03	889.10	27.37	1204.60	1505.14	24.95
Portugal	20.69	30.94	49.55	46.61	71.57	53.56	67.30	102.52	52.33
Romania	3.31	5.60	69.47	14.55	24.30	66.99	17.86	29.91	67.45
Spain	1080.31	1187.51	9.92	1448.52	1763.50	21.75	2528.83	2951.01	16.69
Sweden	206.06	263.83	28.03	420.99	476.23	13.12	627.05	740.06	18.02
Cyprus	0.16	0.57	258.32	1.14	2.39	109.53	1.30	2.95	127.72
Czech Republic	107.75	157.07	45.77	114.16	151.26	32.50	221.91	308.32	38.94
Estonia	0.07	0.05	-27.54	1.09	1.47	35.08	1.16	1.52	31.51
Hungary	25.09	43.05	71.6	87.46	138.09	57.89	112.55	181.14	60.95
Latvia	0.17	0.29	64.1	0.65	0.60	-7.15	0.83	0.89	7.90
Lithuania	0.17	0.17	-2.25	0.20	0.11	-45.46	0.37	0.28	-25.50
Malta	0.05	0.08	52.20	0.11	0.33	188.82	0.17	0.41	145.06
Poland	619.44	506.51	-18.23	1033.06	855.31	-17.21	1652.50	1361.83	-17.59
Slovakia	17.89	22.06	23.32	46.13	57.53	24.70	64.02	79.59	24.31
Slovenia	19.55	21.70	11.01	72.60	68.01	-6.32	92.15	89.72	-2.64
Croatia	3.57	16.57	364.08	9.22	28.10	204.70	12.79	44.68	249.18
Luxembourg	0.13	0.43	230.40	1.15	2.13	85.73	1.28	2.56	100.35
Sub-Total (EU)	6,858.05	7,224.13	5.34	10,828.18	11,979.45	10.63	17,686.23	19,203.59	8.58
EU % of World	42.54	41.02		56.27	57.13		50.01	49.78	
USA	4863.63	4802.22	-1.26	2618.53	2146.16	-18.04	7,482.16	6,948.38	-7.13
% of USA	30.17	27.27		13.61	10.24		21.16	18.01	
U.K.	1510.45	1713.60	13.45	2268.71	2476.77	9.17	3779.15	4190.37	10.88
% of U.K.	9.37	9.73		11.79	11.81		10.69	10.86	
Canada	513.92	696.67	35.56	545.34	532.97	-2.27	1059.25	1229.65	16.09
% of Canada	3.19	3.96		2.83	2.54		3.00	3.19	
Non-Traditional Markets									
Japan	429.88	599.67	39.50	509.30	722.04	41.77	939.18	1321.71	40.73
Australia	261.26	317.97	21.70	430.04	643.33	49.60	691.30	961.30	39.06
Russia	194.99	121.95	-37.46	343.55	237.05	-31.00	538.54	358.99	-33.34
India	337.91	509.38	50.74	253.50	379.68	49.78	591.41	889.06	50.33
Korea Rep.	157.67	226.58	43.70	205.37	251.23	22.33	363.04	477.81	31.61
China	113.21	126.42	11.67	75.68	84.76	11.99	188.89	211.18	11.80
United Arab Emirates	128.50	102.44	-20.28	105.25	142.64	35.53	233.75	245.09	4.85
Mexico	105.35	154.14	46.32	114.09	133.54	17.05	219.44	287.68	31.10
Malaysia	45.63	79.20	73.59	121.27	180.93	49.19	166.90	260.13	55.86
Saudi Arabia	50.33	56.61	12.48	72.30	108.66	50.30	122.63	165.28	34.78
Turkey	71.55	124.00	73.31	66.43	94.58	42.38	137.98	218.58	58.42
South Africa	41.10	42.68	3.85	61.21	64.26	4.99	102.31	106.95	4.54
New Zealand	29.46	29.83	1.26	68.53	77.71	13.38	98.00	107.54	9.74
Chile	65.18	63.35	-2.80	84.63	70.28	-16.96	149.81	133.63	-10.80
Brazil	32.34	53.37	65.02	48.70	85.96	76.51	81.04	139.34	71.92
Other Countries	309.58	565.53	82.67	421.99	555.72	31.69	731.58	1121.25	53.26
Total (Non-Trad. Markets)	2,373.95	3,173.15	33.67	2,981.84	3,832.37	28.52	5,355.79	7,005.52	30.80
% of Non-Traditional	14.73	18.02		15.50	18.28		15.15	18.16	
GRAND TOTAL	16,119.99	17,609.78	9.24	19,242.59	20,967.73	8.97	35,362.59	38,577.51	9.09

Source: EPB

Bangladesh's top 30 apparel items export to world

Value in Million USD

SL	HS Code	Products Description	Jul-Apr 2021-22	Jul-Apr 2022-23	Growth
1	610910	Cotton T-shirts	7,110.29	7,365.71	3.59%
2	620342	M/B cotton woven trousers	4,671.76	4,816.27	3.09%
3	620462	W/G cotton woven trousers	3,006.56	2,849.84	-5.21%
4	611020	Cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	2,570.29	2,724.52	6.00%
5	620520	M/B cotton woven shirts	1,219.86	1,544.99	26.65%
6	611030	MMF knitted Jerseys & pullovers	1,595.48	1,490.63	-6.57%
7	610462	W/G cotton knitted trousers	1,342.38	1,383.07	3.03%
8	620343	M/B synthetic woven trousers	1,371.10	1,277.23	-6.85%
9	610510	M/B cotton knitted shirts	712.58	1,215.16	70.53%
10	610342	M/B cotton knitted trousers	578.57	711.84	23.03%
11	611120	Cotton knitted Babies' garments	537.05	691.52	28.76%
12	610821	W/G cotton knitted briefs & panties	582.99	561.17	-3.74%
13	610711	M/B cotton knitted underpants	511.89	534.83	4.48%
14	621210	Non cotton woven Brassires	551.13	503.50	-8.64%
15	610990	Non cotton knitted T-shirts	367.97	497.34	35.16%
16	620463	W/G synthetic woven trousers	308.15	463.08	50.28%
17	610442	Cotton knitted Dresses	357.46	425.83	19.13%
18	620530	M/B MMF woven shirts	192.75	349.51	81.33%
19	611090	Non cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	275.20	298.46	8.45%
20	620469	W/G non cotton woven trousers	210.50	274.65	30.48%
21	610831	W/G cotton knitted nighties	254.77	259.81	1.98%
22	620333	M/B synthetic woven jackets & blazers	124.47	256.60	106.15%
23	620630	W/G cotton woven blouses	222.11	249.00	12.11%
24	610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	226.55	230.82	1.89%
25	620640	W/G MMF woven blouses	188.80	229.81	21.72%
26	620920	Cotton woven Babies' garments	209.12	225.98	8.06%
27	620590	M/B non cotton woven shirts	138.82	218.08	57.09%
28	610610	W/G cotton knitted blouses	129.95	200.89	54.59%
29	620442	Cotton woven Dresses	215.71	197.68	-8.36%
30	620432	W/G cotton woven jackets and blazers	119.79	188.42	57.29%

Source: EPB

Note: M/B= Men's or boys

W/G= Women's or girls

EU Apparel Import Growth

Growth: 2023 VS 2022				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	4.31%	-6.42%	-12.25%	-4.94%
China	-7.44%	-19.28%	-27.74%	-17.80%
Bangladesh	12.84%	3.60%	-3.30%	3.90%
Turkey	-5.36%	-16.97%	-15.79%	-12.79%
India	14.37%	16.14%	-8.76%	5.75%
Cambodia	3.83%	-5.52%	-15.60%	-6.19%
Vietnam	15.63%	0.70%	-4.82%	3.73%
Pakistan	7.71%	-2.84%	-14.73%	-3.20%
Morocco	-9.95%	-23.71%	-19.53%	-18.04%
Sri Lanka	-6.79%	-25.10%	-17.71%	-16.50%
Indonesia	7.60%	-15.13%	-12.04%	-7.03%

Growth: 2023 VS 2021				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	30.29%	12.96%	8.27%	16.94%
China	12.49%	-0.61%	-15.22%	-0.86%
Bangladesh	66.12%	33.24%	47.69%	48.53%
Turkey	11.14%	2.56%	1.75%	5.13%
India	41.12%	19.30%	8.59%	21.19%
Cambodia	20.42%	26.55%	13.77%	19.91%
Vietnam	45.61%	22.44%	12.96%	26.47%
Pakistan	40.56%	21.31%	10.07%	24.15%
Morocco	15.50%	-6.68%	-3.16%	1.03%
Sri Lanka	9.90%	-11.61%	-8.15%	-3.35%
Indonesia	41.31%	15.34%	7.40%	20.17%

Growth: 2023 VS 2020				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	4.15%	10.01%	27.38%	12.75%
China	-4.70%	3.38%	43.08%	8.32%
Bangladesh	29.01%	29.23%	29.91%	29.40%
Turkey	5.40%	10.52%	40.22%	16.93%
India	10.64%	16.33%	26.41%	17.61%
Cambodia	-3.81%	8.08%	5.14%	2.58%
Vietnam	17.41%	20.25%	50.27%	27.35%
Pakistan	26.16%	37.30%	13.38%	25.02%
Morocco	-6.77%	-3.14%	18.32%	2.41%
Sri Lanka	-2.57%	3.99%	9.03%	2.97%
Indonesia	-3.58%	7.58%	0.86%	1.12%

Source: eurostat

US Apparel Import Growth

Growth: 2023 VS 2022				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	-3.77%	-19.96%	-32.50%	-19.73%
China	-24.63%	-35.40%	-45.75%	-34.89%
Vietnam	-0.47%	-19.99%	-44.22%	-24.25%
Bangladesh	15.33%	-11.77%	-35.30%	-13.34%
India	9.84%	-9.08%	-27.22%	-11.00%
Indonesia	4.72%	-19.04%	-33.76%	-17.96%
Cambodia	-12.86%	-44.40%	-38.31%	-32.57%
Mexico	-0.72%	-3.79%	-7.95%	-4.45%
Pakistan	-3.41%	-37.13%	-37.40%	-26.97%
Honduras	-20.38%	-3.75%	-22.64%	-15.84%
Korea	1.15%	-32.42%	-16.69%	-15.12%

Growth: 2023 VS 2021				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	31.11%	10.83%	-3.59%	11.88%
China	10.99%	-5.65%	-24.23%	-6.03%
Vietnam	17.98%	7.11%	-24.44%	-1.76%
Bangladesh	66.88%	25.33%	26.34%	39.81%
India	68.52%	29.12%	17.74%	36.27%
Indonesia	64.51%	24.45%	13.91%	32.71%
Cambodia	23.22%	-14.34%	-21.39%	-6.16%
Mexico	26.05%	15.19%	8.45%	15.66%
Pakistan	37.73%	13.83%	-10.67%	11.87%
Honduras	-10.38%	11.56%	-0.04%	1.40%
Korea	97.96%	14.00%	41.91%	50.66%

Growth: 2023 VS 2020				
Country	January	February	March	Jan-Mar
World	7.14%	1.13%	20.76%	9.11%
China	-11.07%	0.72%	63.77%	5.91%
Vietnam	-3.94%	2.84%	0.91%	-0.37%
Bangladesh	39.23%	14.04%	27.11%	27.49%
India	30.89%	1.40%	18.26%	16.60%
Indonesia	9.93%	-7.59%	7.44%	3.46%
Cambodia	1.89%	-23.28%	4.80%	-5.28%
Mexico	9.71%	-0.34%	16.84%	8.58%
Pakistan	54.21%	31.22%	34.74%	40.84%
Honduras	-18.81%	-3.32%	18.51%	-0.14%
Korea	50.55%	-17.84%	50.63%	27.26%

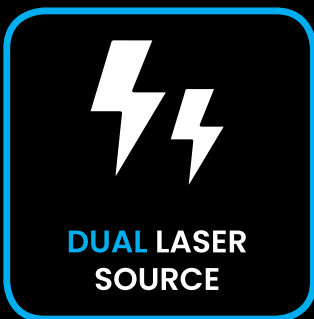
Source: otexa ^A

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Fire Prevention

- 1) Faulty electrical management is major cause of fire. Immediately replace defected electrical wires, circuit breakers, broken switches, plugs, and sockets.
- 2) Installation of fire alarm to detect fire.
- 3) Electrical wirings must be inspected regularly by experienced electrical engineer every now and then.
- 4) Unplug appliances after using.
- 5) Learn how to use fire extinguisher in case of fire.



In case of Fire

- 1) Stay calm and evacuate instantly.
- 2) Inform fire service and civil defense station immediately.
- 3) Use stairs and avoid elevators.
- 4) Do not listen to any rumors and do not run unnecessarily.
- 5) If trapped in smoke, cover your nose with handkerchief or cloth, keep your head down or crawl, look for way out and get out slowly.

অগ্নি প্রতিরোধে

- ১) ত্রুটিপূর্ণ বৈদ্যুতিক ব্যবস্থাপনা আগুনের প্রধান কারণ. ত্রুটিপূর্ণ তার, সার্কিট ব্রেকার, ভাঙ্গা সুইচ, প্লাগ এবং সকেট অবিলম্বে প্রতিস্থাপন করুন।
- ২) আগুন সনাক্ত করতে ফায়ার অ্যালার্ম স্থাপন করুন।
- ৩) বৈদ্যুতিক তার গুলি অবশ্যই অভিজ্ঞ প্রকৌশলী দ্বারা নিয়মিত পরীক্ষা করুন।
- ৪) ব্যবহারের পর যন্ত্রপাতি খুলে ফেলুন।
- ৫) আগুন লাগা এর ক্ষেত্রে অগ্নি নির্বাপক যন্ত্র কিভাবে ব্যবহার করবেন তা শিখুন।



আগুনের ক্ষেত্রে :

- ১) শান্ত থাকুন এবং অবিলম্বে স্থান ত্যাগ করুন।
- ২) অবিলম্বে ফায়ার সার্ভিস এবং সিভিল ডিফেন্স স্টেশনকে অবহিত করুন।
- ৩) সিঁড়ি ব্যবহার করুন এবং লিফট পরিহার করুন।
- ৪) গুজবে কান দিবেন না এবং অযথা দৌড়াবেন না।
- ৫) ধোঁয়ায় আটক পড়লে, রুমাল বা কাপড় দিয়ে নাক ঢেকে রাখুন, মাথা নিচু রাখুন বা হামাগুড়ি দিন, বেরিয়ে আসার পথ খুঁজুন এবং ধীরে ধীরে বেরিয়ে আসুন।



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SETTING A NEW STANDARD IN MORE SUSTAINABLE COTTON PRODUCTION

Launched in 2020, the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol was designed to set a new standard in **more sustainably grown cotton**, ensuring that it contributes to the **protection and preservation of the planet**, using the most sustainable and responsible techniques. It is the only system that provides quantifiable, verifiable goals and measurement in **six key sustainability metrics** and article-level supply chain transparency.

The Trust Protocol provides **brands and retailers the critical assurances** they need to show the cotton fiber element of their supply chain is more sustainably grown with **lower environmental and social risk.**

Trust in a smarter cotton future.



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ROOTING FOR A **GREEN** **PLANET**

BGMEA embodies sustainability as a core value, transcending beyond mere rhetoric. Bangladesh leads the green development path with **197 LEED Certified** garment factories, setting a global benchmark. Through our tree plantation program, **'Rooting for a Green Planet'**, set to take place from **10 to 16 July 2023**, we aim to educate and inspire members to plant trees regularly, extending this practice at factory, home and everywhere. Our goal is to create a ripple effect, encouraging our members to become ambassadors for change today and tomorrow.

