

The Apparel Story

গ্যাপারেল স্টোরি

September-October 2023

SWITCH TO
UPSTREAM
CIRCULARITY
DIALOGUE

MY TWO
PENCE ON
MINIMUM WAGE

Faruque Hassan,
President, BGMEA

TEXTILE
TECHNOLOGY
BUSINESS
CENTER

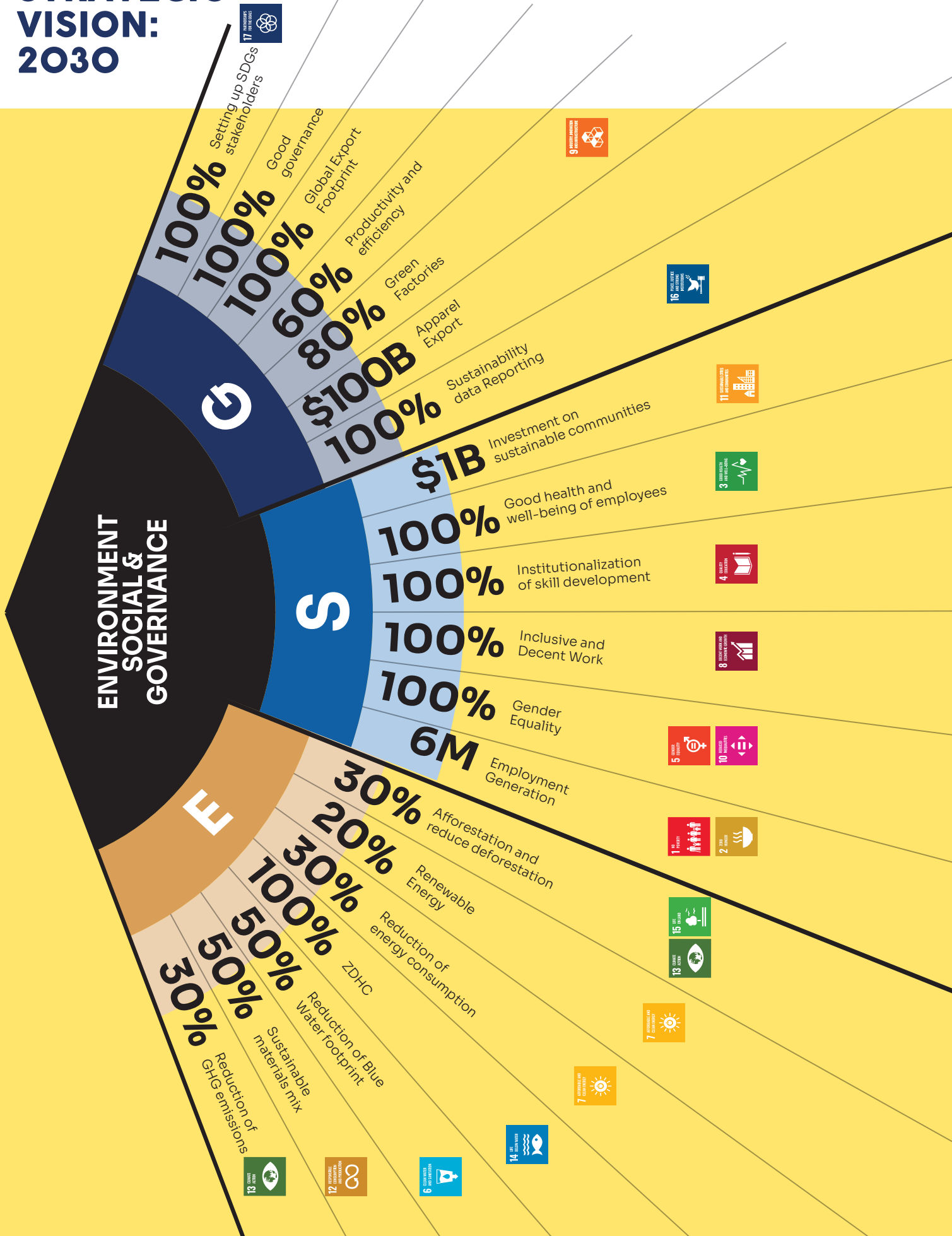


BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (BGMEA)

বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানীকারক সমিতি

• বাংলাদেশ তৈরি •

BGMEA SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC VISION: 2030





BUSINESS
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BASED
TARGETS**

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

**FIRST THREAD
COMPANY TO
VALIDATE
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REDUCTION TARGETS.**

EDITORIAL

With the world under unprecedented threat posed by global warming, sustainability is no longer a mere buzzword; it's an essential aspect of the fashion and apparel industry. Consumers worldwide are increasingly demanding ethical products, transparency, and circularity. It's encouraging that the readymade garment industry in Bangladesh has already taken proactive steps to address sustainability and circularity. It's worth mentioning that Bangladesh is home to the highest number of LEED certified green garment factories in the world.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has taken a bold step by renewing its vision and corporate logo. The nine-dot logo represents nine commitments, with circularity being one of the central pillars. The industry, traditionally linear in its approach, is now aiming for a shift towards circularity to promote sustainable economic growth.

Embracing circularity in Bangladesh presents both opportunities and challenges. Bangladesh is one of the world's largest producers of textile scraps, generating approximately 400,000 tonnes of pre-consumer textile waste annually. However, only a fraction of this waste is recycled locally, with some being exported, while the rest ends up being incinerated or landfilled. This challenge is particularly evident in the form of "Jhut," post-industrial textile waste. It's heartening that entrepreneurs are investing in the recycling industry.

However, to establish a circular ecosystem successfully, various factors are crucial. These include financial support, technology, and a skilled workforce to facilitate the transition towards circularity. Discussions and actions to identify gaps and suggest measures are important for achieving this vision. The support of stakeholders including buyers is also vital in Bangladesh's journey towards a circular economy because establishing a circular supply chain, circular design, and circular fashion items requires collaboration with stakeholders who share the same commitment to sustainability.

By embracing circularity and sustainability, Bangladesh can lead the way in creating a more environmentally friendly and economically sustainable future. With the support of all involved, the journey can change the face of fashion as we know it now.

The Editorial Board
The Apparel Story



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The Apparel Story

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Switch to Upstream Circularity Dialogue

Pre-consumer Textile Waste in Bangladesh



On 3rd September 2023, an esteemed panel of industry leaders, policymakers, and experts in circular economies convened for the "Switch to Upstream Circularity Dialogue: Pre-consumer Textile Waste in Bangladesh" event at the Amari Hotel in Dhaka. The dialogue covered the strategies, policies, infrastructure, collaborations, and innovations necessary to build a thriving circular ecosystem in Bangladesh.

This event was organized under the Switch to Circular Economy Value Chains project (SWITCH2CE), co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland. SWITCH2CE is led by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in collaboration with Chatham House, Circle Economy, and European Investment Bank, and supports the switch to circularity in selected global value chains.

Bangladesh is the second largest ready-made garment exporter in the world, and its apparel industry annually produces about 400,000 tonnes of pre-consumer textile waste. This waste is currently collected in an informal way, and only 5% of it is recycled locally. The remaining waste is either incinerated in boilers or landfilled, which has a negative impact on the environment and human health. The dialogue panelists highlighted the importance of upstream circularity in the textile industry. They also discussed the need for collaboration among all stakeholders, including brands, manufacturers, policymakers, and waste management companies, to build a circular textile ecosystem in Bangladesh.

Some of the key takeaways from the dialogue:

- The need for a national circularity strategy: The government of Bangladesh should develop a national circularity strategy that sets ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling in the textile industry & identify specific measures to support businesses in transitioning to circularity.
- The importance of collaboration: All stakeholders, including brands, manufacturers, policymakers, and waste management companies, need to work together to build a circular textile ecosystem in Bangladesh.
- The role of innovation: Innovation is essential for developing new circularity solutions for the textile industry. This includes developing new sustainable materials, designing for recyclability, and improving manufacturing efficiency.



Faruque Hassan

President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

The ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh has so far followed a linear business model, from cradle to grave. This

trajectory needs to change if we are to sustain the global fashion industry. The circular economy can build a pathway for greater environmental sustainability and economic growth.

Bangladesh is probably one of the safest and cleanest apparel manufacturing countries in the world, offering the best sustainable solutions to our valued clients. We would like to establish ourselves as a global recycling hub and further contribute to our economy, while also positively impacting our climate.



Dr. Bernd Spanier

Chargé d'Affaires, Deputy Head of Mission, European Union in Bangladesh

Fast fashion garments may look great, but they don't hold their value, they can't be

repaired, and they end up in landfills, are incinerated, or are shipped off to faraway places. We need to change the model of overproduction and overconsumption, and we need to establish a new industrial system in the EU that is grounded on the principles of the circular economy.

I don't see any reason why Bangladesh shouldn't also become a world leader in the circular economy, based on its expertise and mindset.



Mark Draeck

Chief Technical Advisor on SWITCH2Circular, UNIDO

What we are trying to do here today will be mainstream years from now. And what our pilot work then wants to

do is to see, well, in order to get from economic opportunity to actual action in the market. Of course, it's not easy; it's not straightforward in terms of technology again, in terms of capacities, business models and so on. That is exactly what we want to try and do. The ship of circularity is being prepared and make sure that you're on it before this year. Let's help with that.



Saber Hossain Chowdhury, M.P.

Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh

The traditional way of looking at how we consume, whether it is "make, use and throw away" or "take, make and dispose," is not really where the future is going. We have to come out of this current situation.

I feel that the best way to perhaps support this case is to look at it not just from a commercial point of view, but also from an environmental point of view.

I think this is a great opportunity for Bangladesh, and we should seize it with both hands. This can be another instance where we can truly say that Bangladesh is leading the world. Let that be the vision.



Vidiya Amrit Khan

*Director in Charge of BGMEA Circular Fashion Partnership Working Committee
Deputy Managing Director, Desh Garments Ltd.*

Bangladesh is not necessarily a country that adds to a lot of incineration pollution figures. And this is partially because if you think about it,

historically, culturally, we have always taken our waste, we have always reused it.

I believe that over the next three years what the BGMEA with all the partners that are supporting this initiative should do is to, integrate to understand and to show the way forward to the waste collectors who are already working in this industry relentlessly.



M. Shovon Islam

Managing Director, Sparrow Group

The transformation of the Bangladesh RMG industry towards circularity is a significant step towards a more sustainable and competitive future.



Shams Mahmud

Managing Director, Shasha Denims Ltd.

Whenever we collected data on circularity, we never included small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the local players who have been doing this for a long time, because we usually talk about the formal economy. So this is perhaps the first event in Bangladesh, where SMEs and the actual players involved in the recycling industry are also presented.



Holly Syrett

Impact Programmes & Sustainability Director, Global Fashion Agenda

We see the global textile industry moving rapidly but we also see that Bangladesh within 4-5 years has been able to move incredibly rapidly as well. Therefore, if there's a country that can jump on this opportunity, we believe we're here right now.



MoU With Circle Economy

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Circle Economy have partnered to accelerate the transition of Bangladesh's garment and textile industry towards a circular economy. The partnership will focus on raising awareness, developing circular strategies, and building capacity. The partnership is expected to play a vital role in helping Bangladesh's garment and textile industry transition to a more sustainable future.



Circularity Game

The Circularity Game is a gamified assessment tool developed by Circle Economy to enhance understanding of circular principles. It is not just another quiz, but a dynamic learning experience. A demonstration of the game was presented at the event to a diverse audience. The Circularity Game is a valuable tool for raising awareness of the circular economy and its benefits.



Panel Discussion 1:

ENABLING A CIRCULAR INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM BY AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODEL

At the event, Dishan Karunaratne, Chief Representative of Bangladesh & Pakistan at BESTSELLER; Dr. M. Masrur Reaz, CEO, Policy Exchange; Mohammed Zahidullah; CSO, DBL Group; Md. Shahidullah Azim, Vice President, BGMEA; and Syed Mahbubur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO, MTB, BD took part in the panel discussion on “Enabling a circular industrial ecosystem by an innovative business model”. Moderated by Shams Mahmud, Managing Director of Shasha Denims, the panelists discussed circularity scenarios and possible solutions to successfully transform Bangladesh’s garment and textile industry to integrate circularity into the value chain.



Md. Shahidullah Azim
Vice President, BGMEA

We are already following the reduce-recycle-recover principle, and we can convert the rest of our waste into exports. We lose 300-400 million dollars every year because of the weight of waste that we export. If we can make fiber from waste, and then fabric from fiber, and then RMG from fabric, I hope we can earn 67 billion dollars. This is a huge opportunity for us, as we are expected to reach 100 billion dollars by 2030.



Dishan Karunaratne
*Chief Representative - Bangladesh & Pakistan
BESTSELLER*

It has to come from within, from the industry itself, to streamline reuse, recycling, or upcycling in our value chain and supply chain. Just like the green garment initiative has taken place, and all the new innovation and R&D centers that have sprung up in Bangladesh, it is because we want this industry to grow from within itself, not because of outside legislation or anything. It is because we care for the story of Bangladesh to be heard in a better way.



Dr. M. Masrur Reaz
CEO, Policy Exchange

A circular economy transition will require a different or new kind of investment in the circular economy system. The current investment climate is not conducive to circular economy investments, so Bangladesh needs to roll out a targeted investment climate improvement strategy for circular economy.



Syed Mahbubur Rahman
*Managing Director & CEO,
Mutual Trust Bank Limited*

The Bangladeshi garment industry is facing liquidity challenges due to the volatility in the foreign exchange market and the recent increase in interest rates. This is making it difficult for banks to provide funding to sustainable businesses. We need to find ways to address these challenges so that the garment industry can transition to a more sustainable future.



Mohammed Zahidullah
Chief Sustainability Officer, DBL Group

By making circular yarns and using the cut face, we do not need to import a certain percentage of the raw cotton. This saves us almost five million dollars a year in raw cotton imports.

UNIDO-led SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains project (SWITCH2CE), co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland, works with EU multinational companies and their suppliers from developing countries to switch to more circular economy approaches and practices in three selected value chains: Plastic Packaging, Textile&Garments, and ICT&Electronics. Learn more: www.switchtocircular.eu

As part of UNIDO’s SWITCH2CE programme, BESTSELLER with support of Global Fashion Agenda, BGMEA and Reverse Resources is the lead applicant on the BESTSELLER – Switch to Upstream Circularity Pilot. Building upon the Circular Fashion Partnership project that started in 2020, the BESTSELLER – Switch to Upstream Circularity Pilot aims to scale traceable textile recycling with manufacturers in Bangladesh, capturing, and valorising high volumes of post-industrial textile waste. This will provide manufacturers with long-term circular business solutions, reducing dependency on virgin materials and increasing the availability of recycled material, to ultimately achieve a long-term, scalable and just transition to a circular textile system in Bangladesh and beyond.

Panel Discussion 2:

UNLOCKING THE WASTE VALUE CHAIN WITH AN INTEGRATED CIRCULAR APPROACH

The second panel discussion was on the topic “Unlocking the waste value chain with an integrated circular approach.” Distinguished panelists included Abdur Rahim Khan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh; Abu Syed Belal, Trade Counselor, EU Delegation to Bangladesh; Francesca Rulli, Founder-Process Factory & Sustainability Manager; Faisal Rabbi, Stakeholder Engagement & Public Affairs Manager - H&M; and Nin Castle, Co-Founder, Reverse Resources. Moderated by Vidiya Amrit Khan, Director, BGMEA, the panelists discussed the challenges and opportunities of transforming pre-consumer waste within the garment and textile industries.



Abdur Rahim Khan

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

To ensure that we have the appropriate policy framework and regulatory framework for a circular economy, we need to work with a variety of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment, the Local Government Division, the Local Government Bodies, the Minister of Commerce, the Minister of Industry, and the National Board of Revenue. The private sector, such as BGMEA and BKMEA, will also play an integral role in developing any policy related to the circular economy.



Abu Syed Belal

Trade Counselor, EU Delegation to Bangladesh

The European Union wants to break the vicious cycle of overproduction and overconsumption in the textile and clothing industry. It is doing this by setting ambitious standards for circularity and sustainability.



Francesca Rulli

Founder, Process Factory & Sustainability
To define a stable framework and make methodologies for the circular economy in the professional luxury industry, we need to focus on sustainable product development, eco-design, quality, low-impact production processes, and traceability.



Faisal Rabbi

Stakeholder Engagement & Public Affairs Manager, H&M Group

Bangladesh is not blessed with post-consumer waste, but we have pre-consumer waste. This is a big opportunity for us. We can recycle our pre-consumer waste and use it in our raw materials, saving us 500 million US dollars. We need to look at this holistically and work together to achieve our goals.



Nin Castle

Co-Founder, Lead of Recycling and Chief Project Officer, Reverse Resources

The waste handling industry in Bangladesh, like any country, faces challenges with informality. What is key is that we show the business opportunity for formalization. We have many business case studies showing that this is possible. We have set up a fully compliant model and want to share it. [A](#)

Local pilot partners:



BESTSELLER



Reverse Resources

Funded by:



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As a top exporter of RMG to the world, Bangladesh's active role in the circular transition becomes non-negotiable if the country aims to remain competitive in the global market

H. E. Christian Brix Moller, Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh

Denmark and Bangladesh have a longstanding partnership that continues to diversify and strengthen. As these two countries seek to fortify the bilateral relationship, there is an emerging focus on sustainability and circularity in the global fashion supply chain – an area of great significance to both countries. In an exclusive interview with *The Apparel Story*, H. E. Christian Brix Moller, the Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh, shared his insights into this dynamic partnership. He also shed light on Denmark's vision for circularity in the EU and its potential impact on the Bangladeshi RMG and textile industry. Ambassador Moller also shared his thoughts on how Bangladeshi RMG and textile companies should prepare for the EU Due Diligence, a topic of growing importance in the context of circular economy.

What is the vision towards circularity in the EU and in Denmark, and how would such a vision impact the global fashion supply chain especially Bangladeshi RMG and textile industry?

The vision towards circularity in the European Union (EU) and Denmark primarily reflects a commitment to transitioning from a linear economic model to a circular economy. In this model of circularity, the goal is to minimize waste, maximize resource efficiency, and promote sustainability. Both in Denmark and the EU, we have clearly articulated our visions and policies in this regard.

There are many components that could shape this vision. First, transparent and responsible business practices, which are essential to an ethical corporate landscape. A responsible business operates with the understanding that their practices should go beyond profit maximization, which could mean many things: a commitment to environmental stewardship, a clean and ethical supply chain, diversity and inclusion within the company and social responsibility, to name a few. The modern customer and investors worldwide have become more conscious than ever of the environment and working standards and so increasingly seek alignment between their values and business practices.

Second, resource efficient production, which starts by recognizing that our planet's resources are finite. Hence, the focus should be on energy saving, energy efficiency and renewable energy and minimizing waste. Thereby, enhancing overall sustainable production. In today's resource-constrained world, resource efficiency becomes a necessity and not a choice.

Third, production must have the

As brands look for newer partnerships, they are likely to prioritise a cleaner and greener supply and production chain, especially in light of the fact that today's customers are increasingly conscious of their consumptions. To remain competitive in this new order of circular economy and fashion, Bangladesh should look into integration of circularity in its national policies, and address issues of human rights and environmental impact in the process.

lowest possible impact on the environment. Businesses can be critical contributors to the global climate agenda that calls for reduced emissions by moving towards production processes that reduce their carbon footprint. Fourth, an unavoidable stage in reaching circularity is sustainable design, which is interconnected with principles of recycle and reuse. This refers to designing products that are functional, appealing but also leave back minimal effect on the environment.

These elements are also reflected in various EU policies such as the Circular Economy Action Plan 2020, the European Green Deal 2019 and other supranational regulations that also apply in Denmark. Denmark is fully aligned with these principles and is ready to lead the way in sustainable and circular fashion. This requires change in demand to promote sustainable production, modernization of the industries, international partnerships and innovations.

As the supply chain of the apparel industry operates at a global level, the EU-Denmark vision will undoubtedly have an impact on Bangladeshi RMG/apparel and textile industry. As brands look for newer partnerships, they are likely

to prioritise a cleaner and greener supply and production chain, especially in light of the fact that today's customers are increasingly conscious of their consumptions. To remain competitive in this new order of circular economy and fashion, Bangladesh should look into integration of circularity in its national policies, and address issues of human rights and environmental impact in the process. It is equally important to bring about changes in practice such as, recycling textile waste materials, making biodegradable yarns, exploring renewable energy, leveraging technology and automation, among others.

How does Denmark view the role of Bangladesh in the transition to a circular economy in the global RMG and textile industry?

Denmark sees Bangladesh as a growing and attractive business hub. As a top exporter of RMG to the world, Bangladesh's active role in the circular transition becomes

BGMEA is a beacon that is supporting the industry to transition towards green, sustainable, ethical, and climate-friendly practices. I am confident that we will witness BGMEA carry this role forward in an even stronger and brighter way.

non-negotiable especially if the country aims to remain competitive in the global market. Bangladesh is taking commendable steps in that direction. I am happy to see that the BGMEA is showing ambitious leadership in this regard. Their sustainable strategic vision-2030 that aims to pursue the growth of the RMG industry in a sustainable manner while creating positive impact on the economy, the environment and people, is one key example of such leadership. BGMEA is a beacon that is supporting the industry to transition towards green, sustainable, ethical and climate friendly practices. I am confident that we will witness BGMEA carry this role forward in an even stronger and brighter way. For Denmark, active participation of Bangladesh in this transition is highly valuable as it is one of the major exporters of apparel to our country. This is also why Denmark is keen on strengthening partnership with Bangladesh to collectively find solutions for successful transition. Denmark believes in focusing on People, Planet and Profit to strengthen the economy and our global business practices are based on this dogma at the moment. We have from the Danish side recently signed a Sustainable and Green Framework Engagement Agreement with Bangladesh, and taken several

initiatives to facilitate green business, investments, and better labour standards. This demonstrates that Bangladesh is a valuable partner for Denmark, and as such we believe Bangladesh has a key role to play in the move towards circular economy in global RMG and textile supply chain.

What advice would you give to Bangladeshi RMG and textile companies to prepare for the EU Due Diligence, particularly with its scope and circular economy?

It is always wise to start with clearly defined and time-bound action plan, and it is no different when it comes to Bangladesh's preparation for the upcoming EU Due Diligence directives.

As a starter, I believe a concrete action plan is needed, in line with the EU Green Deal and Due Diligence directives, that will guide the next stages of preparations. This plan must keep social sustainability at its core. While this might sound like a big ask, we must acknowledge that incorporating social sustainability into the circular economy is essential for its long-term success and acceptance. It does not suffice to only emphasise resource efficiency. Other critical factors such as social well-being will ensure that the circular economy can contribute to a more equitable and prosperous future. Understanding this, in my view, is crucial in preparing for the EU Due Diligence directives.

Also, transparency and traceability in the supply chain, especially in the deeper tiers (Tier 2, 3, or 4), are of paramount importance. Bangladesh should put more effort in this step, as it is essential for managing risks, ensuring ethical and sustainable practices, complying with regulations, and maintaining consumer trust.

Building awareness of the environment also plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the circular economy action plan. Environmental awareness is the driving force behind the need for circular economy and will help motivate individuals, businesses, and governments to adopt practices and policies that reduce resource consumption, minimize waste and mitigate environmental impacts of production and consumption.

What are the priority areas that you think advanced economies like Denmark and the greater EU could collaborate with Bangladesh to make the circular economy smoother and equipped?

I see many areas where we could collaborate with Bangladesh to make the transition to circular economy smoother. Some notable points of departure could be collaborations around recycling technology, both mechanical and chemical; sustainable product manufacturing; and exploring artificial intelligence in production. Besides, there is also significant opportunity for coming together in setting up micro factories for versatile smaller-scale manufacturing. There is also scope for organizing and promoting cleantech cluster, i.e., concentration of companies, organizations, and institutions that are focused on developing, producing, and promoting clean technologies and sustainable solutions. **A**

Circular Economy Fuelled by Renewable Energy is the Economy of the Future



Dr Bernd Spanier

The European Union has pledged to become the world's first climate neutral economy by 2050. This is not just an ambition, but a legally binding commitment. In order to successfully deliver on this pledge, the EU needs to drive a global transition towards a carbon-neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy. This essentially means to decouple the use of resources from economic growth, or to put it simply: to do more with less. Shifting to circular systems in production and consumption is a key factor in achieving this goal. As one of the flagship elements of the European Green Deal, the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted

in December 2020, identifies circularity action in some resource-intensive sectors where the potential for circularity is particularly high. They include key product value chains such as electronics and ICT, batteries and vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles and food. The textile sector ranges high on the circular agenda. Because it is one of the least sustainable industries worldwide. Because it is resource-intensive and wasteful. Because it is among the top three industries affecting water and land use and among the top five for raw materials use and greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

In Europe, textile consumption has the fourth highest impact on the environment and climate change – after food, housing and mobility. A truckload of textiles goes to landfill or incineration every second. The EU wants to change this model of overproduction and overconsumption, and embed a new industrial system grounded on circularity principles.

In this respect, the EU Circular Action Plan relies on the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, adopted on 30 March 2022, which sets a vision to create a greener textiles sector. Its aim is to bring about a major shift inside the industry and among consumers by requiring ecodesign, preventing the destruction of unsold or returned textiles, tackling microplastics pollution, requiring a Digital Product Passport, tackling greenwashing and harmonising EU extended producer responsibility rules for textiles.

This strategy emphasises that by 2030 all textile products placed on the EU market have to be long-lived and recyclable, to a great extent made of recycled fibres, free of hazardous substances, and produced respecting social rights and the environment.

The EU also acknowledges that the Circular Economy Action Plan and the Textile Strategy have an international dimension, given the worldwide nature of value chains and resource flows. Europe is a top producer of textile and garments. Its apparel industry has EUR 162 billion in turnover. Some 160.000 companies are active in the textile ecosystems – 99, 5% of which are SMEs – with 1.5 million workers (more than 70% are women). Yet more than 70% of fashion products consumed in the EU market are imported. EU imports EUR 70-80 billion worth of clothes per year. For all these reasons, working with top textiles and garments producing countries like Bangladesh is a high priority for the EU. Collaboration with Bangladesh is important

We believe that a circular economy fuelled by renewable energy is the economy of the future. It is much less reliant on imports of energy, commodities and goods, which also reduces the vulnerability to supply chains shocks.



because more than 50% of its exports go to Europe, with 80% of these exports being textiles and garments.

Bangladesh needs a transition to circular economy also for its own sake. The country's demand for raw materials is amplifying. The dependency on energy import is growing more than ever. It is one of the world's largest producers of readymade garments and subsequently one of the largest producers of textile wastes worldwide. The growing per capita income is also going to increase consumption and, as a result, generation of waste. Adopting circularity will help address all of these issues and contribute to a more sustainable development in particular at a time when raw materials are becoming an increasingly limited and costly good.

It is encouraging to see that the readymade garment industry has started discussing the need for circular approaches. Awareness of circular economy principles is also growing in the policymaking domain. The frequent appearances of government officials in various dialogues and seminars on this topic is an indicator that a consensus is emerging in this area.

Having access to technology and innovation is vital in this journey.

Collaboration with European companies and investing in circular business models offers huge potential in this regard. A trade environment that promotes free circulation of textile wastes and recycling technologies is equally important. Without open trade, no one will be able to fully reap the benefits of offered by circular economy. Attracting foreign investment is another key factor in this game. The role of policy-makers here is to ensure legal certainty for investments to take hold.

We, the EU and its Member States, remain actively involved in promoting this green transition in various ways. On circular economy, we have partnered with UNIDO and Finland to implement the project "SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE)" in Bangladesh. Under this project, the EU supports businesses active in the textile and garment sector, plastic packaging, and ICT value chains to adopt circular economy practices.

We believe that a circular economy fuelled by renewable energy is the economy of the future. It is much less reliant on imports of energy, commodities and goods, which also reduces the vulnerability to supply chains shocks. With its Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives, Europe have brought its engagement with Bangladesh to a new level: these programmes promote Bangladesh's transition to a circular economy, fuelled by clean energy and being based on sustainable development. The signing of €400 million EUR package for renewable energy projects at the Global Gateway Forum in Brussels on 25 October 2023, in the presence of the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was a decisive first step in that direction – let's take it further in the years to come! 🌱

Dr Bernd Spanier is the Deputy Head of Mission, EU Delegation to Bangladesh.

By Patrick Schröder |
Md. Abdur Rahim Khan
and Asadun Noor

Driving Circular Textile Value Chains Through A Comprehensive Policy Approach



Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector has long been a cornerstone of its economy, but the industry faces increasing challenges in terms of environmental sustainability. In recent years, the concept of a circular textile value chain has gained momentum globally, offering a promising solution to these issues, but also posing new regulatory requirements. The circular economy approach seeks to minimize waste, reduce unsustainable resource

consumption, and promote sustainability through recycling, reuse, and responsible production practices.

Despite its significant role in the global textile market, Bangladesh's textile sector faces a multitude of hurdles that impede the transition towards a circular economy. The absence of inadequate policy direction and a centralized framework for circular economy activities is one of

the primary challenges. However, there is optimism as the Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with the UNIDO-led SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE) Project, has taken a leading role in coordinating a unified approach towards developing a circular textile policy framework in collaboration with Chatham House as global project partner.

In Bangladesh's pursuit of a circular textile value chain, four significant hurdles must be addressed.

Firstly, there is a lack of awareness among textile businesses regarding the environmental and economic benefits of circular practices, particularly for garment waste ('jhut') valorization. With the nation's prominence as the second-largest garment exporter, it generates a substantial 600,000 tons of textile waste yearly, which could contribute an extra US\$ 3 billion per year to the country's GDP through import substitution of raw materials and product diversification.

Second, the informal sector plays a critical role in collection and sorting of post-production textile waste, although workers face challenging conditions and limited safety measures. Recognizing the informal sector's importance, integrating it into the circular textile value chain and improve working conditions, especially for vulnerable female workers, is crucial for a just transition.

Third, the industry faces an alarming scarcity of investment in recycling facilities and advanced processing technology. Without these, the transition to circularity remains distant. Investment in these areas is a significant

opportunity for promoting sustainability and efficient resource utilization.

Fourth, Bangladesh exports a significant amount of post-production textiles to neighboring countries, undermining domestic recycling infrastructure.

A National-level comprehensive Policy Framework and implementation for circular textiles would be the way forward

Such an overall policy framework would need to address the following issues:

Factories' Jhut Handling Practices

- Currently no guidelines or regulations for sorting and collection of jhut within and from factories (leading to contamination, loss of quality, non-transparent pricing structures, etc.)

Policy Solution: Develop specific industry guidelines applicable across the country for sorting, collection, and reuse/recycling of post-industrial waste in the RMG sector, covering all aspects of waste management, from waste reduction, sorting, collection to the use of alternative materials.

- Lack of data and transparency, no national reporting on volumes of jhut generated by garment factories

Policy Solution: Increase transparency and traceability of 'Jhut' through a mandatory disclosure system for garment factories. Create a national online platform on jhut resources with open access for all stakeholders to address the lack of data on volumes, types of jhut, quality and prices.

- Lack of compliance with existing waste management regulations
- Policy Solution: Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to

ensure compliance with existing waste management regulations, including regular inspections and penalties for non-compliance.

Informal Sector & Women (including youth):

Women entrepreneurs and workers have particular challenges in accessing jhut and women are often discriminated as low-cost labor in informal sorting facilities.

- Informal collectors and sorters lack incentives to upgrade and formalize operations to be transparent and offer decent work opportunities

Policy Solution: Provide economic incentives and political protection for informal sector operators to improve their operations and become qualified to work in transparent and accountable ways.

- No access to finance for informal operators in collection and sorting

Policy Solution: Offer access to finance and credit facilities for informal sector participants to upgrade operations in line with new government requirements and guidelines of circularity for collection and sorting.

Economic Structures for investments

(Prices/Taxation):

- Current taxation structure is not friendly for investments into high-quality recycling facilities
- Policy Solution: Make changes in taxation structure to ensure high-quality recycling and reuse of post-industrial textile waste. Offer tax credits and subsidies to promote the growth of the domestic garment recycling industry.

- Non-transparent pricing for jhut at different stages of the value chain (collection, sorting, aggregation, resale, and trade)

Policy Solution: Implement

standardized supply chain for jhut to enable market development and transparency in the pricing process.

- No foreign direct investment into state-of-the-art garment recycling facilities; outdated technologies prevalent for processing
Policy Solution: Adjust regulations on foreign direct investment to encourage both foreign and local investors to invest in circular businesses and garment recycling, unlocking technological advancements in the sector.

Trade/Export of jhut and textile waste resources

- High-quality jhut is exported for valorization through downcycling in non-garment industries
Policy Solution: Introduction of non-financial incentives to encourage domestic processing of jhut (e.g. tax breaks) and disincentivize exports with higher tariffs on jhut exports. Require export licenses to increase transparency and include jhut trade in the exporters' database.
- No legal or financial responsibility for textile waste and jhut generation and ownership
Policy Solution: Identify Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) options for jhut and textile waste to engage brands and factories with jhut sector development.

No need to wait: Emerging circular business opportunities

In the midst of these challenges, there are various business opportunities for the BGMEA members and the private sector. By actively participating in the development of a circular textile value chain, companies can not only contribute to sustainability but

also strengthen their competitive position:

Investment in Recycling Facilities: Private sector enterprises can invest in state-of-the-art recycling facilities that specialize in turning post-production textile waste into high-quality materials. This not only helps in reducing dependence on virgin resources but also creates a new revenue stream.

Innovation in Circular Design: Companies can focus on circular design principles, creating products with longer lifecycles, ease of disassembly, and the potential for recycling or reuse. Such designs contribute to a reduction in waste and the efficient use of resources.

Education and Training Programs: Private sector players can develop and deliver education and training programs to inform the industry about the benefits and practices of circularity. These programs can cater to workers, managers, and decision-makers in the sector.

Integration of Informal Workers: Businesses can work towards integrating informal workers into formal systems, providing them with better working conditions and social protections while enhancing the efficiency of waste management.

Collaboration and Partnership: Collaboration within the industry and with governmental and non-governmental organizations is essential. Companies can participate in national and international initiatives aimed at shaping policies and practices that promote circularity.

The transition to a circular textile value chain in Bangladesh's garment sector is an ambitious and transformative endeavor. It requires a comprehensive policy approach that addresses the multifaceted challenges that the industry faces. The government's involvement in coordinating a unified approach is a positive step forward. Businesses in the private sector also play a

pivotal role, as they have the capacity to drive change, invest in sustainable practices, and innovate for a more sustainable and circular future.

The global Switch to Circular Economy Value Chains project, co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland, and led by UNIDO, supports the circular transition in selected value chains and countries. In Bangladesh, the project works with international and national partners from the private sector, government, academia, and business associations to support circularity in the textile and garments value chain. In the efforts to build an enabling environment for circularity, Chatham House leads the policy dialogue, Circle Economy Foundation implements capacity development activities, while the European Investment Bank (EIB) will support local financial institutions to design and deliver financial products for circular approaches. More info: www.switchtocircular.eu 



Patrick Schröder



Md. Abdur Rahim Khan



Asadun Noor

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Revolutionizing Bangladesh's Textile Industry

UNIDO's SWITCH2CE Initiative Paves the Way for Circular Transformation



Mark Draeck

In line with its mandate to promote and accelerate sustainable industrial development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization - UNIDO actively promotes the concept of circular economy. The circular economy is a new way of creating value, an economic model that aims to maximize the use of resources by keeping them in use for as long as possible, reducing waste, and minimizing the environmental impact. Bangladesh's textile and garments value chain is now part of this transformation.

One of the flagship UNIDO-led projects with a focus on enabling circular economy solutions is the SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE) project. It is co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland and implemented in collaboration with Chatham House, Circle Economy Foundation and the European Investment Bank – EIB. This global project recognizes that the application of circular economy practices requires coherent practices by all actors of the value chains, and therefore



Textiles and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi MP and other guests pose at the 'SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE) Project inception seminar' organised by UNIDO and the Ministry of Commerce in Dhaka.

supports piloting of innovative circular solutions jointly implemented by EU-based multinational companies and their suppliers from developing countries. While focusing on resource-intensive sectors such as plastic packaging, textile, and electronics, SWITCH2CE implements four pilot projects in three countries: Bangladesh, Morocco, and Egypt. The main objective is to facilitate a just transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy, sustainable growth, job creation, and a healthier, pollution-free environment. In Bangladesh, the SWITCH2CE project focuses on the Textile and Garments value chain, providing a unique opportunity to accelerate the shift to circularity in the sector. UNIDO is implementing this project jointly with Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh for achieving these transformations. The global project partners collaborate with a number of local partners in Bangladesh, including the Bangladesh Garment

On 5 September 2023, UNIDO and the Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh, organized an official launching ceremony of SWITCH2CE with industry leaders, government representatives, academia, and international partners. The event aimed to foster collaboration, highlight project strategies including the model of piloting circular strategies with the private sector, showcase circularity in the textiles and garments industry, and explore policy and knowledge ecosystems. Minister of Textile and Jute Mr. Golam Dastagir Gazi, Senior Secretary from the Ministry of Commerce, Tapan Kanti Ghosh, and, EU Delegation Chargé d'Affaires, Bernd Spanier, expressed their support for the circular transition.

Manufacturers and Exporters Association - BGMEA, to ensure local ownership, capacity development, and sustainability of the action.

The need for Circular Switch in Bangladesh: Textile and Garment Sector

Bangladesh, renowned as the world's second-largest garments exporter, owes much of its economic prowess to the textile and garment industry, which contributes a staggering 85% to the nation's export revenue and employs over 4.2 million Bangladeshis directly. Moreover, it is estimated that the sector indirectly supports the livelihoods of approximately 40 million people. Despite these impressive figures, the industry faces a pressing challenge to become more sustainable and efficient, and the transition to a more circular business model and processes can

address this challenge. Presently, there is a substantial deficiency in both the business rationale and the local capabilities required to handle recycling solutions for blended and pure cotton textile waste. This deficiency not only triggers environmental and health concerns but also economic losses. Bangladesh also contends with a daily volume of around 300 million tonnes of PET bottle waste. But the lack of accessible models and technologies for the traceable conversion of PET bottles into Polyester Staple Fiber (PSF) means that local producers miss a valuable opportunity to reintegrate PET bottles into textile production. Consequently, Bangladesh remains shackled by a heavy reliance on imported virgin materials, resulting in a soaring carbon footprint, increased logistics costs, and longer lead times. In the backdrop of these challenges, the market is witnessing mounting demands from key stakeholders and buyers, such as the European Union, for the textile and garment industry to embrace circular practices. These demands are compelling the industry to adapt and evolve. Coupled with supportive legislations and ambitious targets, this transformation is fostering a powerful incentive for growth and expansion within the sector. Importantly, this circular shift aligns with the Government of Bangladesh's commitment as outlined in the 8th five-year plan. This commitment seeks to integrate the principles of a circular economy, thus making a pivotal contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals and environmental objectives. In summary, the need for a circular switch in Bangladesh's textile and garment sector is no longer a matter of choice but a compelling necessity. The industry stands at the precipice of a transformative journey that promises sustainability, growth, and a brighter future for all stakeholders involved.

The SWITCH2CE approach

To achieve the circular switch of the textiles and garments value chain in Bangladesh, SWITCH2CE takes a multiprong approach:

Piloting circular solutions with the private sector

with leading multinationals and their local suppliers in Bangladesh. Two pilots are currently implemented in Bangladesh:

Pilot project led by BESTSELLER, aiming to scale up traceable textile recycling with suppliers in Bangladesh, capture and valorise high volumes of post-industrial textile waste. Pilot partners include Global Fashion Agenda, Reverse Resources and BGMEA.

Pilot project led by H&M, aiming to build indigenous capacity and capability of the local supply chain through surfacing, testing, piloting, and scaling the adoption of collection, sorting and recycling solutions for cotton and polyester. Pilot partner Intellectap and several international and local stakeholders will contribute with technological and methodological innovation to the pilot.


Creating an enabling environment for the circular transition through:

Supporting circular economy policies, value chain research, and dialogue. These activities are led by the global partner Chatham House, a UK-based think tank which collaborates with local partners in Bangladesh to drive the policy dialogue and produce recommendations for enabling circular policies. Local capacity building for suppliers and business development service providers to drive circularity. These activities are led by the global partner Circle Economy Foundation together with local partners including BGMEA.

Assessing and strengthening the capacity of financial institutions to design and deliver financial products for circular approaches. These activities will be led by the European Investment Bank – EIB.

What SWITCH2CE will bring for the sector and Bangladesh

The Switch to Circular Economy Value Chains project promises a significant transformation for the textile and garment industry in Bangladesh. Through the adoption of circular economy business models, businesses will enhance their competitiveness, embracing social responsibility and sustainability. This shift will lead to more efficient and cost-effective sorting and recycling solutions, reducing the industry's reliance on virgin materials and imports. Additionally, the project will foster improvements in the local capacities, policy landscape, business environment, and investment climate to support circular economy initiatives. This, in turn, will create green and circular jobs within the industry, with a strong emphasis on gender inclusion. The project will drive innovation and disseminate knowledge, equipping the industry with the readiness and capacity building needed for sustainable growth, benefiting stakeholders, suppliers, and policymakers alike.

For further information: www.switchtocircular.eu 

Mark Draeck is the UNIDO/ SWITCH2CE Chief Technical Advisor.

Bangladesh Ready Made Garments' Journey towards a Circular Economy



(From right) Asadun Noor, SWITCH2CE National Project Coordinator, UNIDO Bangladesh; Md. Abdur Rahim Khan, Additional Secretary, Head of Export Wing, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh; Mark Draeck, Chief Technical Advisor on SWITCH2Circular, UNIDO; Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan, Director at BGMEA; Hilde van, Head of Global Value Chains at Circle Economy; Mohammed Mostofa Jamal Haider, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh; and Venkat Kotamaraju, Partner and Director, CAIF and Climate Solutions, Intelcap, at the World Circular Economy Forum 2023 held in Finland.



Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan

During the summer of 2022, I was part of a delegation headed by Mr. Faruque Hassan, President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), along with fellow colleagues from the Board, on a trip around Europe. The trip was one of a kind, organized right after the Covid-19 pandemic and our goal was to brand Bangladesh in a new light as far as the Ready Made Garment (RMG) industry was concerned. We visited several of the notable EU

countries, and met multiple stakeholders such as their government representatives, brands, policymakers, educational institutions, researchers, and the like. We wanted to showcase the extensive growth and development of our RMG sector in the past decade and how we continued to successfully work our way through the pandemic, while most of the world was at a standstill. For instance, the number of green factories increased and now

Bangladesh has 203 LEED green garments factories certified by the U.S. Green Building Council, with more than 500 more factories who are awaiting to get the certification. 8 out of 10 of the world's top-rated factories are here in Bangladesh. Moreover, BGMEA pledged to the Green Button Qualification Program which is a global seal of excellence in sustainability by the Government of Germany. We signed the UNFCCC's 'Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action' to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals. We further signed several MoUs with the likes of GIZ, the Good Fashion Fund, Circle Economy, Solidaridad, H&M and so many more organisations, all in our commitment to make our textile and garment sector safer, more dynamic, energy efficient and sustainable in every essence of the environment, social and governance aspects.

The RMG sector in Bangladesh was ready to take on new challenges and we wanted to absorb more of the best practices that were out there. This initiated our trip to Copenhagen to attend the Global Fashion Agenda on 7-8 June 2022. This further resulted in the BGMEA becoming a partner of the BESTSELLER - Switch to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE) project, which is led by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), in collaboration with Circle Economy (CE), Chatham House (CH) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The project is funded by Switch to Circle Economy Value Chains, the European Union and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The other important pilot partners of the project are of course BESTSELLER, the Global Fashion Agenda and Reverse Resources. Building upon the Circular Fashion Partnership project that started in 2020, the main objectives of the SWITCH2CE project are to identify the stakeholders that handle the entire pre-consumer textile waste

network in Bangladesh, facilitate initial engagement with this sector as well as to develop a set of policy and regulatory recommendations for an integrated and inclusive plan to increase traceability and valorise the pre-consumer waste that is generated by our mammoth textile and RMG industry.

Through this project, the BGMEA expects to achieve circularity in the RMG sector, particularly in the pre-consumer waste recycling sector by developing a strong business case for manufacturers and prospective investors. This would further reduce dependency on virgin materials to ultimately achieve a long-term, scalable and just transition to a circular textile system in Bangladesh and beyond. Interestingly though, it must be said that traditionally Bangladesh has always been a country where a culture of recycling has existed, although, perhaps all the current trending words may not have been used to describe what we were doing. For instance, because of the demographic disparity of our country, the practice of 'hand-me-downs' and reusing an item of clothing, has always existed. An outgrown dress would easily be passed on to a younger sibling who would then give it to a relative, who would use it further to a point at which the dress would be taken apart and used to make smaller items such as a wash cloth. If it was a worn out 'saree' that belonged to someone, it would probably be used to make a hand stitched blanket. Thereby, creating something which had aesthetic value with intricate workmanship, turning it into a product which would be termed as being 'up-cycled' in today's world. And so, it would be fair to say that we have always been 'reusing' our clothing or textiles.

In this regard, I believe it would be fair to say that the pre-consumer waste handling industry (and the by-products made from it), is just as old as our RMG and textile


industries. Back in the day, as the production of garments in the country increased during the early 80s, a substantial amount of pre-consumer waste was also being generated. And soon enough, factories were asking their local guys to take the waste away at a small price or even for free. Of course, this then created a possible business case for those who would be collecting it, giving rise to what we refer to as the 'informal' sector today.

Needless to say, they segregated the waste, found local and international demand for it, exported what they could and made use of the rest of it in the local market. While intensive research is still being carried out, we have an assumption of the numbers in hand. Being the 2nd largest apparel producer right after China, our industry generates over 400,000 tonnes of recyclable waste every year out of which, approximately 60% of it is exported, 7-10% of it is recycled locally and the rest is meant to end up in landfills, or is finally incinerated. The BGMEA has officially partnered with Aalborg University Denmark, Copenhagen Business School, GFA, DM&T, DU, IBA and others to conduct a detailed research to further understand and explore the opportunities and challenges of Bangladesh's apparel industry in adopting circular business from a global value chain perspective. The project, 'Circular Economy in Bangladesh's Apparel Industry' (CREATE), aims to investigate the circular economy transition in global garment value chains related to Bangladesh's apparel industry and propose appropriate regulations.

As part of our SWITCH2CE project, the BGMEA on 3rd September 2023, officially organised the very first official event whereby an esteemed panel of industry leaders, policymakers, and experts in circular economies convened for the "Switch to Upstream Circularity

Dialogue: Pre-consumer Textile Waste in Bangladesh" at the Amari Hotel in Dhaka for a very invigorating and jam packed event. The dialogue covered the strategies, policies, infrastructure, collaborations, and innovations necessary to build a thriving circular ecosystem in Bangladesh. The following day, on 4th September, 2023, there was a follow up roundtable that was organised at the BGMEA complex with important stakeholders from the Ministry of Commerce, foreign embassies, financial institutions, think tanks, brand representatives, donor agencies and the like. During that event, there was an intensive conversation where stakeholders pledged their support to successfully help transform Bangladesh's RMG and textile industries into a circular one. It would be fair to say that the frequency and importance of the conversations taking place in relation to circularity in our country today is far greater than it was just about a year ago. There are many local companies that are now fully dedicated to the idea of having a circular system. Foreign companies like Recover have already set up a very large facility in Dhaka and Reverse Resources are in operation for a few years. Local start-ups have also started to take interest in how they can do more in developing solutions towards traceability, collection, segregation and more. However, the work that remains is still mammoth. Proper and correct policy support has to be implemented by our own government in the country and also from within the countries to which we shall be exporting our final products. Provisions of importing the raw material (which can often be fully stitched second hand garments otherwise known as post-consumer wastage) also needs to be considered. There must also be incentives, subsidies and further concepts of purchasing carbon credits to support manufacturers

that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by being involved in a circularity. Perhaps a virtual local and/or global market place or exchange can be created where both pre and post-consumer waste can be traded. Moreover, there must be brand commitment in order to make this transition a success. Brands must educate customers through campaigns and therefore they must be committed to paying higher prices for what will become a more sustainable product. There must be R&D in sustainable designing of the product and further a reduction in how a garment is produced and packed for the end consumer. Potentially, what we are asking for here is a total transformation in styling, hand feel and even packaging of a product, not to mention buying practices. Brands should not feel the need to cancel orders or make small but unnecessary changes. Training should be widespread and offered to all partners, in a cross-sectoral manner between manufacturers and brands, donor organisations and between the public and private sectors. When we talk about 'formalising our informal sector' of waste collection, we must educate, reform and train those already involved in the business for decades. There is a livelihood involved within the pre-consumer waste handling sector here in Bangladesh, and under no circumstances should that come to an end, because of all the employment that it creates. However, we must jointly find a way in which we must help them to transform so that they can understand the need for traceability as the new Due Diligence Directives and other regulations set in globally. Circle Economy has also developed a circularity game as part of its role to help the BGMEA and Bangladeshi manufacturers and waste collectors to under the need for this transition. Designing a product and cross

sectoral recycling and circularity must also be considered an important way of resolving the issues at hand. When we talk about circularity, it should no longer be a conversation of simply fibre to fibre, but rather from plastics to rubber to fiber and beyond. There is of course, many more ideas to be shared, and works to be implemented, however, what we must realise is this that, organisations and manufacturers in various industries globally have already identified the need for a sustainable production system to make the world a better place for our future generations and for this, circularity is a very important instrument that we must adopt at the earliest to make our SDG goals and beyond, a reality. I believe great work is already under way, and further efficiency and alignment will come into effect successfully as we all work together for the betterment of the apparel and textile industries in Bangladesh and globally. However, what we must remember here is that, when we are at the beginning of a relatively new journey to reach a global agenda and goal, we must all come forward in a manner which is more giving and about sharing, both in terms of knowledge, skill, policy and technology. Only then would we be able to successfully shift our industry into one which is more circular and sustainable for all stakeholders involved and future generations. The BGMEA has till now received great support from all stakeholders and we look forward to making more positive changes for our future generations in the years to come. 

Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan is a Director at the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Director in Charge of BGMEA Working Committee on Circular Fashion Partnership, and Deputy Managing Director of Desh Garments Limited.

Supporting Circular Business Models

A Global Perspective on the Circular Economy



Holly Syrett

Whilst the term ‘circularity’ is commonplace in fashion’s sustainability vocabulary, it is not yet fully realised in practice. The circularity gap is in fact widening. Today, global circularity stands at 7.2%, down from 9.1% in 2018, revealing that 90% of materials are either wasted, lost, or remain untapped for reuse. If the fashion industry continues on its current linear path, resource flows will become less

dependable, and more value will be destroyed.

If circular systems are implemented effectively, they have the potential to decouple economic development from the consumption of finite resources and offer dignified, inclusive employment opportunities for workers throughout the fashion value chain. By 2030, circular business models alone could increase the average number of uses per clothing item from

25 to 45 and represent a value pool of USD 700 billion, delivering significant economic opportunities and long-term industry resilience. With increasing brand commitments creating a gap in demand and supply for recycled materials, circular systems present a currently underutilised opportunity. Developing a strong domestic recycling industry offers a multiplicity of benefits for countries such as Bangladesh.

A Collaborative Approach

Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) is a non-profit organisation that fosters industry collaboration on sustainability in fashion to accelerate impact. With the vision of a net positive fashion industry, we drive action by mobilising, inspiring, influencing and educating all stakeholders. Working in partnership with a wide ecosystem of companies and organisations across the value chain, GFA spearheads the fashion industry's journey towards a more sustainable future. Through our work, we reach thousands of stakeholders including brands, innovators, NGOs, policy makers, manufacturers, investors, and more.

At the core of our work is a holistic approach to sustainability. We believe in the need to drive strategic action from leaders in the fashion industry according to the five priorities of the Fashion CEO Agenda: Respectful and Secure Work Environments, Better Wage Systems, Resource Stewardship, Smart Material Choices and Circular Systems.

The transformation to a circular economy requires collective efforts beyond the capabilities of any individual agent or company. Therefore, GFA is honoured to be coordinating a multistakeholder partnership between a group of

The transformation to a circular economy requires collective efforts beyond the capabilities of any individual agent or company. Therefore, GFA is honoured to be coordinating a multistakeholder partnership between a group of esteemed organisations, working together to expedite the transformation towards a circular economy.

esteemed organisations, working together to expedite the transformation towards a circular economy. We recognise that manufacturers are at the heart of this and GFA would like to extend both its gratitude and congratulations to our partners at BGMEA. Since embarking on our journey together we have made tangible impact within the fashion industry.

Circular Business Models in Bangladesh in Practice

Together with BGMEA and technology partner, Reverse Resources, we've been working to identify, present, and implement opportunities for circularity from the manufacturing perspective. Since October 2020, the Circular Fashion Partnership Bangladesh sought to explore and establish infrastructures for capturing and valorising textile waste domestically. It facilitated circular commercial collaborations between fashion brands, manufacturers, and recyclers to enable and incentivise waste segregation and digital

tracing of post-industrial textile waste to recycling solutions. Amongst many learnings from the Partnership, we identified a substantive opportunity for Bangladesh to position itself as leader in circularity.

The Circular Fashion Partnership Bangladesh project is now continuing its activities as part of the BESTSELLER - Switch to Upstream Circularity Pilot for which BESTSELLER is the lead applicant, supported by GFA, BGMEA, and Reverse Resources. This pilot project is supported through the global Switch to Circular Economy Value Chains project (SWITCH2CE), co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland, and led by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in collaboration with Chatham House, Circle Economy, and European Investment Bank. As part of this pilot, BGMEA, together with project partners, hosted a landmark event in Dhaka, Bangladesh in September to discuss business models for post-industrial waste management practices and domestic textile waste trade processes. GFA led a roundtable for organisers of circular textiles initiatives to share mutual objectives and activities in a bid to work together more effectively, to share knowledge and resources, to start establishing a common vision and voice for circular textiles in Bangladesh, and ultimately accelerate all efforts that will support in anchoring Bangladesh's RMG industry into a circular manufacturing hub. During the event, I presented a comprehensive business case aimed at motivating apparel manufacturers in Bangladesh to adopt sustainable waste management practices. The presentation highlighted the sustainable and economic benefits of trading and tracing waste to recycling. This business case

emerged from a collaborative effort involving GFA, BESTSELLER, and BGMEA, with valuable contributions from the Circular Fashion Partnership project partners, including renowned brands such as H&M, C&A, Primark, and Benetton. Please contact cfp@globalfashionagenda.org to learn more about the business case for circular systems in Bangladesh.

“At this moment in time, everybody understands the need for new business practices in order to transition to a circular economy. Bangladesh is a key sourcing country for BESTSELLER, with many long-standing business partners, and that makes Bangladesh an obvious starting point for creating systemic changes in regard to waste segregation. Through our close relation, we know the importance of uniting all key stakeholders to find solutions that are both viable and beneficial for the entire industry. This substantial project can, via its relevant business case, ensure that our partners stay motivated throughout this transition,” said Alexander Granberg, Senior Project Specialist at BESTSELLER.



The Importance of Policy

Parallel to any industrial transformation comes the requirement of appropriate policy changes to support and incentivise investment and make sure there are no antiquated legal barriers obstructing the new industrial process. Policy will be crucial in creating a conducive environment for enabling the full potential of circularity.

Policy was referenced throughout the event in Dhaka, with key messages from BGMEA President, Faruque Hassan, reiterating the need to develop a National Circular Economy Policy, a legal or voluntary waste management framework, review tax policies to facilitate circularity, explore unique HS Codes for green machines with the National Board of Revenue (NBR), and create a conducive investment climate for circular economy initiatives.

We will continue to contribute to discussions about policies, aiming to make Bangladesh an attractive destination for new-age innovative recycling.


Looking Ahead

What started as the Circular Fashion Partnership Bangladesh in 2020, focused on valorising the post-industrial textile waste in Bangladesh, is now expanding in a

bid to attract more manufacturers based on the business case that the Circular Fashion Partnership and SWITCH2CE project partners have developed. Our partner brands are dedicated to pursuing closed-loop transactions by utilising recycled materials derived from this waste and we are now looking at inclusion of all the different stakeholders in the waste upstream value chain. Furthermore, while previously the focus was mainly on cotton-based materials, we are now also assessing blends that are rich in cotton as well as other compositions.

True circularity can only be realised through proactive measures in manufacturing regions, and the resounding message from this work is that Bangladesh is poised to be the global leader for recycled materials, provided it effectively harnesses the potential of post-industrial waste.

With increasing momentum in brand demand and legislations materialising globally, we are confident that Bangladesh can create an ecosystem to expedite this opportunity. We look forward to continuing this work together with BGMEA.

Learn more about the Circular Fashion Partnership at www.globalfashionagenda.org 

Holly Syrett is the Impact Programmes & Sustainability Director, GFA.

Strengthening Local Capacity to Implement Circular Solutions

Bangladesh and the potential of the circular economy



Hilde van Duijn

Globally, up to 100 billion garments are produced by the fashion industry every year. And each year, 92 million tonnes of textile waste is produced. This translates to one truck full of clothes dumped into landfill sites every second! This pile includes both pre-consumer textile wastes i.e. disregarded scraps and leftover fabrics generated during production and post-consumer textile waste which is generated due to worn-out, outdated or

damaged apparel.

As clothing consumption grows, mountains of textile waste which are cycled to different countries broaden global inequalities while harming human health and the environment. Bangladesh is also a contributor to the apparel waste pile, generating around 577,000 tonnes of waste annually. Although the country has made impressive economic progress particularly in the ready-made



garments (RMG) sector, positioning it as the world's second-largest garment exporter, key environmental, social and economic challenges persist.

The circular economy as an emerging solution

The circular economy has become an emerging priority to deal within the government's agenda. The circular economy is nature's equivalent of living within one's means and preventing excessive waste generation. Moving towards a circular economy involves rethinking both the production process as well as consumption patterns and offers a promising solution to transform the volume of pre- and post-industrial waste generation, among other benefits. Adopting circular solutions has become a necessity with incoming regulations on traceability,

increasing global competitiveness, and brands opting to use more recycled materials in apparel (both as a reaction to regulation and a response to changing consumer values towards sustainability), and presents a significant opportunity for Bangladesh to reduce its environmental impact, improve its economic performance, and generate social benefits.

The Switch to a Circular Economy

The global SWITCH2CE project supports micro, medium and small sized textile and garments manufacturers as well as larger suppliers of EU multinational companies in making the switch to a circular economy. The project recognises that the switch to a circular economy within the apparel industry and application of circular economy practices requires collaboration by all actors across

global value chains, from leading multinational companies to suppliers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The project, which runs from 2021-2025 is co-funded by the European Union and the Government of Finland and aims to pilot circular strategies across three value chains in three countries, including within the textiles value chain in Bangladesh. The project is being implemented by UNIDO in collaboration with key partners including Circle Economy, Chatham House, and the European Investment Bank.

Supporting local capacity development

One of the key pillars of the SWITCH2CE programme is capacity development which is being implemented by Circle Economy. Circle Economy Foundation (CE) is a global non-profit impact

organisation founded in 2011. Circle Economy's vision is an economic system that ensures the planet and all people can thrive. Circle Economy provides the practical and scalable approach required to empower decision-makers from the public and private sectors to develop and implement circular economy strategies and business models. To build the capacity of local stakeholders in implementing circular solutions and maximising impact, CE will implement a training programme for MSMEs and larger suppliers via a scalable training of trainers (ToT) approach. This model is designed such that CE and local master trainers work together in co-developing curricula and coaching local trainers who then train MSMEs and larger suppliers. To support this, CE has been working with local partners in Bangladesh and co-developing training materials based on well-tested methodologies, tools and approaches, factoring in local knowledge, structures and processes.

As a first step in determining the baseline levels of awareness about the circular economy, CE developed an innovative circularity game which is a quick, easy and user-friendly way of familiarising people with the circular economy. The circularity game was launched in September 2023 in Dhaka in partnership with BGMEA. The game consists of 6 modules in a gamified format that will support the assessment of current levels of awareness and capacity for the circular economy. The modules contain conceptual information and practical examples to inform players on the harm of the current take-make-use-waste linear economy, the circular economy and its 8 key elements, regulatory requirements and opportunities, to finally collecting, sorting, recycling and tracing textiles. The game is

targeted towards MSMEs and larger suppliers but can be beneficial for anyone who wants to understand the circular economy and the opportunity it offers for the RMG sector in Bangladesh. The game is available for all, and can be accessed here:

switch.circle-economy.com. The circularity game is currently available in English but is also being translated to Bengali. The translated version will be launched at the end of 2023.

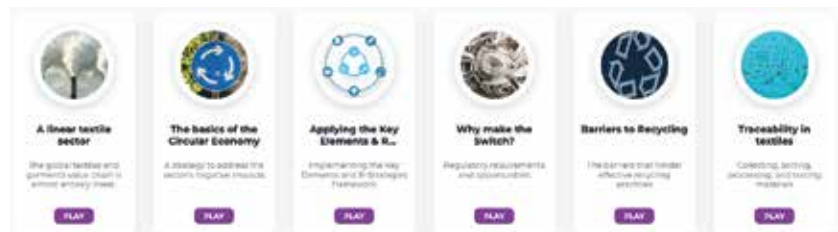
As a next step, Circle Economy is working with master trainers from local knowledge institutes to co-develop the curricula for the training of trainers that is planned to be delivered from March 2024 onwards. In parallel, the

deliver sections of the training to a test panel of MSMEs with the support of CE and master trainers Reflection stage: This process will involve a joint reflection on the process and lessons learnt so these can be implemented in subsequent training sessions.

In the final step, a pilot mentorship programme will be conducted where 1-3 selected MSMEs will receive in-depth pilot mentorship from CE and the master trainers to launch their circular pilot projects. The pilot programme aims to enhance the capacity of suppliers to put into practice the training on circularity and will also include critical components to ensure its success including access to finance. Overall, the SWITCH2CE programme

“We are excited to be working with BGMEA who are visionaries and great partners with such in-depth expertise in the textiles value chain in Bangladesh. This partnership will ensure that the content and methods we co-develop are relevant, contextual and live on beyond the lifetime of the SWITCH project.”

— Hilde van Duijn - Head of Global Value Chains at Circle Economy.



accreditation and certification process of the training programme is also being explored.

The training is planned for 2-days and will cover 3 stages (the 3 stages are not sequential and all three stages will be inter dispensed within the 2 day training)

Learn stage: This stage will focus on presentation and knowledge transfer from CE and the master trainers to the local trainers

Do stage: This stage will focus on practical exercises and practice sessions for local trainers to

intends to reach MSMEs and larger suppliers across the three focus value chains in the three focus countries: textiles in Bangladesh, plastic packaging in Morocco and ICT/electronics in Egypt. The capacity development approach is designed to be scalable and replicable beyond the current project focus countries and value chains, and beyond the lifespan of the SWITCH2CE project. **A**

Hilde van Duijn is the Head of Global Value Chains at Circle Economy.

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How the Quality of Waste Determines the Quality of Recycled Yarns and Fabrics

Reverse Resources (RR) is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform providing digital traceability of textile waste from source to recycling, it participates in multi-stakeholder initiatives in Bangladesh such as the Circular Fashion Partnership and the SWITCH2CE Pilot Projects.



Ann Runnel

Circular Economy is not a market trend. It is a paradigm shift changing the rules of the game on a global scale. The fashion industry has recognised that it is not only the policy change in the EU that will be driving this transition. For any large corporation, it is now a strategic decision to start reusing fibres from textile waste as a raw material. Initially, it may help derisk the increasing cotton prices, but soon, it will be necessary for retail brands to demonstrate that products contain recycled content and are recycled after use to avoid heavy taxation from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme in the EU. Within textile-to-textile recycling, the first challenges for apparel manufacturers are quality, price and accessible volume of recycled yarns and fabrics. Thanks to the

recycling industry in India and the growing recycling capacity in Bangladesh, the problem of access to recycled materials is being resolved step-by-step. Bangladesh is a goldmine for mechanical recycling as it offers significant volumes of 100% cotton waste locally - a unique scenario compared to most other manufacturing countries. However, the quality and price of mechanically recycled materials remain challenging for the industry. Either the quality and length of recycled fibre limit the variety of apparel applications, or the handle and feel of recycled fabric are lower than virgin cotton. What are the root causes for such differences, and how can we improve them?

In any production, the quality and cost of

the output are significantly determined by the quality and cost of the inputs. In textile-to-textile recycling, the quality of textile waste has to match the exact requirements of the recycling technology and the buyer's order specifications. Recyclers, like any other manufacturer, need to have control over what they buy from the market, trusting that the contamination is low and the buying price of the waste is a fair market price. Additionally, recyclers need access to large volumes of the same type of waste, properly prepared for their processes to reach a certain mass of production that reduces the cost of production per tonne.

**Higher quality
of waste**



**Higher quality of
recycled fabrics**

For Bangladesh, textile waste management is not a new topic. Waste has always been a natural part of apparel production, and waste collectors and traders have played a crucial role in providing use cases for decades. Indeed, most apparel manufacturers have close relationships with their waste collection partners, with traders, who ensure that all the waste is removed from the premises quickly and don't demand a bigger storage space that would drive up the cost of these unwanted materials. For most manufacturers, working directly with every single recycler to sort, collect, store and deliver the waste would be unfeasible due to the variety of waste streams, high minimum order quantities from recyclers, the constant price negotiation, the storage cost, and the efforts needed for achieving such transactions. Not to mention the growing demand from brands to segregate their waste separately and follow preferred recycling partnerships. This would just not be possible to manage. Therefore, it's established that traders play a significant role in waste management for both manufacturers and recyclers to manage these very contradictory requirements on both ends. However, without knowing which

recycling destination the waste is going to, manufacturers have little incentive to segregate waste by composition and quality other than the price of the waste. Setting up waste segregation at the manufacturing site is becoming more popular with the growing demand for 100% cotton waste, and its price has increased significantly over the past few years. Regardless, most segregation is still done manually after the waste leaves the cutting room, leaving room for human error when identifying the exact composition of the textiles. Mixing different material compositions into the cotton to increase the volume of

waste is a widespread practice while transferring waste hand to hand from the factory to the first collector, from there to the next trader to aggregate bigger volumes of cotton waste. When exported, a third or fourth trader might manage the export and import licences and other logistics services. As a result, at each step of the way, each party adds a layer of costs, increasing the price of the waste. Consequently, it is not a surprise that the recyclers are struggling with quality, high prices and lack of transparency and control over their incoming feedstock.

How can we solve this puzzle and create a win-win situation for all to enable the scaling of textile-to-textile recycling in Bangladesh? Through a simple reorganisation of the processes, RR offers a solution to optimise costs and achieve maximum quality. First, implementing segregation of the cutting scraps already at the cutting table to avoid mixing other waste (e.g. dust from the floor) and labelling the bags by the exact fibre composition guarantees that the waste quality is not compromised from the start of its journey. We relieve the manufacturer from sorting waste brand by brand. Instead, we guide them in registering the % of branded waste

in each waste category, reporting to brands the volumes of their waste on the mass-balance level. Secondly, registering the volumes and types of waste digitally provides recyclers with an overview of the waste available from the market, enabling recyclers with insights for better decision-making and planning of their incoming feedstock upfront. Thirdly, including a waste handler as the point of contact between the manufacturer and the recyclers, who provide waste management services (transactions, pricing, quality check, preparation of waste in any way necessary), is then possible on slightly new common principles. Lastly, the complete digital trace of waste from source to recycling allows brands to understand how much recycled products they could source from the other end of the funnel, redefining their role in the waste supply chains.

As a result, waste sourced by recyclers through the Reverse Resources Platform is consistently with the highest quality at the lowest price, generating the highest quality recycled fibre. Moreover, the RR Platform enables continuous optimisation of the supply chains and cost reduction in several ways - like an ERP system does within a vertically integrated manufacturing, we do this across a longer supply chain. Traceability of waste allows manufacturers to source recycled materials back from the recyclers with accessible prices, high-quality recycled fabrics, and the trace of which brand waste is included in the materials, allowing brands to create closed-loop products. At the same time, the platform does not compete with the current waste traders in the market. It improves the business case and best practices of waste management and provides a win-win scenario for Bangladesh to be the frontrunner in the global shift to the Circular Economy. **A**

For more information on how to engage with the platform and the network get in touch info@reverseresources.net, or visit our website www.reverseresources.net.

Ann Runnel is the CEO and Founder of Reverse Resources.

My Two Pence on Minimum Wage



Faruque Hassan

Workers are the backbone of the country's burgeoning ready-made garment (RMG) industry. It is their hard work and skills that keeps the plants and factories running so efficiently and effectively as they do. I am always in favor of giving them all the benefits they so richly deserve. The issue of raising the garment workers' minimum wage has hit the news again in view of the skyrocketing inflation and rising cost of living. The government is addressing the grave concerns and has formed a Minimum Wage Board, with equal representation from workers, owners, and interested independent groups, to review the

monthly wage of garment workers. The board is presently consulting with the stakeholders to set a mutually acceptable minimum wage. It is not clear when the process will be completed, but it's likely the new minimum wage will be finalized and announced before the end of the year. The wellbeing and livelihoods of our workers are paramount in priority to the entire RMG industry, its sustenance, resilience, and long-term growth. If we cannot ensure a decent livelihood for those on whom the industry depends, the entire future of the industry is at peril with possible disastrous consequences to the



industry itself and for thousands of its employees and their extended families throughout the nation. No one cares more for our workers than us, the factory owners. They're our extended families. The industry has already set benchmarks in many areas through its unique initiatives for the workers and many more are on the drawing board. We are most grateful and thankful to them for their hard work, the engagement of their skills, and their dedication to propel the industry forward as never before. As custodians of all that is the RMG industry we

continually go into battle on the world stage and know the strength of our competitors. No one knows the reality of the industry and competitiveness as we do. That is our forte... that is our duty... that is our strength. The export data is reflecting admirable steady growth, but it doesn't reflect the pressure on our cost and profit margin. I am not suggesting this analogy as a contrast to the need for a wage hike, but to be rational, equitable, fair, and that is our position to the wage board. We all know the global economy is

experiencing a slowdown, and the trade data is already showing a steady declining trend. We are yet to fully recover from the financial damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and we are facing the impact of a geopolitical conflict in the form of inflation and interest rate hike globally. Due to interest rate increases in our export markets, consumers' spending power has been affected and the demand for clothing has declined. It is obvious therefore; the demand-supply situation will continue to have a price impact, which is not good news for us. In the current year itself the price of electricity and gas has gone through the roof and increased multiple times, fuel price has increased exorbitantly, and recently the bank interest rates also went up. All these have contributed heavily to the cost of production and ultimately the cost of manufacturing.

At the same time the aggregate inflation over the past five years is recorded above 30%, making it even more difficult for our workers to sustain their living standards. To help protect our workers from the effects of this harmful inflation we give the minimum of 5% wage increments to all existing workers annually. Many receive more. How the wage board balances the equation for both workers and the industry crucial is for both the industry and the economy. In view of the research and evidence at hand, it's difficult for us to speculate what the new minimum wages should be, but we may look at the previous reviews and see how they were and be guided by our findings. We need to be ... we want to be rational, and fair.

At the same time, we – the manufacturers and exporters – have

to make mental preparation for a hike in the minimum wage of the workers. To cope with this, we have to be pragmatic in terms of engaging with our buyers, re-organising factories, and restructuring our investments. There will be price pressure no doubt, as we operate in a highly competitive global market. Undercutting the price among ourselves will not secure business globally in the longer term. Rather we need to get our valued buyers engaged in long term partnership. It is also true that by adding cost without value is not sustainable and detrimental to the industry. The point I am trying to make here is that, firstly we need our buyers to understand and internalize the wage dynamics from our respective contexts and priorities, and support us through a rational price adjustment. I have already written to our valued buyers who are operating through a liaison office in Bangladesh, the Acton, Collaboration and Transformation (ACT) and to American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA) requesting them to recalculate the price for the orders, which will be processed from the beginning of December. We hope they will take into consideration the standard and cost of living of our workers, and inflation. We expect fair prices and ethical sourcing from our valued buyers. We appealed to them, individually and collectively, to rationally adjust the price levels. This is most important for a smooth transition to a new wage scale. Secondly, it's time for us to think long term. The increase in cost and wages are unavoidable, and we cannot compete in certain product categories if the costs continue this upward trend, no matter how efficient we are. We need to find

We expect fair prices and ethical sourcing from our valued buyers. We appealed to them, individually and collectively, to rationally adjust the price levels. This is most important for a smooth transition to a new wage scale.

new opportunities where we are competitive. This needs constant improvisation, innovation and diversifying into items that matches our cost and competitive trajectory. Investments in machinery, technology, and skills have no alternatives. We need to find ways to optimize cost, trade-off investments in technology with resource use, and reduce wastage. Investments in guides, folders, attachments and workplace friendly tools, techniques and processes could significantly reduce unnecessary motion and man hours, reduce physical burden on workers ensuring workplace comfort, less fatigue and attrition, and higher productivity. Moreover, the long-term plan requires us to balance our value addition capacity, especially in backward and forward term linkage industries. Overcapacity is a curse for our industry. It's inspiring that our factories are now adapting modular lines to cater for smaller MOQs with a higher price range. It is a great start and we need to direct future investments in higher SMV items and in backward linkage to draw synergy. BGMEA is working to facilitate sustainable business by means of

ensuring efficient logistics and befitting policies. We are actively engaged with the government and development partners to ensure support to our workers, especially their healthcare, nutrition, skills development and efficiency enhancement.

While we strive to ensure better livelihoods and the wellbeing of our workers, we don't expect that inflation will eat it up and we urge the government to consider efforts to protect the income of the wage earners. So, we urge our government to take appropriate measures to control inflation and to bring our workers under a special safety net program including food rationing, etc. We appreciate our buyers and development partners for their support, and we would urge them to find more areas to support us ensuring wellbeing of the workers.

There is no doubt we are passing through a turbulent time, but that's not new to us. We've been there before and come out on top. I believe the order situation will start to improve from the beginning of next year. We are pioneers and working relentlessly to accelerate the transformation of our industry to be cleaner and greener; we have already made tremendous efforts to make our workplaces safer and a more pleasant environment in which our employees to work, which is why Bangladesh is now recognized as the safest manufacturing country in the world. We are committed to continue this momentum in line with our sustainability strategic vision. Let's work together to secure the future of the industry, the wellbeing of its workforce and for the benefit of Bangladesh. **A**

Faruque Hassan is the President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

A Sustainable Waste Management Solution

Geocycle



Managing waste presents significant challenges for both businesses and municipalities, with demands that are often complex, costly, and time-consuming. In response to these challenges, Geocycle has emerged as a pioneering force in the field of waste management. Geocycle offers innovative waste treatment solutions based on a distinctive industrial process known as co-processing, which

not only addresses waste disposal but also ensures simultaneous recycling and recovery.

The textile industry is renowned for its substantial waste generation, particularly in the form of cutting scraps, effluent treatment plant (ETP) sludge, and other manufacturing residues. Addressing these textile industry waste challenges can indeed be demanding, given the complexity and diversity of these waste streams. Geocycle's waste treatment solutions, centered around co-processing, offer a

valuable approach to managing textile industry waste more sustainably. Geocycle is a sustainable waste management wing of Holcim group, a global leader of innovative and sustainable building materials and solutions. With its headquarter located in Switzerland, Holicim group currently operates in more than 60 countries. It has Geocycle operations in more than 50 countries with 180 co-processing plants. Lafarge Holcim Bangladesh has invested almost 4 million USD in reinvigorating its Geocycle facility at its Chhattak plant. Recently, a delegation from Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) led by President Faruque Hassan visited Lafarge Holcim Bangladesh's Geocycle facility at Chhatak, Sunamganj. The delegation witnessed firsthand exemplary practices for sustainable waste management. The primary objective of the visit was to gain insights of sustainable waste management through the Geocycle project and to explore how its innovative approach can be adapted and implemented within the readymade garment industry. Geocycle is equipped with state-of-the-art preprocessing and co-processing facilities to ensure the proper homogenization and ultimate disposal of various kinds of waste through co-processing in its cement Kiln which operates with 1500 degree Celsius and is the only integrated plant in Bangladesh. With current installed capacity, it has the ability to dispose of ~100,000 MT of waste per annum and the company has further investment plan to revamp up to ~300,000 MT in next few years. Its waste management facility (Geocycle) is approved by the Department of Environment (DOE)

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and entitled to provide disposal certificates to its clients across the industry. The company co-process non-recyclable wastes from different industries like Pharmaceuticals, FMCG, Oil and Gas, Fertilizer & Pesticides etc. It also has worked closely with the Department of Environment on a couple of projects. Geocycle can be very instrumental in sustainable disposal of wastes from Garments & Textiles industry such as textile cutting (Jhutt), ETP sludge and other relevant waste streams. For country like Bangladesh where sustainable waste management is a challenge and time consuming, Geocycle can collaborate with industries in finding out most sustainable solution for waste management diverting it from landfills. Its solutions support industries in contributing to a closed loop circular economy and driving a greener tomorrow.

The use of textile waste in co-processing:

Industrial wastewater treatment facilities produce a substance known as sludge, which can result from either biological or physical-chemical processes. Sludge is essentially a semi-solid waste slurry that settles at the bottom of an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP), and this slurry is subsequently extracted from the system for treatment or disposal, commonly referred to as ETP sludge. Sludge is a residual byproduct of wastewater treatment and can exist in solid or semi-solid forms.

Following the dewatering process of sludge, it is either buried underground in a landfill or repurposed as fertilizer, with its application contingent upon its chemical composition. The ultimate disposal method for sludge that cannot be repurposed typically involves landfilling or incineration. Landfilling of sludge that contains heavy metals or toxic chemicals may necessitate the use of clay or plastic liners to prevent groundwater contamination. Incineration of sludge is executed in furnaces or fluidized bed furnaces, requiring energy to dehydrate the sludge. The resultant combustion gases need to undergo treatment to adhere to air pollution control standards, and the operational costs for incineration tend to be substantial.

In cases where sludge is excessively toxic, it may be incinerated and transformed into ash rather than being buried or repurposed. Sludge can also be spread on agricultural land to harness its fertilizer properties; however, this practice is not suitable when the sludge contains toxic industrial chemicals, especially on land used for crop cultivation. In urban settings or



when suitable land disposal sites are unavailable, incineration may become the preferred choice. Incineration serves to completely remove moisture and convert organic solids into inert ash, which still requires proper disposal but in a reduced volume. The secure disposal of ETP (Effluent Treatment Plant) sludge in the cement industry through co-processing represents an optimal solution. In addition to ETP sludge, another significant waste stream in the textile industry is "cutting jhut." This particular waste material, cutting jhut, assumes a pivotal role alongside ETP sludge in the co-processing approach within the cement industry.

ETP sludge originating from the textile sector can vary in moisture content depending on the specifics of the effluent treatment process. In the case of LafargeHolcim's 100% dry cement production process, it is imperative to maintain a certain moisture level within the combustion chamber to ensure product quality. It's worth noting that various other waste materials introduced into the chamber may also contain a high moisture content. This is where garments jhut becomes particularly relevant, as it is generally low in moisture. When garments jhut is combined with other waste materials, it effectively enhances the efficiency of the

combustion chamber. By incorporating low-moisture waste materials like garments jhut, the combustion process can be optimized, leading to more efficient and environmentally friendly cement production. LafargeHolcim employs a certification process for its waste suppliers to regulate waste disposal, particularly concerning hazardous textile ETP (Effluent Treatment Plant) sludge. This certification system ensures meticulous tracking of the disposal process. Currently, Geocycle's co-processing approach stands out as the optimal solution for addressing the disposal of hazardous textile ETP sludge in the textile industry. [A](#)

A Paradigmatic Advancement in Sustainable Apparel Manufacturing

Cyclo Recycled Fibers



Within the dynamic and constantly changing world of the fashion industry, the concept of sustainability has transcended its status as a mere trendy term. The phenomenon has been recognized as a driving force, motivating manufacturers and consumers to actively seek and adopt innovative approaches to address environmental consequences, while simultaneously maintaining aesthetic and qualitative benchmarks. Cyclo Recycled Fibers

is a pioneering enterprise at the cutting edge of a revolutionary paradigm shift in the domain of textile manufacturing. In this exposé on factory features, we delve into Cyclo, examining the unique approach that is gradually transforming the future of apparel manufacturing.

Transformation of Textile Waste for Sustainable Fashion

Cyclo's primary objective revolves around a steadfast commitment to the principles of sustainability,

and the continuous pursuit of advancements in textile engineering. In sharp contrast to traditional approaches in textile manufacturing that rely extensively on new and untouched raw materials, Cyclo Recycled Fibers sets itself apart by facilitating a significant revival for previously wasted resources. By utilizing advanced recycling methods, Cyclo brings about a fundamental change, transforming textile waste from consumers into exceptional, environmentally friendly fibers that can be used to create fashionable, high-end garments.



The initiation of Cyclo's trajectory is characterized by a meticulous acquisition of post-consumer textile waste. This repository comprises a diverse range of abandoned textiles, including unused clothing, remnants from industrial processes, and even marine waste such as discarded fishing nets. As a result, it ensures a plentiful and varied supply of raw materials. Through the process of recovering and reutilizing these materials, Cyclo effectively reduces the harmful effects associated with their disposal in landfills and the subsequent pollution of the environment. The company's commitment to sustainability extends beyond the recycling stage, as it continually looks out and collaborates with suppliers who share their values of responsible sourcing.

Waste to Premium Fashion Fiber

Following the initial phase of material collection, a rigorous sorting procedure is implemented to remove impurities and prepare the materials for the recycling process. Cyclo employs advanced mechanical and chemical recycling techniques for breaking down the waste into its

fundamental components, with a particular focus on fibers. The procedural sequence described herein encompasses a series of steps, namely shredding, segregation, and purification, which collectively lead to the transformation of the materials into pristine recycled fibers. Sophisticated purification methods are employed to effectively eliminate any remaining impurities, resulting in fibers that possess properties

similar to those of their original state. Although Cyclo Recycled Fibers recognizes the fundamental importance of sustainability, it also acknowledges the inherent dual nature of the fashion industry, where style and aesthetics are intertwined with ethical considerations. Given the recognition of this inherent duality, Cyclo places considerable emphasis on the advancement of adaptable fibers that are proficiently suited to accommodate a diverse range of design methodologies. The primary focus is to ensure that the recycled materials have the inherent flexibility to be transformed into garments that not only meet, but also surpass, the highest standards in the field of premium fashion.

Sustainable Versatility in Fashion/High-End Output

The recycled fibers produced by Cyclo demonstrate remarkable versatility, making them suitable for a wide range of applications in the field of apparel. A wide range of fibers, including wonderful knits, breathable textiles known for their softness, robust denim, and high-performance fabrics, offer





fashionable and comfortable clothing. This approach successfully balances these two important considerations.

Driving Sustainable Collaboration in the Fashion Industry

Cyclo Recycled Fibers recognizes that achieving significant change within the fashion industry relies on collaborative efforts and collective action. Cyclo aims to establish an integrated community that is deeply dedicated to the principles of sustainable practices and the tenets of a circular economy, achieved through strong collaboration with visionary designers, reputable brands, and manufacturers. Within these collaborative alliances, the company actively strives to foster innovation, ignite imaginative thinking, and build a shared commitment towards the achievement of a more mindful and sustainable fashion ecosystem. By engaging in collaborative endeavors, these individuals cultivate a setting that is conducive to the creation of cutting-edge fashion collections, thereby showcasing the immense possibilities that sustainable



enables designers and brands to effortlessly incorporate these fibers into their collections. Additionally, Cyclo consciously maintains a rigorous protocol of testing for its recycled fibers, ensuring adherence to the current industry standards regarding performance, durability, and suitability for use. By integrating sustainability and elegance, Cyclo enables consumers to make fashion choices that align with their ethical beliefs while also meeting their preferences for



numerous possibilities for creative garment construction. The fibers produced by Cyclo exhibit a level of quality and aesthetic appeal that is comparable to traditional raw materials. This characteristic





materials possess. These mutually beneficial collaborations not only facilitate the emergence of innovative trends in the fashion industry but also contribute to raising consumer consciousness. By providing consumers with the necessary information, these partnerships empower them to make informed decisions and actively support the promotion of sustainable fashion.

Cyclo's strategic perspective extends beyond individual collaborative initiatives, as the organization aims to instigate a comprehensive transformation within the industry. Specifically, their aim involves the standardization of recycled fibers in every aspect of apparel production, making them the prevailing practice rather than a rare occurrence. Cyclo collaborates with various designers, brands, and manufacturers to promote the democratization of sustainable fashion, aiming to make it more accessible to a broader and more diverse audience. Their overarching objective is to encourage and educate these various stakeholders, with the end goal of promoting the utilization of more environmentally friendly procedures and standards within the fashion industry.

Advancing Sustainability in Fashion and Meeting UN SDGs

The integration of Cyclo's recycled fibers yields advantageous consequences that extend beyond the mere reduction of waste and the mitigation of environmental degradation. Significantly, the manufacturing process linked to these recycled fibers results in significant decreases in energy consumption, water usage, and carbon emissions in comparison to traditional textile production methods. By adopting the principles of circularity and incorporating recycled fibers into their production processes, brands and manufacturers are able to actively contribute to the progress of an apparel industry that prioritizes sustainability and responsible management of environmental resources.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that the actions taken by Cyclo align with the objectives outlined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, specifically emphasizing goals 12, which pertains to Responsible Consumption and Production, and

The company's unwavering commitment to advancing research and development efforts is resolute. The company's investments are strategically focused on improving recycling technologies, researching new materials, and refining manufacturing processes.

13, which addresses Climate Action. Cyclo is actively enhancing its contribution to the global sustainability agenda by offering an innovative solution that effectively addresses the environmental consequences of the apparel sector.

Pioneering Sustainable Fashion through Research and Innovation

Cyclo Recycled Fibers continues to lead the way in promoting a fundamental change towards sustainable production of apparel. The company's unwavering commitment to advancing research and development efforts is resolute. The company's investments are strategically focused on improving recycling technologies, researching new materials, and refining manufacturing processes. These efforts collectively contribute to enhancing the quality and functionality of their recycled fibers. Cyclo Recycled Fibers is positioned as a leading force within an overall trend that aims to create a fashion ecosystem characterized by integrity and ecological responsibility. By providing designers, brands, and manufacturers with a wide range of environmentally sustainable fibers, this innovative initiative enables the fashion industry to take on the concept of circularity and make a positive impact on the environment. **A**

Bangladesh's RMG Sector on a Path to Diversification

Iraq beckons



A delegation of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) headed by President Faruque Hassan met Ather Daoud Salman Al-Ghariri, Minister of Trade, the government of Iraq.

The readymade garment (RMG) industry is the mainstay of Bangladesh's economy. It's a sector that has not only elevated our socioeconomic status

but also transformed the lives of millions by providing them with employment. As we celebrate the industry's success, it's important to remember that complacency is not an option. To ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for the RMG industry, we must continue to evolve and explore new horizons. Having secured a firm position in the global market, our aim is to further strengthen the standing of our industry in every possible way. To do so, we have identified some key areas where our industry needs to focus more and put considerable efforts. One of the key priorities for the RMG industry of Bangladesh is market diversification. Currently, we heavily

rely on a few traditional markets, such as the United States and the European Union. While these markets have served us well, relying on a limited number of these markets also pose certain risks. Economic downturns or changes in trade policies in these countries can disrupt our industry, as we've witnessed in the past. To secure a more resilient and robust future, it's imperative that we diversify our market base.

At the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), we have been actively working on market diversification through our "Apparel Diplomacy" initiative. As part of our efforts, I along with a few of my esteemed colleagues of BGMEA recently visited Iraq from August 17 to 24. Our visit to Iraq is a testament to our commitment to exploring new markets and unlocking their potential for the RMG industry.



Faruque Hassan



A BGMEA delegation headed by President Faruque Hassan held a meeting with Khaled Battal Najm Abdullah al-Jughifi, Minister of Industry and Minerals, the government of Iraq.

During our visit, we embarked on a mission to fortify trade relations between Bangladesh and Iraq. The journey was marked by productive meetings, promising discussions, and unforgettable cultural experiences. We were humbled by the unprecedented honor and hospitality extended to us by all stakeholders in Iraq, including government offices, trade bodies, business organizations, and influential figures. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who greeted us with such warmth.

Our meetings in Iraq provided us with an opportunity to showcase the high quality and competitiveness of our RMG products. We presented Bangladesh as an attractive source of apparels for Iraq, emphasizing our commitment to quality and excellence. We also highlighted the strengths of our industry, especially strides in the areas of workplace safety, environmental sustainability and workers' well-being. Our discussions with Iraqi business leaders, including Engineer Haidar Al-Athari, Chairman of the Najaf Chamber of Commerce, and Khaled Battal Najm Abdullah al-Jughifi, the Minister of Industry and Minerals, were productive and promising. Our engagement with Abdulrazak Al-Zuheere, President of the

Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, and other notable figures centered on potential collaborations, trade opportunities, and avenues for cooperation that promise mutual benefits for both Iraq and Bangladesh.

We also visited the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where we explored opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. Our discussions with key figures from the government and trade bodies, including Safeen Dizayee, Minister of the Department of Foreign Relations, Kurdistan Regional Government, and Kamal Muslim, Minister of Trade and Industry, Kurdistan Regional Government, were enlightening and encouraging. We also held meetings with Kamal Muslim, Minister of Trade and Industry, Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil; Dr. Mohammed Shukri, Chairman of Board of Investment, Kurdistan Regional Government; Dr. Dara Jaleel Al-Khayat, President, Erbil Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Atheer Daoud Salman Al-Ghariri, Minister of Trade, the government of Iraq. As there are some complexities in visa processing for Iraq, I have discussed the consular matter with the respective Iraqi authority. We also talked about the direct air flight

between Dhaka-Baghdad.

One of the most striking revelations during our visit was the emergence of a new Iraq. When many perceive Iraq as a war-torn nation, we witnessed a country making significant progress in terms of per capita income, infrastructural development, consumption, and overall economic growth.

I had the opportunity to visit shopping malls in Iraq and observed that the clothing available was primarily imported from Turkey, with only a few items originating from Bangladesh, albeit transshipped through Turkey. This presents a huge opportunity for Bangladesh to become a preferred apparel sourcing hub directly to Iraqi customers. Iraq, with its 44 million population, imports 100 percent of its garment requirements, which aligns perfectly with the range of apparels that we manufacture and export. By exploring the Iraqi market, we can tap into this vast potential and establish a strong presence.

Our exporters may take the opportunity to participate in the 5th Erbil International Fashion & Textile Exhibition will take place from December 14 to 17, 2023, in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Participation in these expositions will enable our exporters to gain deeper insights into the market and plan their strategies accordingly. Our visit to Iraq has showed that Bangladesh needs to tap into the untapped potential and opportunities in new markets. It is vital for our RMG industry to diversify its export destinations to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. By widening the export horizons, we have the potential to not only strengthen the standing of our industry but also to contribute to the socioeconomic development of our beloved Bangladesh. Together, we can achieve the potential and secure a brighter future for our RMG industry. **A**

Faruque Hassan is the President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Textile Technology Business Center: A Journey Towards Sustainability



A workshop on Rooftop Solar held at Radisson Blu in Dhaka

The textile industry plays a vital role in the global economy, yet it is also one of the most resource-intensive and polluting sectors. As consumer demand for sustainable and ethically produced textiles continues to rise, the need for sustainable practices in the industry becomes even more critical. In response to this challenge, the International Finance Corporation

(IFC) has led the Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT) Program, which aims to transform the textile industry by promoting sustainable practices. One of the success stories of this program is the Textile Technology Business Center operating in the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). This article will explore the outcomes of the PaCT Program and how it has contributed to sustainability in the textile industry.

The PaCT Program was launched in 2013 by IFC in collaboration with various partners, including global brands, manufacturers, and BGMEA; funded by the Kingdom of Netherlands, the government of Australia and the Royal Danish Embassy. The aim was to improve resource efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and promote sustainable practices in the textile industry. The program focuses on three key areas: water, energy, and chemicals. By implementing

TTBC provides a platform for networking and collaboration. It brings together textile entrepreneurs, manufacturers, suppliers, and industry professionals under one roof, creating opportunities for partnerships and knowledge sharing. This collaborative environment fosters innovation and facilitates the exchange of ideas, ultimately promoting the growth and success of businesses in the textile sector.



innovative technologies and practices, the program aims to reduce water and energy consumption and minimize the use of hazardous chemicals in textile production.

The Textile Technology Business Center (TTBC), located in the BGMEA complex, is one of the flagship projects of the PaCT Program. The center provides technical support and training to textile manufacturers, helping them adopt sustainable practices and improve

their environmental performance. The center also serves as a hub for research and development, promoting innovation and technological advancements in the textile industry. Since its inception, the PaCT Program has achieved significant outcomes in terms of sustainability in the textile industry. Due to the increased challenges and complexities of the textile industry, the program evolved to its second phase (PaCT II) where the competitiveness of the sector became the emphasis of the program.

The Textile Technology Business Center also continued to be a component of the program playing a crucial role in this success by providing technical expertise and support to the manufacturers. By reaching out to 488 factories from both the phases of the program, some of the key outcomes from the overall PaCT include:

1. **Water Efficiency:** Through the implementation of innovative technologies and best practices, the PaCT Program has helped textile manufacturers reduce water consumption 31.7 billion liter/year and cut wastewater discharge by 26.5 billion liter/year.

2. **Energy Efficiency:** The program has also focused on improving energy efficiency in textile production. By adopting energy-saving technologies and practices, manufacturers have been able to save 3.6 million MWh/year in energy and avoid greenhouse gas emissions of up to 682,472 tonnes CO₂ eq/year.

3. **Chemical Management:** The PaCT Program has also emphasized the need for responsible chemical

management in textile production. By promoting the use of safer chemicals and implementing proper waste management practices, manufacturers have been able to minimize the environmental impact of chemical usage helping factories recover chemicals such as salt and caustic soda, which also cut their operating costs. This has resulted in a safer working environment for the industry workers and reduced pollution.

4. **Capacity Building:** By organizing more than 400 training/workshop sessions with more than 7000 participants, with support of the Textile Technology Business Center, the program helped building capacity of textile manufacturers. Through technical training programs and knowledge sharing sessions, manufacturers have been equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to adopt sustainable practices. This has not only improved their environmental performance but also enhanced their competitiveness in the global market.

Furthermore, the TTBC supported IFC to implement advisory services through conducting studies on In-depth Cleaner Production, Combined Energy Efficiency & Productivity, and Rooftop Solar PV. The center further initiated business-to-business linkages between factories and technology vendors for manufacturers to achieve efficiency in their production.

One of the key advantages of TTBC is that it is equipped with cutting-edge machinery, advanced technology, and modern production solutions that enable businesses to



Productivity Assessment by TTBC team

enhance their manufacturing capabilities and improve product quality. This allows textile companies to stay at the forefront of innovation and meet the ever-changing demands of the industry. TTBC also offers a range of support services to assist businesses in their operations. This includes access to skilled workforce, technical expertise, and business consultation. The center has a team of industry experts who provide guidance and assistance in areas such as product development, market research, and supply chain management. This support helps businesses streamline their processes, reduce costs, and maximize their profitability. Moreover, TTBC provides a platform for networking and collaboration. It

The PaCT Program was launched in 2013 by IFC in collaboration with various partners, including global brands, manufacturers, and BGMEA; funded by the Kingdom of Netherlands, the government of Australia and the Royal Danish Embassy. The aim was to improve resource efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and promote sustainable practices in the textile industry. The program focuses on three key areas: water, energy, and chemicals.

brings together textile entrepreneurs, manufacturers, suppliers, and industry professionals under one roof, creating opportunities for partnerships and knowledge sharing. This collaborative environment fosters innovation and facilitates the exchange of ideas, ultimately promoting the growth and success of businesses in the textile sector. Furthermore, TTBC is committed to sustainability and eco-friendly practices. It encourages businesses to adopt environmentally responsible manufacturing processes and offers guidance on sustainable sourcing. By promoting sustainability, TTBC helps businesses align with changing consumer preferences and contribute to a greener future. ^A

An Exciting Showcase of Sporting Talent and Spirit

BGMEA CUP



The trophy of BGMEA Cup 2023 was unveiled at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka in September 2023. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan graced the trophy unveiling ceremony as chief guest.

Working in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh is not just a job; it's a source of pride for millions, considering the industry's immense contribution to the socioeconomic development of the economy. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), as the apex trade body representing the industry, understands the importance of fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among the industry's workforce. Taking this into consideration, the association introduced the BGMEA

Football Cup in 2016, an annual extravaganza that not only provides a refreshing break from daily routines but also promotes the spirit of sportsmanship and unity within the garment sector.

The BGMEA Cup made its debut in 2016, and since then, the tournament has become an eagerly anticipated event, showcasing the extraordinary enthusiasm and sporting talents of garment employees. BGMEA Cup has introduced Players Auction which helps fresh university graduates as well as former professional players to get jobs. Bando Design Ltd claimed their inaugural BGMEA Cup title, and they



also secured the championship in 2017. Comfit Composite Knit Ltd emerged victorious in the BGMEA Cup Football Tournament 2018. In 2019, Epyllion Group triumphed to win the BGMEA Cup. Bando Design Ltd dominated the 5th edition of the BGMEA Cup football tournament in 2020. Epyllion Group repeated their success by hoisting the BGMEA Cup trophy in 2021. Bando Design Ltd once again showcased their prowess, taking home the title in the 7th edition of the BGMEA Cup football tournament in 2022. This year, the eighth edition of the inter-garments football tournament, BGMEA Cup 2023, is set to kick off on November 9 at the Uttara Sector 4 Kallyan Samiti Field in Dhaka. The tournament's trophy was unveiled at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka on September 29, 2023, exhibiting the spirit of competition and unity that the BGMEA Cup represents. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan graced the auction and cup unveiling ceremony as chief guest. Distinguished guests, including BGMEA Senior Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Directors Haroon Ar Rashid, Rajiv Chowdhury, and Md Imranur Rahman, as well as prominent garment entrepreneurs, players, and representatives of sponsors, were present at the program. The tournament brings together mid and upper-management teams from

16 garment factories across the country to compete in an 8-a-side football tournament. The BGMEA Cup serves as a unique platform for players to build trust, make crucial decisions, and set ambitious goals. The participating teams in BGMEA Cup 2023 are - Comfit Composite Knit Ltd, TRZ Group, Shrabony Knitwear Ltd, Tusuka Group, Setara Group, Hossain Group, Mosharraf Apparels Ltd, Sayem Fashions Ltd, Fakir Fashion Ltd, Asian Apparels Ltd, Apparels Village Ltd, Aspire Garments Ltd, Kims Corporation Ltd, Evince Group, Laila Group, and Bando Design Ltd. These renowned garment companies will compete to win the title of BGMEA Cup 2023. Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, said "Football is a bond that binds people together. It's about teamwork; the glory, the pain, and the victory shared with teammates." He thinks the BGMEA Cup is more than just a sporting event; it's a bonding experience for employees that fosters camaraderie and healthy competition, promoting physical fitness and developing leadership among the corporate community. "We believe that football is a great medium to build a strong sense of unity among garment workers and employees who are the main driving force behind the success of the apparel industry in Bangladesh," Faruque Hassan said. Renowned corporate footballer and

organizer, Imranur Rahman, who is the Managing Director of Laila Group and also a Director of BGMEA, is the architect of the BGMEA Football Cup. Imranur Rahman, who has recently been appointed as the Director General of the Asian Federation of Corporate Football (FAFCO), has a consuming passion for football. He believes that football tournaments offer valuable life lessons. "One of the remarkable aspects of football tournaments is that, regardless of the outcome, there's always something new to learn and gain from your fellow teammates," he said. FAFCO is the Asian department of the International Federation of Corporate Football (FIFCO), the world governing body of corporate football and headquartered in Montreal, Canada. Apart from being a sport event, the BGMEA Football Cup is a testament to the unity and spirit of the garment industry in Bangladesh. Through sportsmanship, teamwork, and friendly competition, it brings together professionals and creates a sense of belonging in an industry that plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy. The BGMEA Cup stands as a symbol of the shared goals and achievements of the individuals who make the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh a force to be reckoned with. **A**



Crafting magic out of clay

Pottery is one of the oldest handicrafts in Bangladesh, with its history dating as far back as the Mohenjodaro and Harappa civilisation. This time-honored tradition is still practiced in various parts of the country. A single visit to a potters village helps to unravel the mystery of how potters manufacture a wide variety of eye-catching long-enduring products from a simple ball of clay.

The subtle art of pottery is fascinating for young and old to watch. After placing a lump of earth (ceramic clay) on the wheel (or potters lathe, as it's sometimes called) the artisans bring it to life by transforming the lifeless lump into their desired shape just by the pressure of

their dexterous fingers. It takes a long time and much practice to master this craft. The technique is usually passed down from one generation to the next and the children begin to learn from an early age. There, most probably, isn't a child on earth who doesn't love to play with mud so the activity is a win-win situation.


The eye-catching earthenware, stoneware and porcelain they skilfully produce range from an assortment of pots, cups, flower vases and decorative objects. The products come in all sizes and an assortment of variations, in exquisite styles, offering an artistic and brilliant way to furnish the home and office and bring what nature has to offer inside.



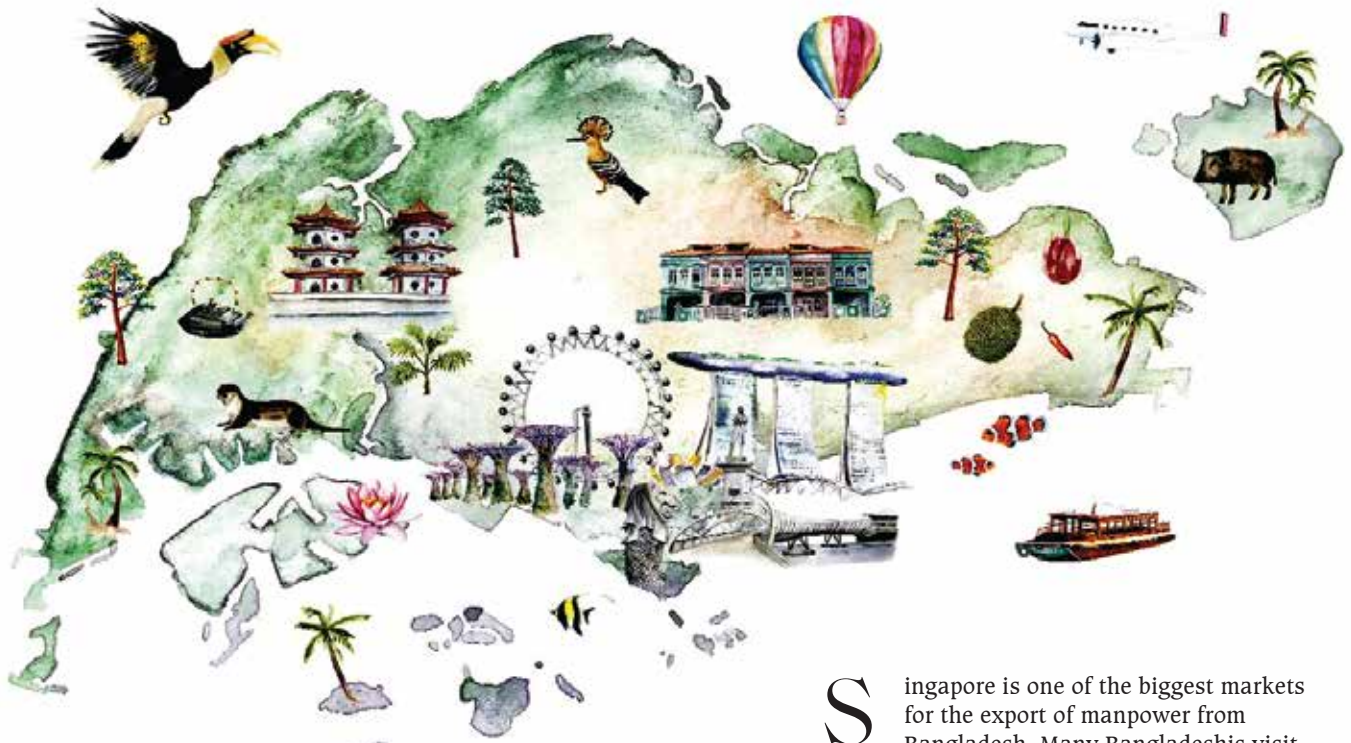


Lalakhhal- Breathtakingly Blue!

Hidden between the hills of north Sylhet close to the border with India, Lalakhhal is globetrotters' paradise. It is probably the most beautiful canal in Bangladesh with opulent emerald blue water that's soothing to eye and soul. The water of the canal is so clear that one can see the riverbed 10-12 feet below and watch the fish go about their daily routine! It is actually a tributary of the Shari River, which stems from Khasia-Jaintia Hills in India and

enters Bangladesh through Lalakhhal, a picturesque village. Its crystal clear water flows in quick joyful play across the waterfalls and cascades all the way through the rocky mountains. A pleasure to watch and exceedingly relaxing. Along its length, the canal has many breath-taking curves, which nature lovers particularly enjoy. This popular tourist attraction is only 35 km away from Sylhet city centre. 

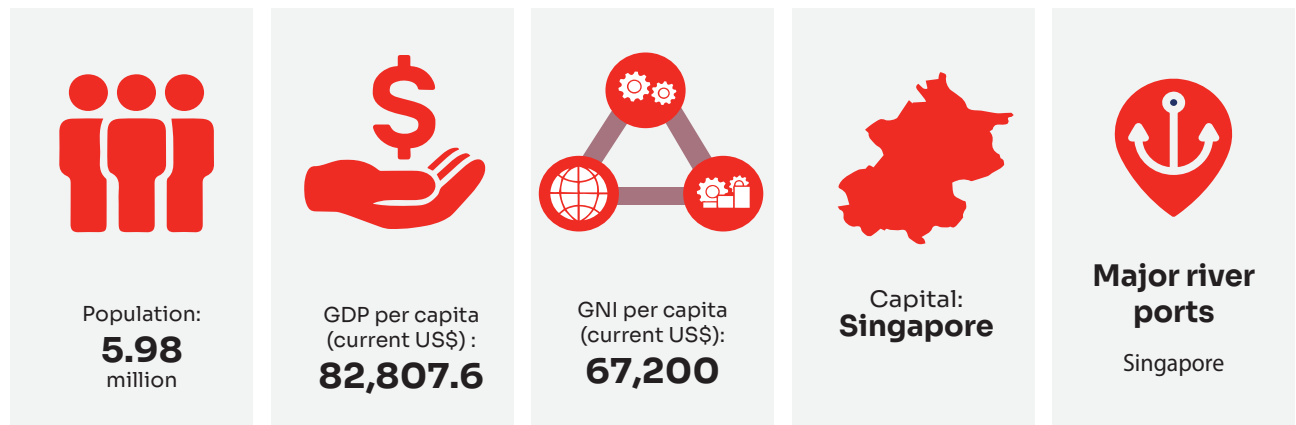




Tapping the Emerging Market: Singapore

Singapore is one of the biggest markets for the export of manpower from Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshis visit Singapore as a popular nearby travel destination. Over the past five decades, the two countries have shared a cordial relationship and their ties have gradually grown stronger through cooperation in a number of areas. Singapore is also an important trading and strategic partner for Bangladesh. Singapore is one of the largest importing partner of Bangladesh, with imports amounting to about US\$4.11 billion in fiscal year 2021-22. In recent year, Bangladesh's export to Singapore has also been increasing. Last fiscal year 2022-23, Bangladesh's export to Singapore reached US\$ 176.26 million of which US\$ 98.57 million export was from apparel sector.

Demographic and Economic Overview of Singapore

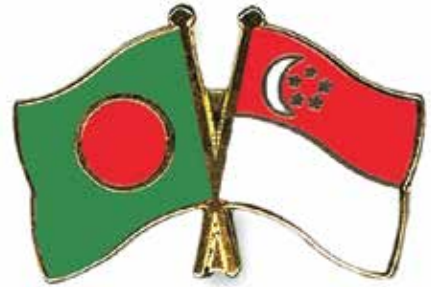


Source: The World Factbook – CIA & World Bank

Bilateral Trade:

Year	BD's Export to Singapore	BD's Import from Singapore	Trade Balance
2017-18	125.75	2696.52	-2570.77
2018-19	149.38	3105.67	-2956.28
2019-20	95.10	1716.21	-1621.11
2020-21	116.57	2467.99	-2351.42
2021-22	127.11	4115.75	-3988.64
2022-23	176.26		

Source: Bangladesh Bank and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)



Singapore's Clothing Import from the World:

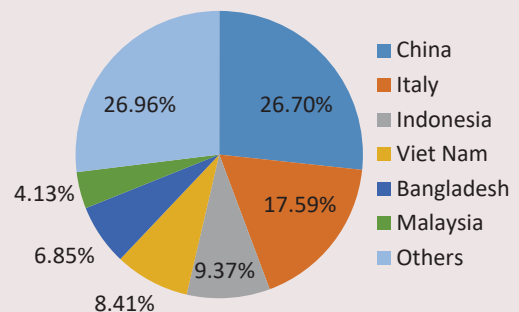
Bangladesh is the fifth largest apparel sourcing country of Singapore. The share of Bangladesh in Singapore's total RMG import is 6.85%. In 2022, Singapore imported USD 160.15 million apparel from Bangladesh. China tops as a supplier with 26.70% share.

Table-2: Singapore's Clothing Import from the World and share in 2022 (Value in million USD)

Exporters	2020	2021	2022	Share in 2022
China	639.29	490.28	624.04	26.70%
Italy	244.44	296.64	411.17	17.59%
Indonesia	191.78	208.17	218.98	9.37%
Viet Nam	137.92	151.89	196.54	8.41%
Bangladesh	121.53	127.62	160.15	6.85%
Malaysia	128.60	135.60	96.51	4.13%
Others	578.29	504.97	630.17	26.96%
Total	2041.85	1915.15	2337.56	100.00%

Source: ITC Trademap

Figure-1 : Singapore's Major Sources of Apparel Imports in % in 2022



Bangladesh's Clothing Export to Singapore:

In FY2022-23, Bangladesh's RMG export to Singapore grew by 51.45% year-on-year and reached US\$ 149.29 million.

Table 3: BD's Knit, Woven and Total apparel Export to Singapore (Value in million USD)*

Year	Knit	Woven	Total	Growth
2012-2013	17.67	16.49	34.16	61.84%
2013-2014	25.04	31.93	56.97	66.76%
2014-2015	37.49	50.95	88.44	55.23%
2015-2016	38.92	38.89	77.81	-12.02%
2016-2017	37.13	35.33	72.46	-6.87%
2017-2018	37.36	35.93	73.29	1.15%
2018-2019	34.38	33.37	67.75	-7.56%
2019-2020	29.87	30.79	60.66	-10.47%
2020-2021	41.69	36.92	78.61	29.59%
2021-2022	56.00	42.57	98.57	25.39%
2022-2023	72.47	76.82	149.29	51.45%

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

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

Singapore imported USD 2.35 billion worth of apparel from the world where the share of cotton made items was 40.01%. On the other hand, the share of non-cotton items by Singapore from Bangladesh was 31.38% only of total apparel imports while the share of cotton items was 68.62%.

Figure-2: Share of Singapore's cotton & non-cotton clothing import from World in 2022

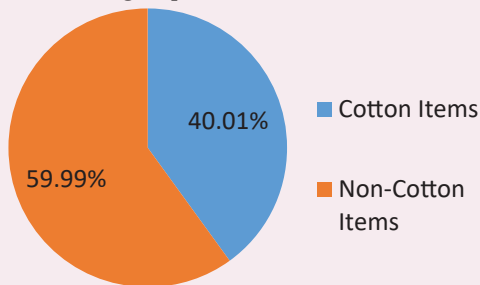
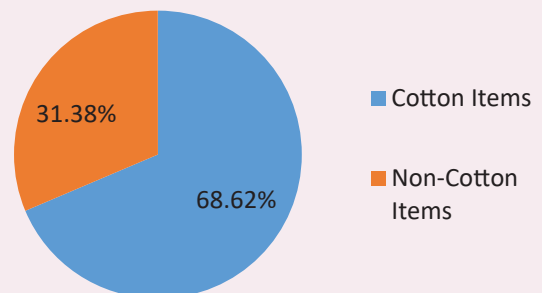


Figure-3: Share of Singapore's cotton & non-cotton clothing import from BD in 2022



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

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

HS Code	Items	World 2017	World 2022	China	Italy	Indonesia	Viet Nam	BD	Malaysia	France	CAGR of Singapore's import from world (2017-2022)
610910	Cotton knitted T-shirts	158.90	196.31	31.88	37.34	7.20	20.42	23.17	16.80	2.64	4.32%
611490	Non cotton knitted sporting special garments	116.69	109.48	79.00	5.97	2.15	1.19	0.56	0.88	1.01	-1.27%
620342	M/B cotton woven trousers	76.87	103.14	26.08	7.10	3.30	8.34	30.73	0.84	0.62	6.06%
611020	Cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	138.39	101.61	9.65	31.04	14.17	15.64	5.22	6.22	0.53	-5.99%
610990	Non cotton knitted T-shirts	99.24	101.00	32.25	3.04	19.57	11.12	3.25	7.28	0.96	0.35%
621710	Non-cotton Made-up clothing accessories	142.31	87.68	8.18	13.16	1.09	0.42	0.32	0.44	0.79	-9.23%
620462	W/G cotton woven trousers	67.51	78.26	24.99	6.57	4.48	7.91	19.76	0.18	0.62	3.00%
620520	M/B cotton woven shirts	55.33	55.51	10.02	8.78	2.84	8.69	6.49	2.53	3.39	0.06%
610462	W/G cotton knitted trousers	57.91	52.31	3.27	0.98	36.16	3.54	1.36	2.14	0.10	-2.01%
610510	M/B cotton knitted shirts	35.71	49.86	9.24	2.02	9.14	10.92	4.62	1.71	0.29	6.90%
621210	Non cotton woven Brassieres	52.87	49.34	18.35	0.37	3.61	17.18	0.82	0.22	0.07	-1.37%
610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	36.91	48.88	5.88	1.22	21.81	8.96	0.35	1.19	0.02	5.78%
621149	W/G non cotton tracksuits	29.59	44.95	11.37	4.42	0.73	0.87	10.00	0.46	0.76	8.72%
611030	MMF Knitted Jerseys & pullovers	45.09	42.05	7.60	8.31	9.53	3.73	2.18	1.20	0.23	-1.39%
620630	W/G cotton woven blouses & shirts	42.56	41.18	18.61	6.95	4.64	1.34	1.43	0.02	0.62	-0.66%
611780	Knited Ties, bow ties, cravats	82.64	37.72	14.41	4.59	0.19	0.55	0.12	6.53	1.07	-14.52%
621790	Non cotton woven garments or clothing accessories	126.28	35.90	6.16	5.61	0.15	0.26	0.04	18.87	1.13	-22.24%
620343	M/B synthetic woven trousers	22.84	34.51	4.51	1.49	4.91	10.91	2.96	0.54	0.06	8.60%
620442	W/G cotton woven dresses	27.27	34.44	15.22	5.94	0.78	0.36	0.65	0.06	0.90	4.78%
621420	Woolen woven shawls, scarves & mufflers	15.59	33.30	0.03	26.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.41	16.39%

Source: ITC Trademap



Table-5 shows the major apparel items imported by Singapore 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 Singapore as they have high demands for those products.

HS code	Items	Singapore's import from world	Singapore's import from BD	BD's share in Singapore's total import	CAGR of Singapore's import from world during 2017-22*
610990	Non cotton knitted T-shirts	101.00	3.25	3.21%	0.35%
610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	48.88	0.35	0.72%	5.78%
620442	W/G cotton woven dresses	34.44	0.65	1.88%	4.78%
611090	Non cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	22.80	0.93	4.09%	5.05%
620463	W/G synthetic woven trousers	22.77	0.96	4.23%	4.13%
610520	M/B MMF knitted shirts	14.91	0.55	3.67%	16.59%
620690	W/G non cotton woven blouses & shirts	13.37	0.47	3.53%	1.83%
620332	M/B cotton jackets and blazers	13.35	0.35	2.60%	26.35%
620452	W/G cotton woven skirts & divided	12.16	0.67	5.52%	12.50%
620432	W/G cotton jackets & blazers	9.99	0.36	3.58%	17.00%

Source: ITC Trademap 



Statistics

Bangladesh's RMG Export to World

Value in Million USD

Month	2021	2022	2023	2023 VS 2022	2023 VS 2021
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	2556.95	3158.58	4053.28	28.33%	58.52%
June	2894.88	4092.00	4360.82	6.57%	50.64%
July	2887.22	3366.91	3953.74	17.43%	36.94%
August	2753.38	3745.76	4044.86	7.99%	46.91%
September	3418.84	3161.67	3618.90	14.46%	5.85%
October	3561.71	3678.00	3165.60	-13.93%	-11.12%
November					
December					
Total	28532.32	36664.80	38778.02	5.76%	35.91%

Source: EPB

Knitwear

Value in Million USD

Month	2021	2022	2023	2023 VS 2022	2023 VS 2021
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	1366.37	1743.29	2310.38	32.53%	69.09%
June	1597.71	2228.44	2460.09	10.40%	53.98%
July	1658.45	1854.15	2266.48	22.24%	36.66%
August	1600.44	2061.53	2315.73	12.33%	44.69%
September	1905.29	1733.78	2180.38	25.76%	14.44%
October	2045.89	2075.66	1914.19	-7.78%	-6.44%
November					
December					
Total	15643.93	19777.81	21755.30	10.00%	39.07%

Source: EPB

Wovenwear

Value in Million USD

Month	2021	2022	2023	2023 VS 2022	2023 VS 2021
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	1190.58	1415.29	1742.90	23.15%	46.39%
June	1297.17	1863.56	1900.73	1.99%	46.53%
July	1228.77	1512.76	1687.26	11.54%	37.31%
August	1152.94	1684.23	1729.13	2.67%	49.98%
September	1513.55	1427.89	1438.52	0.74%	-4.96%
October	1515.82	1602.34	1251.41	-21.90%	-17.44%
November					
December					
Total	12888.39	16886.99	17022.72	0.80%	32.08%

Source: EPB

Bangladesh's RMG Export to World

(January-October 2022 & 2023)
Value in Million USD

EU Countries	Woven			Knit			Total		
	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Growth %	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Growth %	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Growth %
Austria	11.33	11.02	-2.78	31.19	29.68	-4.85	42.52	40.69	-4.30
Belgium	173.81	209.18	20.35	423.85	406.25	-4.15	597.66	615.43	2.97
Bulgaria	0.18	0.14	-20.54	0.88	0.86	-2.58	1.06	1.00	-5.57
Denmark	325.58	303.58	-6.76	648.44	801.94	23.67	974.01	1105.51	13.50
Finland	5.40	13.25	145.46	31.80	31.14	-2.08	37.20	44.39	19.32
France	775.39	906.29	16.88	1,416.69	1,509.61	6.56	2192.08	2415.90	10.21
Germany	2,440.56	1,798.74	-26.30	3,442.04	3,242.25	-5.80	5882.60	5040.98	-14.31
Greece	12.07	15.26	26.39	42.21	48.30	14.42	54.29	63.56	17.08
Italy	480.03	610.72	27.23	961.95	1,140.96	18.61	1441.98	1751.68	21.48
Ireland	71.84	81.09	12.87	118.86	148.18	24.67	190.70	229.27	20.22
Netherlands	562.36	643.27	14.39	771.98	903.77	17.07	1334.34	1547.04	15.94
Portugal	25.97	32.60	25.54	57.65	74.89	29.89	83.62	107.49	28.54
Romania	2.63	12.27	366.93	12.14	54.71	350.62	14.77	66.98	353.52
Spain	1,104.29	1,327.80	20.24	1,570.54	1,850.60	17.83	2674.83	3178.40	18.83
Sweden	231.56	245.49	6.02	460.61	494.41	7.34	692.18	739.90	6.90
Cyprus	0.29	0.44	48.85	2.12	1.95	-7.70	2.41	2.39	-0.79
Czech Republic	124.71	145.32	16.52	136.94	145.34	6.13	261.65	290.65	11.08
Estonia	0.06	0.11	75.17	1.05	1.91	81.19	1.12	2.02	80.85
Hungary	32.18	31.56	-1.91	108.47	116.87	7.74	140.65	148.43	5.53
Latvia	0.13	0.38	191.98	0.48	3.88	713.91	0.61	4.26	601.77
Lithuania	0.14	0.05	-67.41	0.21	0.11	-44.00	0.34	0.16	-53.47
Malta	0.07	0.06	-21.55	0.27	0.15	-44.00	0.34	0.21	-39.24
Poland	557.37	527.48	-5.36	937.40	965.61	3.01	1494.76	1493.09	-0.11
Slovakia	20.60	18.76	-8.93	57.94	52.71	-9.04	78.54	71.46	-9.01
Slovenia	25.12	14.70	-41.46	88.30	45.00	-49.04	113.41	59.70	-47.36
Croatia	5.34	20.07	276.08	14.74	41.46	181.31	20.07	61.53	206.50
Luxembourg	0.32	2.73	744.19	1.43	2.87	101.16	1.75	5.60	219.92
Sub-Total (EU)	6,989.33	6,972.33	-0.24	11,340.2	12,115.4	6.84	18,329.50	19,087.73	4.14
EU % of World	41.39	40.96		57.34	55.69		49.99	49.22	
USA	5,038.48	4,416.18	-12.35	2,403.12	2,401.26	-0.08	7441.60	6817.44	-8.39
% of USA	29.84	25.94		12.15	11.04		20.30	17.58	
U.K.	1,599.34	1,765.05	10.36	2,334.57	2,674.61	14.57	3933.90	4439.66	12.86
% of U.K.	9.47	10.37		11.80	12.29		10.73	11.45	
Canada	615.88	679.45	10.32	577.70	555.09	-3.91	1193.58	1234.53	3.43
% of Canada	3.65	3.99		2.92	2.55		3.26	3.18	
Non-Traditional Markets									
Japan	481.26	600.11	24.70	541.80	803.38	48.28	1023.06	1403.50	37.19
Australia	276.08	367.90	33.26	432.19	701.72	62.36	708.27	1069.62	51.02
Russia	115.15	113.79	-1.18	217.65	257.76	18.43	332.80	371.55	11.64
India	408.75	482.06	17.93	337.87	328.27	-2.84	746.62	810.32	8.53
Korea Rep.	202.44	230.69	13.96	212.74	264.91	24.52	415.18	495.60	19.37
China	118.25	149.09	26.08	63.01	111.33	76.70	181.25	260.42	43.68
United Arab Emirates	106.54	106.81	0.25	135.32	153.56	13.48	241.86	260.37	7.65
Mexico	136.49	143.04	4.80	131.67	133.65	1.50	268.16	276.68	3.18
Malaysia	56.72	73.39	29.39	159.54	147.58	-7.49	216.26	220.97	2.18
Saudi Arabia	45.12	54.16	20.04	83.35	100.60	20.69	128.47	154.76	20.46
Turkey	103.41	137.43	32.90	95.47	130.15	36.32	198.88	267.58	34.54
South Africa	42.86	48.71	13.63	56.23	58.75	4.47	99.10	107.46	8.43
New Zealand	26.51	32.75	23.55	68.42	88.56	29.43	94.93	121.30	27.78
Chile	76.57	65.61	-14.31	82.02	80.53	-1.82	158.60	146.15	-7.85
Brazil	35.94	65.30	81.66	46.04	73.00	58.56	81.98	138.30	68.69
Other Countries	411.88	518.88	25.98	458.91	575.18	25.34	870.78	1094.06	25.64
Total (Non-Trad. Markets)	2,643.97	3,189.71	20.64	3,122.25	4,008.94	28.40	5,766.22	7,198.65	24.84
% of Non-Traditional	15.66	18.74		15.79	18.43		15.73	18.56	
GRAND TOTAL	16,886.99	17,022.72	0.80	19,777.81	21,755.30	10.00	36,664.80	38,778.02	5.76

Source: EPB

Bangladesh's Top 30 Apparel Items Export to World

Value in Million USD

SL	HS Code	Products Description	Jul-Oct, 2022-23	Jul-Oct, 2023-24	Growth
1	610910	Cotton T-shirts	2376.86	2188.40	-7.93%
2	611020	Cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	1334.78	1596.96	19.64%
3	620342	M/B cotton woven trousers	1783.11	1570.89	-11.90%
4	620462	W/G cotton woven trousers	995.87	1014.62	1.88%
5	611030	MMF knitted Jerseys & pullovers	882.52	927.49	5.10%
6	620520	M/B cotton woven shirts	638.74	554.85	-13.13%
7	610462	W/G cotton knitted trousers	468.87	524.83	11.94%
8	611120	Cotton knitted Babies' garments	193.44	358.98	85.58%
10	610510	M/B cotton knitted shirts	298.45	354.03	18.62%
9	620343	M/B synthetic woven trousers	414.99	352.09	-15.16%
11	610342	M/B cotton knitted trousers	233.52	314.70	34.76%
12	610711	M/B cotton knitted underpants	196.08	235.32	20.01%
13	610821	W/G cotton knitted briefs & panties	200.19	201.05	0.43%
14	621210	Non cotton woven Brassires	175.17	175.01	-0.09%
15	610831	W/G cotton knitted nighties	115.83	163.74	41.37%
16	611090	Non cotton knitted Jerseys & pullovers	149.05	153.75	3.16%
17	610990	Non cotton knitted T-shirts	155.56	148.74	-4.39%
20	610463	W/G synthetic knitted trousers	100.38	135.40	34.89%
18	620463	W/G synthetic woven trousers	138.83	135.27	-2.56%
21	620333	M/B synthetic woven jackets & blazers	106.97	123.61	15.56%
19	610442	Cotton knitted Dresses	84.27	122.15	44.95%
23	620530	M/B MMF woven shirts	99.83	109.28	9.46%
22	620920	Cotton woven Babies' garments	73.69	101.27	37.43%
25	610721	M/B cotton knitted pyjamas	56.52	96.28	70.35%
24	620332	M/B cotton woven jackets & blazers	91.67	85.27	-6.99%
26	620630	W/G cotton woven blouses	80.50	79.73	-0.95%
27	610343	M/B synthetic knitted trousers	49.94	79.64	59.48%
28	620339	M/B non cotton woven jackets & blazers	45.29	68.77	51.84%
29	610610	W/G cotton knitted blouses	55.16	66.62	20.78%
30	610220	W/G cotton knitted coats	48.52	65.87	35.76%

Source: EPB

Note: M/B= Men's or boys

W/G= Women's or girls

EU Apparel Import Growth

Growth: 2023 VS 2022									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	3.74%	-4.78%	-7.74%	-16.84%	-13.42%	-10.93%	-2.45%	-21.29%	-9.61%
China	-7.63%	-18.46%	-25.30%	-13.52%	-5.37%	-3.54%	-2.11%	-26.86%	-14.13%
Bangladesh	12.23%	3.90%	-0.36%	-29.93%	-29.97%	-26.28%	-4.84%	-26.06%	-13.71%
Turkey	-7.10%	-16.13%	-11.36%	-12.38%	-5.91%	-8.52%	-10.71%	-14.43%	-10.89%
India	13.69%	16.67%	-5.79%	-12.53%	-22.76%	-16.28%	-7.14%	-16.20%	-7.20%
Cambodia	2.84%	6.39%	-1.85%	-21.40%	-24.94%	-16.43%	6.10%	-13.77%	-8.44%
Viet Nam	15.51%	8.70%	4.86%	-13.03%	-12.71%	-10.85%	-1.76%	-19.65%	-4.41%
Pakistan	6.66%	-0.44%	-10.41%	-23.74%	-17.57%	-19.34%	-5.11%	-29.14%	-13.17%
Morocco	-11.88%	-23.78%	-15.58%	-8.34%	-4.60%	-12.20%	-11.67%	-20.62%	-13.63%
Sri Lanka	-6.61%	-18.86%	2.67%	-30.46%	-19.76%	-16.78%	-5.45%	-22.83%	-14.95%
Indonesia	7.15%	-10.96%	-6.17%	-19.21%	-34.13%	-35.89%	-23.03%	-32.92%	-20.33%

Growth: 2023 VS 2021									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	29.72%	15.00%	13.98%	1.57%	17.88%	15.47%	20.10%	10.40%	15.43%
China	12.36%	0.32%	-12.27%	1.61%	16.53%	24.03%	28.87%	2.42%	8.73%
Bangladesh	65.25%	33.66%	52.21%	-4.21%	13.48%	5.77%	30.49%	17.98%	25.88%
Turkey	9.10%	3.60%	7.09%	6.93%	20.59%	10.05%	-9.79%	-1.69%	5.16%
India	41.15%	20.37%	12.67%	3.78%	22.12%	19.80%	30.85%	23.37%	20.64%
Cambodia	19.34%	42.88%	32.73%	7.23%	12.21%	64.34%	61.63%	34.72%	32.72%
Viet Nam	45.58%	32.33%	24.77%	5.92%	17.30%	17.85%	16.00%	20.45%	22.46%
Pakistan	39.93%	25.02%	16.31%	-2.05%	14.80%	22.98%	-1.09%	7.79%	14.89%
Morocco	13.03%	-6.76%	1.59%	-0.80%	25.87%	9.43%	-16.81%	-10.38%	1.11%
Sri Lanka	10.13%	-4.24%	14.66%	-28.44%	-1.84%	9.55%	-4.07%	8.95%	-0.05%
Indonesia	41.38%	21.54%	16.05%	-14.73%	-7.91%	-3.76%	9.94%	9.66%	8.13%

Growth: 2023 VS 2020									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	3.70%	12.00%	34.09%	64.68%	72.49%	39.59%	12.05%	2.08%	23.31%
China	-4.81%	4.35%	48.05%	47.66%	12.79%	10.14%	4.55%	-2.79%	8.98%
Bangladesh	28.33%	29.63%	33.89%	36.10%	134.70%	117.38%	58.42%	12.18%	44.06%
Turkey	3.47%	11.64%	47.58%	151.31%	108.50%	56.35%	-8.03%	2.46%	30.53%
India	10.66%	17.37%	31.16%	91.88%	180.40%	93.30%	35.30%	19.22%	44.25%
Cambodia	-4.67%	22.03%	22.66%	27.44%	43.19%	33.70%	17.02%	0.69%	16.46%
Viet Nam	17.39%	29.97%	65.98%	80.91%	94.68%	50.68%	24.12%	13.82%	39.47%
Pakistan	25.60%	41.51%	19.81%	63.13%	161.67%	80.45%	37.91%	17.71%	43.57%
Morocco	-8.77%	-3.22%	24.13%	811.95%	541.86%	71.03%	-21.54%	12.69%	40.37%
Sri Lanka	-2.36%	12.66%	36.10%	22.82%	201.36%	67.79%	-1.98%	-2.14%	24.09%
Indonesia	-3.53%	13.36%	8.98%	18.46%	24.37%	-9.75%	-1.16%	2.87%	5.64%

Source: eurostat

U.S. Apparel Import Growth

Growth: 2023 VS 2022									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	-3.78%	-19.95%	-32.48%	-29.41%	-25.85%	-24.32%	-17.56%	-25.58%	-22.77%
China	-24.62%	-35.38%	-45.67%	-23.00%	-22.03%	-23.70%	-27.21%	-32.79%	-29.47%
Viet Nam	-0.47%	-20.02%	-44.25%	-36.12%	-30.73%	-20.08%	-14.29%	-23.50%	-24.57%
Bangladesh	15.32%	-11.76%	-35.36%	-31.39%	-24.42%	-43.61%	7.45%	-33.71%	-21.77%
Indonesia	4.63%	-19.09%	-33.66%	-44.54%	-35.67%	-37.89%	-13.71%	-18.22%	-26.09%
India	9.91%	-9.08%	-27.19%	-30.52%	-35.70%	-25.16%	-18.81%	-25.26%	-21.59%
Mexico	-0.72%	-3.76%	-7.88%	-14.10%	-9.46%	-11.74%	-11.06%	-10.40%	-8.87%
Honduras	-20.38%	-3.77%	-22.30%	-34.16%	-13.96%	-24.40%	-28.54%	-26.78%	-22.26%
Cambodia	-12.96%	-44.10%	-38.52%	-40.23%	-33.85%	-20.64%	-18.95%	-11.51%	-27.28%
Pakistan	-3.44%	-37.18%	-37.40%	-37.42%	-39.24%	-28.14%	-26.30%	-18.98%	-29.24%
Korea	1.06%	-32.80%	-16.66%	-1.37%	-20.31%	-5.40%	12.76%	-26.51%	-11.74%

Growth: 2023 VS 2021									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	31.08%	10.83%	-3.62%	1.21%	2.65%	6.06%	10.14%	-4.48%	5.98%
China	10.95%	-5.61%	-24.20%	7.40%	7.27%	1.40%	1.80%	-15.70%	-3.15%
Viet Nam	17.98%	7.07%	-24.49%	-11.57%	-5.15%	16.64%	17.13%	-4.56%	0.74%
Bangladesh	66.77%	25.35%	26.22%	19.44%	4.34%	-6.00%	31.31%	-1.71%	19.84%
Indonesia	64.36%	24.37%	14.09%	-14.54%	2.28%	1.22%	34.31%	12.35%	15.42%
India	68.63%	29.20%	17.78%	13.73%	-2.52%	27.50%	41.62%	4.33%	23.01%
Mexico	26.05%	15.20%	8.43%	9.37%	13.17%	-4.02%	-6.88%	-0.57%	6.37%
Honduras	-10.39%	11.55%	-0.06%	-17.60%	5.99%	-8.99%	-12.70%	-7.00%	-4.80%
Cambodia	23.23%	-14.09%	-21.66%	-10.82%	12.17%	51.28%	42.71%	16.46%	9.98%
Pakistan	37.72%	13.88%	-10.67%	6.96%	-7.38%	-11.95%	-3.05%	-6.64%	0.53%
Korea	97.78%	13.36%	41.96%	39.64%	36.63%	-0.34%	32.04%	-8.28%	26.21%

Growth: 2023 VS 2020									
Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jan-Aug
World	7.11%	1.13%	20.73%	68.18%	137.84%	64.88%	29.47%	17.47%	32.37%
China	-11.10%	0.76%	63.84%	69.36%	71.67%	30.97%	17.44%	2.15%	19.79%
Viet Nam	-3.94%	2.80%	0.85%	24.22%	80.73%	46.77%	15.58%	16.22%	18.11%
Bangladesh	39.14%	14.05%	26.99%	40.58%	268.69%	124.86%	76.91%	3.55%	48.74%
Indonesia	9.83%	-7.65%	7.61%	13.66%	74.65%	46.25%	36.17%	38.05%	21.71%
India	30.97%	1.46%	18.30%	90.93%	507.03%	234.44%	97.24%	36.31%	63.34%
Mexico	9.71%	-0.33%	16.82%	238.70%	170.58%	38.16%	22.76%	26.39%	38.56%
Honduras	-18.82%	-3.34%	18.48%	767.82%	825.07%	210.58%	37.08%	18.51%	57.63%
Cambodia	1.89%	-23.05%	4.45%	26.04%	84.51%	57.83%	17.07%	52.94%	22.46%
Pakistan	54.20%	31.27%	34.75%	51.46%	375.21%	82.29%	80.76%	43.54%	67.58%
Korea	50.41%	-18.31%	50.68%	112.32%	101.58%	32.77%	42.49%	29.05%	43.30%

Source: otexa ^A

News in Pictures



A diverse group of stakeholders from the garment and textile industry gathered at BGMEA Complex in Dhaka to discuss the prospects of circular economy in the country. Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, delivered the opening remark at the discussion which was moderated by Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan, Director, BGMEA. H. E. Jeremy Bruer, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh; Mark Draeck, Chief Technical Advisor on SWITCH2Circular, UNIDO; Holly Syrett, Director of Impact Programmes & Sustainability at Global Fashion Agenda; Nin Castle, Chief Program Officer- Co-Founder, Reverse Resources; Abdur Rahim Khan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO, HSBC Bangladesh; Enamul Huque, Managing Director and Country Head of Corporate, Commercial and Institutional Banking at Standard Chartered Bank; Humaira Azam, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Trust Bank, joined the discussion.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan delivered his speech as guest of honor at the SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains (SWITCH2CE) Project inception seminar organized by UNIDO and the Ministry of Commerce in Dhaka. Golam Dastagir Gazi (BirPratik) MP, Minister, Ministry of Textile and Jute, was present at the event as chief guest. Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, and Dr. Bernd Spanier, Chargé d'Affaires, EU Delegation to Bangladesh were present as special guests.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan along with senior management representatives from Kontoor Brands, including Ezio Garciamendez, Vice President, Chief Supply Chain Officer; Wesley Gibson, Vice President, Managing Director Sourcing; Heena Agrawal, Vice President Finance; and Gihan Palihena, Director Asia Product Supply – South Asia, posed for photograph after a meeting held in Dhaka. Two iconic denim labels -- Lee and Wrangler -- are owned by Kontoor Brands.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan addressed the inauguration ceremony of Textech series of exhibitions as the guest of honor. The exhibitions were organized by CEMS Global USA in association with CEMS Bangladesh in Dhaka. Honorable Textiles and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi (Birpatik) MP attended the ceremony as chief guest.



The Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd. (DSE) and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) signed a MoU to foster collaboration and support the country's readymade garment sector in accessing capital market services. Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, and M. Shaifur Rahman Mazumdar, Managing Director (Acting), DSE inked the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations at BGMEA Complex in Uttara, Dhaka. BGMEA Vice President Shahidullah Azim, Director Mijanur Rahman were present at the MoU signing ceremony.



H. E. Jeremy Bruer, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA. The meeting was marked by fruitful discussions on mutual interests and potential collaborations in grasping trade opportunities between Bangladesh and Australia. BGMEA Vice President Shahidullah Azim, Directors Abdullah Hil Rakib, Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan and Neela Hosna Ara were also present at the meeting.



Stefan Liller, Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh, met with Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA in Dhaka. During the meeting, they discussed potential collaboration between UNDP and BGMEA in promoting sustainability, skills development and workers' wellbeing in the readymade garment industry of Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) hosted a seminar on the German Due Diligence Supply Chain Act in Dhaka. Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, addressed the seminar as chief guest. The event brought together distinguished industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss the significance of human rights and environmental due diligence in the global business landscape.



A delegation of BGMEA headed by President Faruque Hassan held a meeting with A.K.M. Mahbubur Rahman, Commissioner of Customs Bond Commissionerate, Chattogram. The BGMEA leaders urged the Customs Bond Commissionerate in Chattogram to enhance the speed and simplicity of custom bond-related services to boost the competitiveness of the RMG industry. BGMEA First Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Vice President Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, former First Vice President Moinuddin Ahmed Mintu, Directors A.M. Shafiu Karim (Khokon) and M. Ahsanul Hoq were present at the meeting held at the Customs Bond Commissionerate office in Chattogram.



A delegation of the BGMEA, led by President Faruque Hassan, held a meeting with Mohammad Fyzur Rahman, Commissioner of Custom House, Chattogram. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and address key concerns related to customs procedures affecting the readymade garments (RMG) industry. BGMEA First Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Vice President Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, Directors Md. M. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, A.M. Shafiu Karim (Khokon), and M. Ahsanul Hoq were present at the meeting held at the Custom House in Chattogram.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan held a meeting with Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail. BGMEA First Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Vice President Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, Directors A.M. Shafiu Karim (Khokon), and M. Ahsanul Hoq were also present at the meeting held at CPA office in Chattogram.



A high-level delegation representing the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the U.S. Department of Labour met Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA. The meeting, which took place at BGMEA Complex in Dhaka, discussed a variety of crucial issues, including bilateral trade opportunities, environmental sustainability, workplace safety, workers' rights, and wellbeing. BGMEA was represented by its President Faruque Hassan along with Vice President Shahidullah Azim, Vice President Md. Nasir Uddin, Directors Barrister Shehrin Salam Oishee, Faisal Samad, Abdullah Hil Rakib, Haroon Ar Rashid, Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on ILO Affairs ANM Saifuddin, Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Foreign Mission Cell Shams Mahmud, and Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Press, Publication, and Publicity Shovon Islam.



The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has installed a state-of-the-art Complete Blood Count (CBC) machine dedicated to the pathological examination of dengue patients at the BGMEA Hospital and Diagnostic Center in Chattogram. The momentous occasion was marked by an inauguration ceremony with BGMEA President Faruque Hassan as the chief guest. BGMEA First Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Vice President Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, Directors A.M. Shafiul Karim (Khokon), and M. Ahsanul Hoq, Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Trade Fair Mohammed Kamal Uddin, and Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Cash Incentive Humayun Kabir Salim were present at the inaugural ceremony.



Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, addressed a dialogue titled “fostering the Health and wellness of our workforce” organized by Ayat Education, in partnership with Integral Global Health and BGMEA, and supported by The John C. Martin (JCM) Foundation at The Westin Dhaka. The program was attended by distinguished guests, including H. E. Charles Whitely, Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Bangladesh; Tuomo Poutiaine, Country Director of ILO Bangladesh; Dr. Sadhana Bhagwat, Medical Officer-NCD, WHO Bangladesh; Asif Ibrahim, Director, BGMEA; Ziaur Rahman, H&M Group Country Manager for Bangladesh; Neelanjana Khan, Country Project Manager, Primark; Misha Mahjabeen, Country Director, VisionSpring.



A delegation representing the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal held a meeting with Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA. During the meeting held at BGMEA Complex in Dhaka, both sides discussed issues of mutual interests, potential areas of collaboration, and trade and investment opportunities between the two countries.



A high-level delegation from the Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association (VITAS), led by its Chairman, Vu Duc Giang, paid a visit to BGMEA in Dhaka. The 24-member delegation also included Vice Chairmen of VITAS — Nguyen Bao Tran, Than Duc Viet and Luu Tien Chung. During the visit, the delegation held a meeting with BGMEA President Faruque Hassan, where both parties discussed potential areas of collaboration that could bring mutual benefits to both Bangladesh and Vietnam, particularly within the textile and apparel industry.

A delegation led by Sandeep Poudrik, Additional Chief Secretary, Industries Department, government of Bihar, India paid a visit to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). The delegation held a meeting with Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA, at the BGMEA Complex in Dhaka.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan held a meeting with Md. Nazmul Karim, Member (Taxes) of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), in Dhaka where he called upon NBR to extend their support and cooperation to the readymade garment industry in the face of ongoing global economic challenges. The meeting was also attended by Munir Hossain, Vice President of FBCCI and former Director of BGMEA.



Mr. Munish Avasthi, Managing Director of Sportking, a prominent Indian textile conglomerate, held a meeting with Mr. Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA. The meeting, held at BGMEA Complex in Dhaka, was also attended by Rashim Jindal, President (Marketing and Raw Materials) at Sportking. During the meeting, President Faruque Hassan pointed to the improved regional connectivity between Bangladesh and India, especially the opening of new land ports to boost bilateral trade.

Mr. Sandeep Das, Regional Managing Director - South Asia and President - Global Softlines and Hardlines at Intertek, paid a courtesy call on BGMEA President Faruque Hassan. The meeting, held at the BGMEA Complex in Dhaka, was also attended by key representatives from Intertek, including Country Managing Director Neyamul Hasan, Head of Business Assurance Shoriful Islam, and Head of Dhaka Sales Aliza Sultana.



Tolga Ilter, Chairman of Orkim Chemicals, paid a courtesy call on Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA in Dhaka. During the meeting, they had discussions encompassing various areas of shared interest.



A delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), led by IMF Mission Chief for Bangladesh, Rahul Anand, paid a courtesy visit to Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA at the BGMEA Complex in Dhaka. BGMEA Directors Asif Ashraf, Ms. Neela Hosna Ara, Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Labour and ILO Affairs ANM Saifuddin and Chair of BGMEA Standing Committee on Foreign Mission Cell Shams Mahmud were also present during the meeting.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan addressed a view exchange meeting organized by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) in Dhaka where he called for government policy support to align with evolving global business dynamics. The view exchange meeting, chaired by newly elected President of FBCCI Mahbulul Alam, was also joined by Md. Saiful Islam, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI); Md Sameer Sattar, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI); Mohammad Ali Khokon, President of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA); Md. Munir Hossain, Vice President, FBCCI; Fazlee Shamim Ehsan, Vice President, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Omar Hazzaz, President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI).



H. E. Haji Haris Bin Haji Othman, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam to Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Faruque Hassan, President of BGMEA. The envoy, accompanied by First Secretary of the High Commission Rozaimie Abdullah, had productive discussions that encompassed various areas of mutual interest.

Anti-harassment Committee

Ensures all the employees of the factory feel free from harassment, safe, respected and valued as well as help to create a positive environment.

Arranges training and awareness programs for all employees to prevent harassment incidents and promote a respectful workplace culture.

Ensures the company's compliance with local labor laws and international labor standards concerning harassment and discrimination.

Helps an organization to avoid legal issues and associated costs by ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations.

Changes the concept of working culture that enhances the company's reputation.

হয়রানি প্রতিরোধ কমিটি

কারখানার শ্রমিকদের নিরাপত্তা, সম্মান ও মূল্যবোধ রক্ষার পাশাপাশি হয়রানি মূলক পরিস্থিতি থেকে বিরত রাখতে কাজ করে।

শ্রমিকদের প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি এবং নিরাপদ কর্ম পরিবেশ তৈরি করতে সহায়তা করে।

দেশীয় শ্রমআইন, কারখানার কমপ্লায়েন্সনীতি ও আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রমআইনের মানদণ্ডের সাথে সমন্বয় করতে ভূমিকা রাখে।

শ্রমআইন ও কমপ্লায়েন্স নিশ্চিতকল্পে আইনি সমস্যার সমাধান ও সংশ্লিষ্ট খরচ সাশ্রয় করে।

কারখানার কর্ম পরিবেশ সুন্দর করে এবং কারখানার সুনাম অক্ষুন্ন রাখতে সহায়তা করে।



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HOME TO WORLD'S HIGHEST NUMBER OF GREEN READYMADE GARMENT FACTORY

BGMEA joined the Charter with an ambition to reduce **GHG emission by 30% by 2030.**

203 LEED Green Readymade garment factories certified by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

Out of the world's top 100 **53** readymade garment factories are in Bangladesh



73
PLATINUM



116
GOLD



10
SILVER



BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION
বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানীকারক সমিতি

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