

The Apparel Story

May-June 2014

Cover Story

**Budget for FY 2014-15:
RMG perspective**

Column

**Bangladesh:
Behemoth garment industry
weathers the storm**

Fashion & Style

**Different ways of:
Wearing Denim**

Career

**Demand and Supply
Gap between Education
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It is really heartening and encouraging to find the picture of readymade garment industry of Bangladesh far better than what was perceived at home and abroad. A recent survey has revealed that safety in garment factories are not as bad as thought. According to the comprehensive assessment conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), about 80.8 percent of garment buildings have approved structural designs and 85.9 percent approved factory layouts while 92 percent have updated fire safety licenses. The data recently released by the Accord on Fire and Building Safety also show similar picture of the RMG sector. Less than 2 percent of 760 garment factories inspected by Accord so far are identified as risky.

It is true that the tragic accident in 2013 sent a negative message about the apparel industry of Bangladesh to the world community. It is also true and at the same time unfortunate that some exaggerated reports about the garment industry have temporarily tarnished our image locally and internationally. But there goes an old adage that three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon and the truth; so is the case of our RMG industry and the smoke of misconception is gradually clearing.

However, there is no denying that safety concerns still exist in a number of factories, fewer may it be. But now all the stakeholders – government, factory owners, buyers and development partners -- in the sector are determined to ensure a safer industry and are working together to make it true. Not only that, our apparel sector is moving towards sustainability and the photo story of this issue is telltale signs of that.

We believe all the articles and features contained in the May-June issue of the *Apparel Story* will give our readers a clear view of our RMG industry and remove all kinds of misconception about it.

Md. Shahidullah Azim
Vice President, BGMEA

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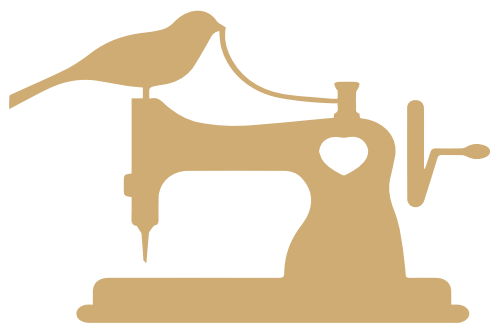
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The Apparel Story

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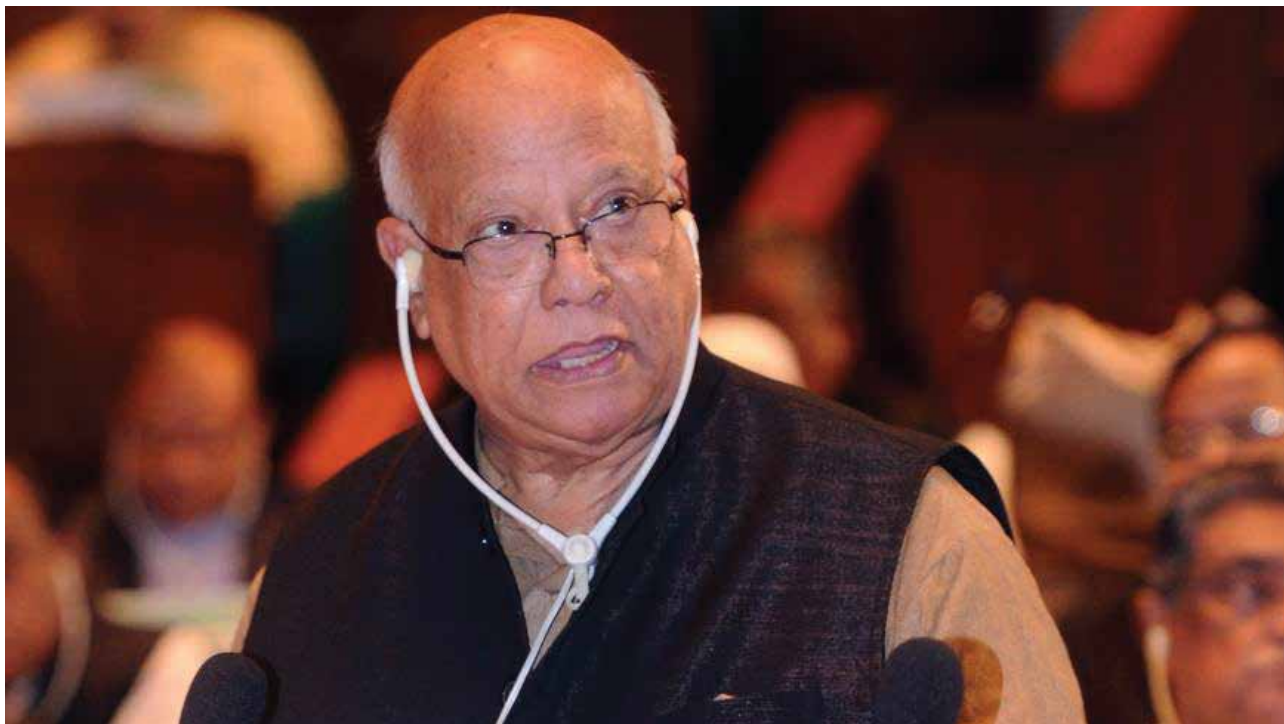
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Budget for FY 2014-15: RMG perspective

By Omar Gias



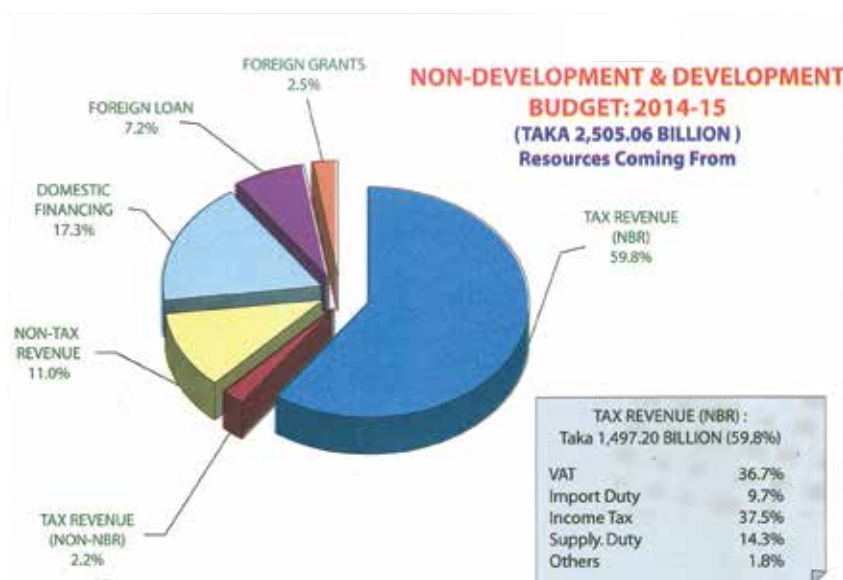
Finance Minister AMA Muhith placing the budget of FY 2014-15 in Parliament.



Parliament on June 29 passed Tk 250,506 crore national budget for FY 2014-15. On the day Finance Minister AMA Muhith moved the Appropriations Bill, 2014 seeking a budgetary allocation of Tk 382340, 01, 21,000, which was approved by voice vote in parliament. Earlier on June 5, the finance minister placed a Tk 250,506 crore proposed national budget for the next fiscal year (2014-15) in parliament eying a 7.3 percent GDP growth rate. The first budget of the present government looks to contain the average inflation rate at 7 percent. The proposed budget is 18.7 percent of the GDP.

The budget also sets an overall revenue collection target of Tk 1,82,

954 crore, of which NBR tax revenue is Tk 149, 720 crore. The revenue collection target from the non-NBR sources has been estimated at Tk. 5,572 crore. Besides, Tk 27,662 crore will be collected as non-tax revenue (NTR). The allocation for non-development expenditure has been estimated at Tk 154,241 crore. The expenditure for ADP has been estimated at Tk 80,315 crore. The overall budget deficit will be Tk 67,552 crore which is 5 percent of GDP. Of the amount, Tk. 18, 069 crore will be financed from external sources while Tk. 43, 277 crore from domestic sources. Of the domestic financing, Tk 31,221 crore will come from the banking system and Tk 12,056 crore from savings certificates and other non-banking sources.



There is no denying that the RMG industry is crucial to the economy of Bangladesh as the industry accounts for 80 percent of the total export earnings of the country. Given the dominance of the RMG industry on the economy, the sector has got attention in the budget.

The collapse of Rana Plaza and fire in Tazreen Fashions has brought the safety issue in the RMG industry to the fore. Platforms such as Alliance, Accord and National Plan of Action have been formed to ensure RMG factories safer and compliant. They have already started inspecting the garment factories and shut down a number of factories due to safety concerns. However, have we ever thought of how these workers would lead their life after losing their livelihood? The country does not have the capacity to provide jobs to this huge number of workers in any other sector. This will surely halt our march of development. Now only one option is left for us to save our RMG industry: improving building and fire safety at the garment factories to prevent further catastrophic collapse or fire. Of the

3,600 garment factories now in operation in Bangladesh, 40 percent are housed in shared and converted buildings employing around 1.5 million people; the rest operate in purpose-made buildings. We need to retrofit and, if not possible, relocate all the factories that are housed in shared and faulty buildings with poor safety standards. Given the fact that we have to address the workplace safety issue within a stipulated time frame, using prefabricated materials is the best alternative to ensure building safety as they are easy to build within the shortest possible time and ensure quality at the same time. Taking into consideration the fact, in the budget the government has withdrawn the 61 percent tax on the prefabricated materials for the RMG industry only.

Apart from building safety, ensuring fire safety at all garment factories is also a big challenge ahead of us. There is no alternative but to install fire safety equipment at garment factories to reduce the risk of fire accident. But huge tax was imposed on the import of fire safety equipment. In the current budget the import of fire door, sprinkler system and emergency exit lights has been made tax free. Withdrawal of tax on these safety items was a strong demand of private sector entrepreneurs. BGMEA in different forums also demanded the same.

In the budget of FY 2014-15, corporate tax on the non-listed company has also been reduced from 37.50 percent to 35 percent. President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Md. Atiqul Islam said that the reduction of corporate tax will help encourage further investment in different sectors. The 20 percent tax rebate for factory relocation from Dhaka and its surrounding areas too will increase investment and employment, he added.

Name of Equipment	Previous tax	Present tax
Prefabricated materials	61.00%	0%
Sprinkler system and equipment	31.07%	0%
Emergency light with exit signs and double heads	154.74%	0%
Fire resistant door	61.09%	0%
Busbar trunking system	2.00%	5.00%



Experts have also laid emphasis on increasing allocation in the budget to take special projects under its Social Safety Net to improve the life of workers by ensuring their education, health and accommodation. In the budget there is no mention of incentive for constructing dormitories for workers as well

In the budget the government reduced source tax from five percent to three percent. The BGMEA President applauded the decision of the government saying that it will be instrumental in increasing the exports of RMG products.

On the other hand, the Tk 50 crore allocated for skill development for workers in the budget has termed very meager by Abdus Salam Murshedy, former President of BGMEA. "Because of the recent increase in minimum wage productivity improvement at the garment factories is the need of the hour now. So, the government needs to allocate at least Tk 500 crore for the skill development of the RMG workers only. The proposed Tk 50 crore is too little to fulfill the demand of the RMG industry let alone to mitigate the shortage of skilled workers for the whole industrial sector of the country."

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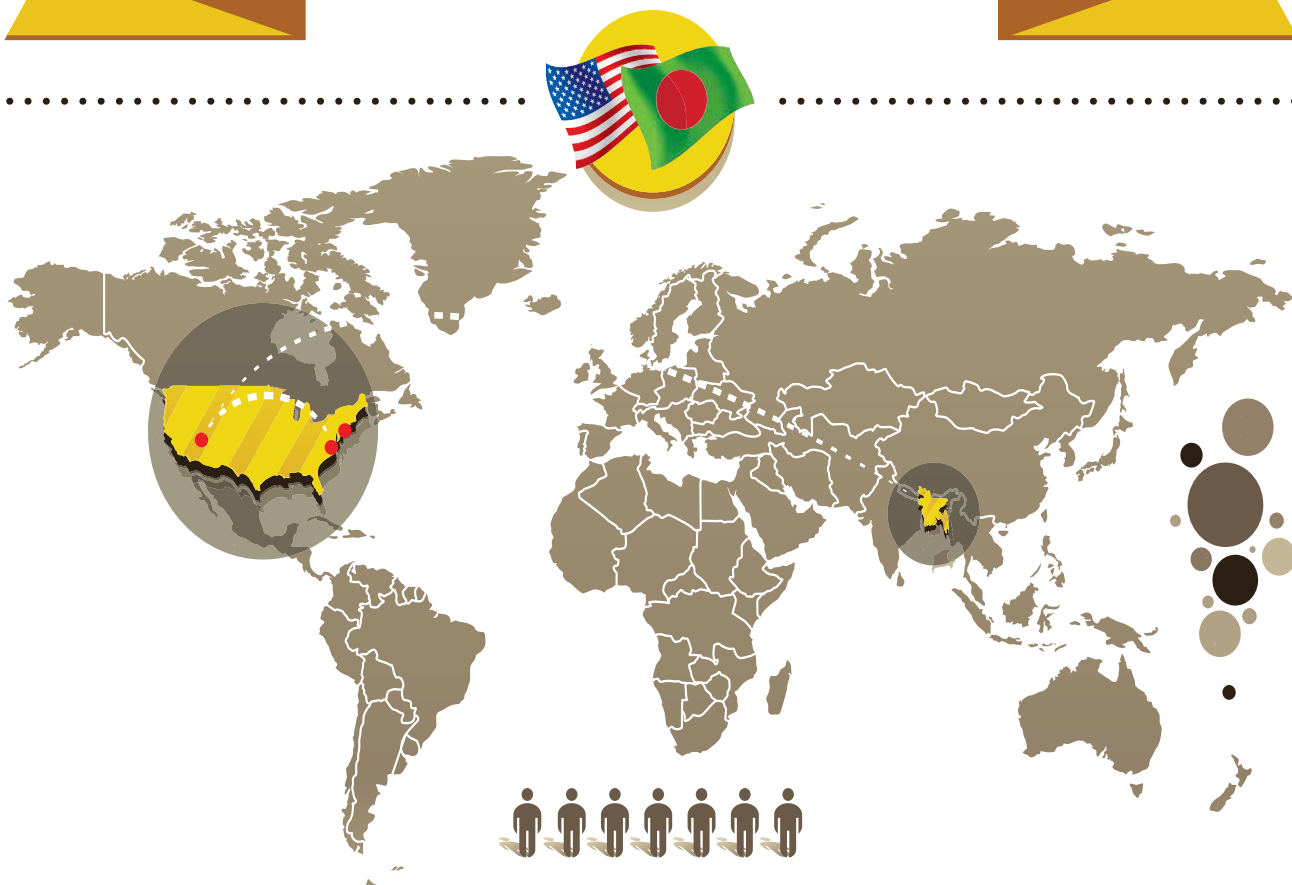
for workers as well.

Moreover, the provision of imposing five percent tax increasing it from the existing two percent on the import of busbar trunking system may hamper the growth of RMG industry, the experts opined.

Over the last three decades our apparel industry has achieved a phenomenal growth due to policy support from the government, dynamism of the private sector entrepreneurs and extremely hardworking workers. The export earnings have reached USD 23.5 billion in the last calendar year and people of around 130 countries of the world are the consumers of 'made in Bangladesh' knit garments and woven products. Moreover, a more glittering future is waiting for the ready-made garment industry of Bangladesh; at least facts and figures have made us believe so. The budgetary support, especially withdrawal of tax from the prefabricated materials and fire safety equipment, will add momentum to the journey of Bangladesh's apparel industry towards sustainability, analysts believe.

JUNE 8 - 15, 2014

Bangladesh business delegation's visit to US



By Apparel Story Desk

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After the tragic Rana Plaza incident, Bangladesh RMG sector faced numerous challenges; one of them was the withdrawal of US GSP last year in June. An action plan was given by the US government to be followed after which the GSP would be reviewed and reinstated, given that the action plan was followed properly. In the last one year, all the stakeholders in Bangladesh, including the government of

Bangladesh, have been trying to comply with the plan and have made quite a progress regarding the implementation of the actions required. With that in mind, all the important stakeholders, including representatives from the government and representatives from different business associations, visited the USA to update the international partners on the progress made to regain the GSP. There were also

discussions regarding the different initiatives taken to ensure better environment for the business and workers. The 10-member delegation to the USA was headed by Honorable Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, MP along with representatives from BGMEA, BKMEA, Bangladesh Fire Service & Civil Defence, labor federation and the Alliance. The BGMEA representatives were its President Md. Atiqul Islam, Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim, Md. Toufiq Ali, Advisor to BGMEA and Chief Executive of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC), and Nur Mohammad Amin Rasel, Joint Secretary, BGMEA.

In the two-day visit to Washington D.C., the delegation met Congressmen Sander Levin, George Miller, Joseph Crowley, Steve Chabot, Eliot Engel, and Congresswomen Jan Schakowsky and Grace Meng. The commerce minister also met USTR Ambassador Michael Forman and Ms Cathy Novella, Under Secretary of Economic Affairs, Department of State. Along with this, the delegation had a brief meeting with Senator Robert Menendez and also met with some senior employees of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed briefed everyone about the current business environment in Bangladesh. He outlined the changes in terms of safety measures, updated them on the GSP action plan and the progress in its implementation. The commerce minister laid emphasis on the transition of this war-torn country into a fast-forward developing country and this has been achieved through the RMG sector and the hard working labor force of Bangladesh. BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam said Bangladesh is determined to ensure workplace safety. 'Made in Bangladesh with pride' is a brand and BGMEA will try its best to uphold and protect this brand. BGMEA is committed to ensuring dignity, well-being and safety of workers. The delegation also had meetings with business representatives from National Retail Federation (NRF), Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), and United States Fashion Industry Association (USFIA).

The delegation then visited New York with the commerce minister. They



A Bangladeshi business delegation led by Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed is seen discussing with the US Congressmen Joseph Crowley, George Miller, Eliot Engel, and Congresswomen Grace Meng and Jan Schakowsky.



The delegation posed with Congressman Steve Chabot after their meeting with him.



The delegation is seen discussing with Congressman Sander Levin.

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held a meeting with different representatives of brands and retailers. The brands and retailers emphasized on the importance of coordination between Accord and Alliance. Then the delegation had a discussion with the Dean and Professors of New York University Stern Business School. They expressed their interest to know about financial assistance for remediation of the closed factories, particularly those which were shut down after inspection by Alliance and Accord. After the Rana Plaza incident, New York University Stern Business School did a research work on Bangladesh RMG sector which was shared with the national stakeholders in April this year in a three-day long workshop in Dhaka. The delegation also gave a brief interview to the New York Times.



BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam is seen speaking with US Senate Foreign Relations Committee.



The business delegation met US Department of Labour.



The business delegation led by Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed also attended at a Breakfast Meeting with different retailer and brand associations during their sojourn in the US.

On 14 June 2014, the International Sustainable Development Institute of Harvard University organized a daylong conference in which Bangladesh garment industry and its present challenges and prospects were elaborately discussed in six sessions. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and his delegation were present along with Congressman George Miller, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, Director of the ILO Office in Dhaka Srinivas B. Reddy. Harvard University's professors and students from Law, Business and Health Education, USA's Business Chamber representatives, different labor representatives like Human Rights Consortium, Solidarity Center, AFLCIO were also present in the conference.

In the conference, Director of the ILO Office in Dhaka Srinivas B. Reddy highlighted the progress made in inspection of the factories in Bangladesh. He stated that less than 2% of all the factories are found vulnerable and the rest are structurally sound, but require remediation in fire and electrical safety.

In regard to workers, he outlined the improvement in freedom of association and also mentioned that 160 trade unions have been registered in the last one and a half year. He also recognized the need for educating both management and workers regarding responsible trade union activity. Dr. Fauzia Ahmed of Harvard School of Public Health has pointed out the importance of the role of women in the supply chain process.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, in his keynote speech, outlined what the US government expects from the Bangladeshi government and stakeholders to do in regards to workers' rights. Dr. Toufiq Ali, Advisor to BGMEA, has pointed out that it is unrealistic to expect all workers' rights and responsibilities to be established overnight, rather it took many decades for countries that are now developed. Furthermore, it was pointed out that some means must be found to meet the cost of structural changes in the factories already inspected.

The Commerce Minister pointed out that Bangladesh's garment industry is developing very rapidly and is diversifying its export base as well

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The BGMEA delegation also visited a 2-day NFPA Conference & Expo 2014 for the first time in Las Vegas. BGMEA Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim and Brig. General Ali Ahmed Khan, Director General, Bangladesh Fire Service & Civil Defense, pose with the high NFPA functionalities.

as destination for exports. He urged the US to provide duty-free access of RMG from Bangladesh to the US market.

The President of BGMEA appreciated the objective of this conference and expressed its determination to work in a responsible way in cooperation with the workers, the government and the buyers. He reiterated BGMEA's plans to introduce the most appropriate global best practices in the RMG industry. He also mentioned that BGMEA will organize the next round of conference in Dhaka at the end of this year.

Besides, Bangladesh delegation

visited a 2-day NFPA Conference and Expo 2014 for the first time in Las Vegas, USA. NFPA is an association established to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. The Bangladeshi delegation had a meeting with the outgoing and incoming presidents of NFPA along with other board members and employees. NFPA expressed their interest to collaborate with Bangladesh for knowledge sharing and capacity building through training and workshops.

Harvard Conference on “Globalization and Sustainability of Bangladesh Garment Industry”



Commerce Minister of Bangladesh Tofail Ahmed, US Congressman George Miller and BGMEA President spoke at the 3rd session of the conference.

The International Sustainable Development Institute of Harvard University and BGMEA jointly organized a day-long conference on “Globalization and Sustainability of Bangladesh Garment Industry” on 14 June 2014 at the premises of Harvard University, Boston. The conference was attended by representatives from a wide group of stakeholders from USA and Bangladesh including the Bangladeshi and U.S. governments, representatives from major buyers and retailers, fashion industry associations, labor rights advocates, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and scholars examining developments in global retail and labor. The whole day was divided into six sessions and concluding remarks.

The first session was titled “State of Bangladesh Garment Industry”. The keynote paper in this session was delivered by Dr. Srinivas Reddy, Country Director of ILO in Bangladesh. The other members of the panel were Mr. Faruque Hassan, Immediate Past Vice President of BGMEA & Managing Director of Giant Group; Ms. Juliette Li, Fair Wear Foundation; Dr. Fauzia Ahmed, Professor, Harvard School of Public Health; Dr. Syed Abu Hasnath, Professor, Boston University; and Dr. Abdullah Shibli, Professor, Boston University.

The second session was focused on “Globalization and Labor Standards” moderated by Dr. John Quelch, Professor, Harvard Business School. The US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W.

Mozena delivered the keynote paper in this session. The members of this panel and discussants were Meher Afroz Chumki, Honorable State Minister for Women & Children Affairs; Government of Bangladesh; Mr. Md. Shahidullah Azim, Vice President, BGMEA; Dr. Toufiq Ali, Chief Executive, Bangladesh International Arbitration Council (BIAC) & Advisor to BGMEA; Dr. Arnold Zack, Professor, Harvard Law School; Mr. Michael O'Donovan, US Department of Labor (USDOL); and Ms. Celeste Drake, American Federation of Labor & Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

The third session highlighted the issue “Trade and Investment Cooperation -- Worker Rights & Safety” where the keynote speakers were Mr. Tofail Ahmed, MP, Honorable Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh; and Mr. George Miller, Honorable Congressman, USA. The members of this panel were Mr. Md. Atiqul Islam, President, BGMEA; Ms. Mara M. Burr, Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR); Mr. Scott Nova, Executive Director, Worker Rights Consortium; and Mr. Rich Verma, Senior Advisor, Alliance for Bangladesh Workers Safety.

The topic of the fourth session was “Working Condition – Fire & Building Safety Challenges” moderated by Mr. Iqbal Yousuf, International Sustainable Development Institute, Harvard University. The discussants of this session were Mr. Mohammed Hatem, Acting President, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BKMEA); Brig. General Ali Ahmed Khan, Director General, Bangladesh Fire Service & Civil Defense; Mr. Mesbah Rabin, Managing Director, Alliance for Bangladesh Workers Safety; Mr. Robert Solomon, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); Alfredo Ramirez, Underwriters Laboratories (UL); and Mr. Avedis Sefarian, President, Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP).

The fifth session was focused on the issue “Responsible and Sustainable



State Minister for Women and Children Affairs of Bangladesh Meher Afroz Chumki is seen delivering her speech at the conference while the US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W. Mozena is seen, among others, on the dais.



Vice President of BGMEA Md. Shahidullah Azim is seen delivering his speech at the second session of the conference.

Sourcing" moderated by Dr. Nien-he Hsieh, Professor, Harvard Business School. The panelists of this session were Mr. Rick Darling, Li&Fung; Mr. Aleix Busquets, Inditex; Ms. Julia Hughes, President, US Fashion Industry Association (USFIA); Ms. Heather White, Professor, Harvard University; Ms. Liana Foxvog, Director, International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF); and Mr. Mark Anner, Professor, Penn State University.

The topic of the sixth session was "the Role of International Development Partners" where Mr. John T. Smith, International Coordinator of Textile & Garments, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) delivered the keynote presentation. The discussants/panelists in this session were Ms. Alyssa Ayres, Council of Foreign Relations; Pascal Grotenhuis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands; Mr. Americo Beviglia Zampetti,

Delegation of the EU to United Nations; Ajay Narayanan, Head of Sustainability, International Finance Corporation (IFC); and Scott McMillan, BRAC USA.

In brief, the discussions highlighted issues like workplace safety, workers rights, and responsibilities across different stakeholders of the supply chain including governments, market access, etc. The ILO country director has emphasized the progress made in inspection of factories in Bangladesh mentioning that less than 2 % of factories are found vulnerable so far. Rests are structurally sound, but require changes for fire safety, electrical wiring etc. In regard to workers' rights, he has outlined the tremendous improvement in freedom of association; about 160 trade unions have been registered. We also recognize that there is a need for educating both management and workers regarding responsible trade

union activity. The US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena in his keynote speech outlined what the US Government expects the Bangladeshi Govt. and the BGMEA to do in regards to workers' rights. Dr. Toufiq Ali has pointed out that it is unrealistic to expect all workers' rights and responsibilities to be established overnight- it took many decades in countries that are now developed. Furthermore, it was pointed out that some means must be found to meet the cost of structural changes in the factories already inspected.

The session involving honorable Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and Honorable George Miller was the most interesting. Congressman Miller gave a detailed account of incidents related to harassment of unionized workers by the management. The Commerce Minister pointed out that many of such complaints are made abroad, but not to the governmental authorities in Bangladesh. As a result the government does not get an opportunity to properly address the concerns of the workers. The minister recognized that it is vital that domestic complain procedure be completed before the issues are raised internationally. The Commerce Minister also pointed out that Bangladesh's Garment Industry is developing very rapidly and we are diversifying our export base as well as destination for exports. The Commerce Minister urged the US to provide duty free market access for import of RMG from Bangladesh.

The BGMEA appreciates the objective of this conference. The President of BGMEA mentioned that there is no alternate to work together in a responsible way in cooperation with the workers, the govt. and the buyers. He also mentioned that since the tragic accident in 2013, significant progress has been made in the area of workplace safety, labor law has been amended and minimum wage increased. "We are working with buyers, ILO, governments and other development partners to build a safe and sustainable garment industry whereby we can say "Made in Bangladesh with Pride", he added. This process, as our stakeholders will appreciate, takes time. He also demanded USA to reinstate the GSP and to provide meaningful duty free market access for Bangladesh.

A journey towards green future

By Mohammad Monower Hossain

World Environment Day is celebrated every year on June 5 globally to raise awareness about positive environmental actions to protect nature and the planet Earth. It is the prime vehicle of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to encourage positive actions and showcase everyone's effort in making a better livable planet. It was 1973 when the first World Environment Day was celebrated worldwide. Since then it is hosted every year by a different city with a different theme. For years it has been recognized as a broader global platform for all and widely celebrated by stakeholders in over 100 countries. This year theme for World Environment Day focused on 'Small Islands and Climate Change', and the official motto for the year 2014 was 'Raise Your Voice Not The Sea Level'. Bangladesh observed this day under the coordination of Department of Environment (DoE) of the government with all the stakeholders concerned. BGMEA took part in this national event along with other organizations that work for a sustainable Bangladesh. There always exists a negative relation with industry and environment; as industry is recognized as the number one

polluter of the environment. The negative externalities of industrialization possess a huge environmental impact in terms of groundwater depletion, surface water pollution, air pollution, resource depletion, endangering species and biodiversity, deforestation, carbon emission, global warming and ultimately climate change. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) "Fifth Annual Report" reveals that Bangladesh is the most vulnerable country to climate change, being one of the smaller (0.18%) emitters of CO₂ in the world.

In the take-off phase of industrialization Bangladesh as a country is facing a lot of challenges in terms of lack of infrastructure, power, skilled manpower, labour unrest, occupational health and safety etc. Despite so many challenges the country has witnessed a sharp growth trend in the industrialization, especially in the RMG sector. Bangladesh has succeeded in being the second largest RMG supplier in the global RMG supply chain.

In recent years the issue of sustainability has got a huge impulsion in every possible sphere -- government, buyers, development partners, environmentalists, think tanks, lawmakers etc. Everyone has taken the issue of environmental sustainability very seriously with utmost care. So being indifferent in this regard would diminish the marginal growth in industrialization in the global business landscape. Keeping this in mind many of the leading RMG manufacturing factories of Bangladesh are now doing excellent and innovative practices which are beyond legal compliance and buyer's business code of conduct. Vintage Denim Studio Ltd, one of the leading denim suppliers of Bangladesh, has recently received prestigious "Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design)" certificate from United States Green Building Council (USGBC) for their extraordinary green practices. The factory has scored 90 out of 110, which is outstanding by all means in the world. Viyellatex, DBL Group and many other factories are doing world-class practices in the area of waste



Lillianne Ploumen, Honorable Minister for Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Gerben Sjoerd de Jong, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh, Md. Shahidullah Azim, Vice President of BGMEA, Kyle Kelhofer, the Country Manager of IFC Bangladesh, Md. Moshikul Azam (Shajal) and Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, Directors of BGMEA are seen at the launching ceremony of Textile Technology Business Centre (TTBC).



BGMEA Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim delivering his speech in the Launching Ceremony of EHS+ Centre (Environment Health & Safety) at North South University on May 12.



Reaz Bin Mahmood, Vice President (Finance), BGMEA, and Magnus Schmid, Program Coordinator of PSES, signed a MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.

management (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle), waste heat recovery, cogeneration, energy efficient technology, environmental management system and many more. Viyellatex has recently taken a great step of going towards carbon-free production. They have already published the carbon footprint assessment. Besides these, there are a number of RMG factories which are doing cleaner production practices. Being the apex trade body of RMG industry in Bangladesh BGMEA has taken a number of initiatives to enhance environmental sustainability and energy efficiency amongst its member factories. Under "TREES" (Toward Resource Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability) BGMEA runs several programs to help its member factories in adopting available best practices in the industry.

BGMEA has already concluded two pilot projects with IFC-SEDF on cleaner production. It is also engaged with the Government of Netherlands, International Finance Corporation (IFC), Solidaridad, TNO and a number of global brands (C&A, H&M, Inditex, G-Star Raw, Kappa, Lindex, Primark, and Tesco) to run a project titled Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT) as an implementing partner. PaCT is working for promoting clean and responsible production in Bangladesh textile sector, reducing water and carbon footprint in the wet processing units of the sector.

A Textile Technology Business Centre (TTBC), the first of its kind in Bangladesh, has been launched on May 26, 2014 by Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation for the Netherlands. The center housed in BGMEA premises aims to assist the

textile industry in adopting resource efficiency measures including waste water and groundwater management systems, ETP, environmental management system etc. TTBC will collect and disseminate information on Cleaner Production, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The center will also capture the knowledge developed by the PaCT programme for broader public dissemination.

A textile sustainability platform has been created by Policy Research Institute (PRI) as part of the PaCT project's component-III to engage all the stakeholders of textile and RMG industries. From buyers to government – all stakeholders concerned are part of this platform and are working on specific issues like policy and regulation, access to finance etc.

Recently BGMEA has participated in the environment fair organized by the Department of Environment (DoE) as part of the World Environment Day celebration to create awareness among the stakeholders concerned.

BGMEA has signed a MoU with Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards (PSES), GIZ on Improving Environmental Performance of Factories. Reaz Bin Mahmood, Vice President (Finance) BGMEA, said: "The garment industry in Bangladesh is growing, but we don't want this to happen in an indifferent manner with no consideration to the environment. We need to make significant changes with regard to environmental sustainability issues. BGMEA has its limitations and scarce resources. We realize what is within our scope and what could be an effective and affordable step is an arrangement

between our members, particularly between advanced and challenged ones. We join hands with GIZ to facilitate the capacity development of our 2nd-tier member factories with the aim of minimizing their impact on the environment, while at the same time, increasing their productivity."

To build the capacity of the industry in the area of Environment, Health and Safety; International Sustainable Communities (ISC) partnered with North South University established EHS+ center at the NSU premises. "When the center is fully operational, it will have the capacity to provide comprehensive training to more than 2,000 factory managers per year. There will be a full suite of high quality courses ranging from fire safety to water quality to energy efficiency. More than 50 courses will be offered," said T. Adil Chowdhury, Country Director of ISC Bangladesh. BGMEA Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim said: "In the area of environmental sustainability we have lots of challenges like groundwater depletion, resource inefficient process, waste management, occupational health and safety, safe drinking water, hygiene and etc. If we can overcome these challenges, we would be able to be more competitive in the global RMG supply chain."

In recent years the issue of environmental sustainability has emerged as an important issue in the global business landscape. BGMEA has taken this sustainability issue as one of its strategic goal. Change may not be possible over night, but it is obvious that the journey that started towards sustainability will definitely take the RMG sector of Bangladesh to a different height.

Bangladesh:

Behemoth garment industry weathers the storm



By Alyssa Ayres

Over the weekend I had the opportunity to participate in an excellent conference focused on Bangladesh, its development and its garment industry hosted by Harvard University. The organizers did a tremendous job convening the many diverse stakeholders on this issue—the Bangladeshi garment exporters associations, representatives from the Bangladeshi and U.S. governments, representatives from major buyers and retailers, fashion industry associations, labor rights advocates, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and scholars examining developments in global retail and labor. The background to the gathering, obviously, was last year's tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka on April 24, 2013, which killed more than 1,100 and left more than 2,500 injured.

In the aftermath of Rana Plaza, many feared that global brands and retailers -- primarily in the European Union and the United States -- would shift their orders away from Bangladesh, thus potentially disrupting the source of livelihood for some four million workers, primarily

women. In the year since, there has been intensive negotiation and consultation among governments, international organizations, and the private sector in the United States, European Union, and Bangladesh, resulting in agreements that provide better oversight, governance, and compliance on workplace safety and labor matters. Between the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and the EU-ILO-Bangladesh Global Sustainability Compact (which the United States endorsed in July 2013), there is now more significant focus on factory safety conditions, including structural integrity and fire safety protections, than ever in the past.

Bangladesh's garment industry is huge, the world's second-largest garment exporter after only China, and as the Economist Intelligence Unit report, "Garment shift," commented recently, Bangladesh's scale is "nearly on par with total combined capacity of its main competitors in Southeast Asia." It has nearly 5,000 factories producing exports valued around \$20 billion



(2013). Fixing its problems with factory and labor conditions thus has represented an effort of historic scale. And over the past year, there has been positive change. Bangladesh has made progress with a new labor law, higher minimum wage, and 150-plus new labor unions registered. The ILO and International Finance Corporation have launched the largest Better Work program in history. Inspections of factories supplying members of the Accord and the Alliance are well underway, with remediation taking place to get buildings up to international standards. Factories found to have irretrievably unsafe conditions have been shut down. Still, with such a large industry, much work remains. As the U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh noted in his remarks at the conference, Bangladesh still needs to complete hiring and training the 200 building inspectors they committed to employ; all the buildings housing factories need to be inspected and brought to safe standards; reports of those inspections should be made public per the Compact; and harassment and intimidation of labor unions and

activists should stop. Bangladesh can get this done, but it needs to keep pushing ahead.

From my perspective, the surprise has been how well Bangladesh has weathered this difficult storm so far. No one knew how the global garment industry would respond after Rana Plaza—perhaps by diversifying their sourcing slightly, or greatly? Would Bangladesh's workplace conditions present just too much risk until fully remediated? Back in January, admittedly on the heels of a violent political season that saw road traffic shut down for days on end, it seemed that Bangladeshi garment exporters were facing tougher times. Press reports detailed exports "losing steam," with growth at 7.1% in January, "less than a quarter of the year-on-year growth recorded in November." People worried that the hartals (street strikes), higher wages and company interest in hedging supply chains was causing a turning away from Bangladesh.

The latest data show that has not transpired. Looking at the latest export statistics shows only a slight drop, with textile and apparel exports to the United States falling only

0.56% to \$1.77 billion (US Commerce data, year over year). The latest data from Bangladesh show 14% growth for the industry overall in the July 2013-May 2014 period. The Bangladesh Garment Buying House Association has reported that orders from "compliant" factories are rising 15-20%. And the U.S. Fashion Industry Association just released a survey of brands and retailers detailing that 76.9% of those surveyed currently source from Bangladesh, with 60% anticipating that they will "somewhat increase" from Bangladesh in the "next two years."

With the Accord, Alliance, Compact, Better Work program, and such focused attention to needed improvements in Bangladesh's workplace, the systems are in place to preserve the gains the country has made over the years through the garment industry. It now depends on all parties seeing this through at the scale needed to transform the industry.

The article first published in the Forbes Magazine is reprinted in the Apparel Story.

Voice of our Facebook friends @ /bgmea.official



Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association has now a very active and dynamic Facebook page where it welcomes comments on different issues related to RMG industry of Bangladesh. Recently BGMEA invited comments from its Facebook friends by throwing a question in its facebook page in quiz format. The question was -- to ensure safety at all garment factories in Bangladesh what is the most important step the manufactures/buyers/the government should take immediately? BGMEA received a good number of comments on the question and the friend whose comment was liked by most people was awarded with an attractive prize by BGMEA. Here we would like to share some of the comments with the readers of the *Apparel Story*.



Shariful Islam To ensure safety at all garments factories in Bangladesh all manufacturers/buyers/the government should do the activity 1.To ensure a proper & useful guidelines of safety for garments factories 2.to ensure a monitoring cell for safety, they should be monitor properly & honestly 3.individual training & development of all staff and workers in factories 4.to ensure all the safety measures taken & useful training by the factories 5.coordination must be developed between manufacturers,buyers, the government and factories.



Akramul Hoque Government should ensure safety of manufacturing unit before approve it. They should monitor it time to time . The related employees should be honest . Or, Government should handover related authorization power to BGMEA.



Moajjam Hossain Rohan All the manufacturers must change their mentality about the workers.They must ensure all the safety measures taken by their factory.If they can do this i think it may be helpful for safety.



Shami Walid To ensure safety at all garments factories in Bangladesh all manufacturers/buyers/the government should do the follows: 1st step: To prepare a guideline of H&S, 2nd step: To form a H&S cell, 3rd step: Individual Training and development of all workers, 4th Step: Monitor workers activity and at last take necessary initiatives to improve all operationf of H&S.



Walid Mirza Shipon To ensure workers safety, all of the organ work together.



Jahangir Alam It was unplanned growing industries in our country. Now time to set up newly.



Mir Altaf Hossain Shipon 1) Factory inspection by registered engineer & to ensure factory safety 2) Provide safety awareness Training to all employee & 3) Time to time Monitoring.



Product diversification and market diversification is important to boost RMG earnings: Dr. Hafiz G.A. Siddiqi

Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi is a renowned academician of the country. He is the former Vice Chancellor of North South University. Currently he is Professor Emeritus at BRAC Business School. Musharrat Tarannum Baishakhi of the *Apparel Story* talked with Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi about different aspects of RMG sector.



Dr. Hafiz G.A. Siddiqi

Apparel Story (AS): The minimum wage has been raised for the garments workers but prices of products have not increased so far. So what we can do to protect our industry?

Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi: Here I would say that there are scopes to minimize the cost of production. Costs like transportation cost. Our transportation system is not that much efficient or the condition of roads and highways is not commendable. Therefore, for the shipment through Chittagong port, construction of roads is required. In addition, it has to be done by the

government or the government along with BGMEA as public private partnership. There are some hidden costs as well which we call cost of doing business. This also needs to be reduced. Technological upgradation is also important to follow 'lead time' in terms of production, which can maximize the output. Besides, we need to train up the mid-level supervisors so that they can lead, motivate, and overall can contribute effectively to increase productivity. Productivity on the other hand will reduce the cost of production. Another ways could be value chain analysis and trying to find out where the highest profit margin exists. If the profit margin can be reduced slightly, and pass it on in line with full value chain process, then our industry will be sustainable in the long run. Apart from that, hiring mid-level managers from outside like Sri Lanka or India is very costly. We can get mid-level managers from our people comparatively in low cost. So, if buyers do not raise the price of the product, factories need to go for cost reduction strategy. And these are some ways that I have mentioned to reduce the cost.

AS: Keeping in mind the garment industry, which issues should be given importance in the budget for 2014-15 fiscal years?

Dr. Hafiz: First of all, transportation through roadways and infrastructure development. As much as transportation system will be

We need to train up the mid-level supervisors so that they can lead, motivate, and overall can contribute effectively to increase productivity. Productivity on the other hand will reduce the cost of production. Another ways could be value chain analysis and trying to find out where the highest profit margin exists

upgraded, smooth and inexpensive, garment industry will be benefitted from that. Dhaka-Chittagong Highway network needs a lot of improvement to make it efficient. River connectivity is also important here. Side by side, power should be another concern to invest in. In addition, the capacity building of the ports needs to be focused. So I think these three sectors need special care for the development of garment industry.

AS: What trade benefits you expect from TICFA?

Dr. Hafiz: You see, it is a forum that gives you the first opportunity to negotiate on new things along with new trade opportunities. TICFA is good for maintaining good relationship between two countries -- the US and Bangladesh. However, in my opinion the beneficiary timeframe from TICFA is far away. It is a gateway but immediate feasibility will take long time to get any sort of benefits from that horizon. We cannot ask for the GSP or duty-free access facilities immediately as there many issues to resolve.

AS: Still in the production floor, we do not have sufficient expert mid-level officials from our country; so our garment factories need to hire managers from countries like Sri Lanka or India. Why does this problem still exist although our garment industry is almost three decades old?

Dr. Hafiz: From my personal point of view, as an economist, I think we may have some recommended expertise from the buyers' side. Or there is also a reason which is the negotiation power. Foreign experts may have good negotiation skills for which still there is a lack of our own mid-level supervisors. Again, we should not have any reason to hire from outside rather train up our own people properly. We must go for local people, should train up them for the position of mid-level managers as a part of cost reduction strategy for our own benefit.

AS: How can we increase the earnings from RMG exports?

Dr. Hafiz: Well, here my suggestion

would be, now we should move for high-end production. It could be expensive suit or other expensive garment products. We need to go for higher-end market along with the lower end market. It could be a balanced combination. Just as an example, China and India could be our next destinations for the lower-end consumption as they are technologically advanced already. This is why they will not produce the lower-end garments and will ask for them from Bangladesh in near future. So, product diversification and market diversification is important to boost our earnings from RMG exports.

AS: We have witnessed some unfortunate accidents in garment industry within a very short span of time, which have had some negative impacts on the sector. So how we can clean up the image?

Dr. Hafiz: We need to show a positive sign through Accord and Alliance that, "yes, we are respecting their expectations. We are in line with their requirements and we are committed to bring the change." We need to let the world know about our situation through these ways that we are now highly concerned about any sort of safety issues. Thus, it will give them a good impression and we will get a chance to recover our image

AS: How can we regain the trust from the buyers after these happenings?

Dr. Hafiz: As long as the production cost is low, buyers will come to us under any circumstances. Nevertheless, it is our responsibility to make sure that they get a positive image from our side. We have faced difficulties but we tried to sort out our problems. BIDS also showed that the situation of factories is not that bad as it was thought after the incidents of Rana Plaza collapse. Therefore, we must do whatever is necessary to recover our industry's image.

AS: Thank you for giving us your valuable time.

Dr. Hafiz: You are welcome.

by Apparel Story Desk

The word 'jeans' comes from the French phrase 'bleu de Genes' meaning 'the blue of Genoa'. The denim fabric originated in the French town of Nimes and owes its name to the location, which was quickly known as 'denim' abroad. Spunky Genoese Navy sailors first strutted around in denim back in the 1500's but it wasn't until the 1870's in the gold rush boom that denim took off. This was when Levi Strauss -- a name now synonymous with denim -- created a strong style of workers pants with rivets that was quickly adopted by Californian coal miners. Originally made from uncomfortable hemp, Strauss eventually discovered and started using the twilled cotton cloth that originated from the French town of Nimes and denim. For a long time, it was largely worn by workers but became popular in American Pop Culture when jeans became symbolic of protest against

Different ways of **WEARING DENIM**

conformity. Worn by teenagers and young adults they were often refused admission to movies, restaurants and other everyday haunts when wearing them. But the trend grew and during the 1960's wearing blue jeans became more acceptable and by the 1970's they were truly established as a fashion trend. The 80's brought with it "designer jeans" and denim took to the catwalks. Today jeans are a staple of everybody's wardrobe and often a key element in seasonal trends and

fashion around the world. Each season brings with it new cuts, features, treatments and embellishments. Denims are now favorite dresses for fashion-conscious male and female alike. Those wishing to go beyond the traditional ways of wearing denim now discovered very bold (sometimes weird) styles and fancy designs of denims for a fashion-forward look. Here we are mentioning a few among them:





Party Choice

Denim dresses like this one here are a perfect option for summertime cocktail parties or even a laid back summer wedding.



Cool and Comfortable

Lovers of comfort everywhere rejoice! Not only this denim dresses are super comfortable but they are perhaps the easiest outfit to put together with a simple or cropped blouse underneath.



Bold and Brave

The washed jean pants along with faded jacket with one-color shirt inside and gloves in both hands is very popular among the youth who like rush and ride in life.



Go Easy

If you're not ready to dive back into overalls, try a denim onesies. Just be sure to go for a fit-n-flare silhouette or a super fitted cut to avoid the '80s baggy boiler suit look'.



Soft Look

If bold cotton or leather patches aren't your scene, this two tone denim patchwork is just as stylish.



Loose Leggy

These loose jeans are super soft, relaxed and drapery. Wearing with tops made of linen or silk, these wide-legged slacks are a new spin on go-to denim trousers.

BGMEA hospitals: Offering healthcare facilities to RMG workers on the doorstep

By Anika Mohiuddin



B

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) as the largest trade body of readymade garment manufacturers and exporters of the country is engaged in a number of welfare activities for RMG workers. Facilitating access to healthcare and health related service is an indispensable part of its endeavors. BGMEA has been operating 13 health centers/mini-clinics at different parts of Dhaka and Chittagong for over 15

years with a view to providing basic healthcare facilities to garment workers and their families.

A hospital is run by BGMEA in Chittagong to provide healthcare facilities to the garment workers of the port city. The garment workers get healthcare services and medicines free of cost at the 25-bed hospital situated at Saltgola intersection in the city. The hospital also offers indoor and outdoor treatment,

pathology and specialized treatment facilities, and ambulance service to the workers. Beside general wards, the hospital has a burn unit.

Taking into consideration the huge number of RMG workers living and doing jobs in Dhaka and on its outskirts and addressing their healthcare need, BGMEA has taken another project of constructing a 100-bed non-profit general hospital in Mirpur, Dhaka. Once completed, the hospital is expected to provide all kinds of outdoor and indoor healthcare facilities including surgery, Diagnostic centre, etc. to RMG workers at heavily subsidized charges. This aims to help the workers to avoid the hassle of public hospitals and exorbitant charges of private hospitals.

Construction of frame-structure of the hospital has been completed up to 6th floor out of 8 floors (there are 2 basements for parking and storage) and partial civil finishing work has also been completed up to 3rd floor. The construction of frame-structure of other two floors is in progress. The hospital project is expected to be fully completed by December 2014, subject to availability of required fund.

Special Provisions

The BGMEA Hospital in Mirpur has special provisions for naming its beds, wards, cabins, floors, operation theaters and major equipment in one's own name or dedicating the same in the name of donor organizations.

1 bed	Tk	USD 5000
Twin-bed Cabin	Tk	USD 12000
5-bed ward	Tk	USD 25000
10-bed ward	Tk	USD 50000
2 Operation Theater	Tk	USD 80000 each
1 Ambulance	Tk	USD 50000

BGMEA has received considerable response from businessmen and reputable corporate houses who came forward to donate to the BGMEA Hospital in Mirpur. To mention the names of a few who have already donated to the hospital fund are ACME Group and Amerella of Canada/Sunlink International Ltd.

A hospital is run by BGMEA in Chittagong to provide healthcare facilities to the garment workers of the port city. The garment workers get healthcare services and medicines free of cost at the 25-bed hospital situated at Saltgola intersection in the city



Tanveer Sinha Suprio, Director of ACME Group, is seen handing over a cheque of donation to BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam for the BGMEA Hospital which is under construction in Mirpur, Dhaka. BGMEA Second Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi) and Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim were also present on the occasion.



Jayantha Senarathna, Country Manager, Amerella of Canada/Sunlink International Ltd, is seen handing over a cheque of donation to BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam for the BGMEA Hospital, Dhaka. Vice President (Finance) of BGMEA Reaz Bin Mahmood was also present on the occasion.



FIFA WORLD CUP

By Apparel Story Desk

Craze of football has smothered the air of the world from Rio de Janeiro to Dhaka, flags of the World Cup football playing nations are fluttering on the rooftops from São Paulo to Cox's Bazar. The greatest football show on earth will make the people spellbound for about a month. Though Bangladesh is not playing in the World Cup, the readymade garment industry of the country has made our presence visible at the stadiums where Messi and Neymar et al are showing their football magic. At least 20 factories in Bangladesh have exported jerseys for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The country mainly exported T-shirts and jerseys for spectators and supporters of different teams during the big sports events.



THE VENUES

1 ARENA AMAZONIA
(2013) MANAUS
Capacity 42,374



2 ESTADIO CASTELAO
(1973) FORTALEZA
Capacity 64,846



3 ESTADIO DAS DUNAS
(Dec 2013) NATAL
Capacity 42,086



4 ARENA PERNAMBUCO
(2014) RECIFE
Capacity 44,248



5 ARENA FONTE NOVA
(1951) SALVADOR
Capacity 48,747





Group A			Group B			Group C			Group D		
Team		Pt	Team		Pt	Team		Pt	Team		Pt
BRAZIL			SPAIN			COLOMBIA			URUGUAY		
CROATIA			NETHERLANDS			GREECE			COSTA RICA		
MEXICO			CHILE			CÔTE D'IVOIRE			ENGLAND		
CAMEROON			AUSTRALIA			JAPAN			ITALY		

Group E			Group F			Group G			Group H		
Team		Pt	Team		Pt	Team		Pt	Team		Pt
SWITZERLAND			ARGENTINA			GERMANY			BELGIUM		
ECUADOR			BOSNIA			PORTUGAL			ALGERIA		
FRANCE			IRAN			GHANA			RUSSIA		
HONDURAS			NIGERIA			USA			KOREA REPUBLIC		



6 ESTADIO NACIONAL (2012) BRASILIA Capacity 68,009	7 ARENA PANTANAL (2014) CUIABA Capacity 42,968	8 ESTADIO MINEIRAO (1965) BELO HORIZONTE Capacity 62,547	9 ESTADIO DE MARACANA (1950) RIO DE JANEIRO Capacity 76,804	10 ARENA DE SAO PAULO (2014) SAO PAULO Capacity 65,807	11 ARENA DA BAIXADA (2014) CURITIBA Capacity 41,456	12 ESTADIO BEIRA-RIO (1969) PORTO ALEGRE Capacity 48,849

A visit to Vintage Denim Studio Ltd



S Starting from scratch three decades back the readymade garment industry has gradually carved a niche in the global market and positioned Bangladesh as the second largest apparel exporting country in the world. Now the RMG industry is moving towards sustainability. Sustainable industry is not possible keeping the environment vulnerable. Keeping that in mind Bangladeshi garment factories are going green ushering in



a new era in the country's apparel industry. They are adopting cleaner technologies and producing garments in a caring and responsible way that preserves the environment for future generations. Vintage Denim Studio Ltd. (VDSL) is one of the glaring examples of green garment factory in Bangladesh, which has been awarded 'LEED Platinum' certificate by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) where it scored 90 out of 110 scale for its environmentally sound achievements. Water and energy savings through the increased use of solar power and daylight and ETP are the main features of its eco-friendly practices. The factory saves 40 percent of water by recycling through its ETP. Besides, it has set up a 110kw solar panel from which around 30 percent of its total energy comes. Skylights and plasmatic lights, T-2, T-3, T-5 lights are installed to save energy. Energy-efficient machines like servo motors and task lights are used to reduce energy consumption, thus reducing environmental and economic impacts associated with excessive energy use. During a visit to the VDSL the *Apparel Story* team has discovered that the internationally-recognized standards in terms of eco-friendly technologies have helped improve the overall environmental and working conditions at the factory.





On the eve of the Global Sustainable Compact review by the EU in July this year, **Karel De Gucht**, European Commissioner for Trade, delivered a speech at the Informal OECD Ministerial meeting in Paris, on 26 June 2014. He spoke on the progress of Bangladesh garment industry as regards safety, sustainability and workers' rights, especially after the tragic Rana Plaza incident. Here we quoting his remarks as it is for the readers of the *Apparel Story*.



Rana Plaza Aftermath

Ladies and gentlemen,

On the eighth of July last year, the Government of Bangladesh, the European Union, and the International Labour Organisation made an agreement. The United States joined us later.

We agreed to do our part to improve labour rights and factory conditions in the garment industry in Bangladesh.

The European Union had an obligation to act because it grants duty-free and quota-free tariff preferences to Bangladesh which have been a boon to the country's export performance. The European Union was – and still is – the largest client of Bangladesh's garment business. We imported over 9 billion euros worth in 2013.

I therefore am proud of the fact that after some very hard work with the Government of Bangladesh, the ILO and the US, we launched the Sustainability Compact for Bangladesh.

And I am also proud to report that much of that programme has been put into practice.

Let me give you some examples:

Bangladesh has amended its labour law improving labour rights. It has also upgraded

its system for inspecting factory safety and begun the recruitment process of hundreds of new inspectors. Inspections have started and their results are being made public. Many new unions have registered and workers are starting to organise.

For our part, the European Union has extended its 16-million-euro programme to promote Better Work and Standards in Bangladesh, as well as its 15 million-euro Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme that also helps with rehabilitation of some of the victims of Rana Plaza.

In parallel: the private sector both in Bangladesh and in buyer countries is working with trade unions to implement their own commitment through the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. In particular, they are making good progress on inspections of factories according to common standards and an operating manual for assessing building, fire and electrical safety.

Of course, the reality is that there is still much more to do.

Most urgently: implementing regulations on

labour reform must be enacted soon.

Improvements in labour rights must be extended to the Export Processing Zones.

Bangladesh's labour law still needs to address restrictions on trade union formation and membership, no later than in the next iteration of the labour law reform.

The recruitment of labour inspectors needs to be accelerated, inspections need to proceed and their results published.

All the enabling conditions must be in place, not only in law but in practice, for workers to organise into trade unions and make their voice heard at the factory level. Inspections must be followed by structural improvements to improve safety. Bangladeshi industry has a key role to play here.

And there is still much for retailers and importers to do. Although the Compact does not cover the issue of compensation of victims, I welcome the statement by governments calling for further contributions to the Rana Plaza Arrangement by international retailers and Bangladeshi manufacturers as well as by the Government of Bangladesh.

I further welcome the joint ILO and OECD initiative to organise a High-Level Roundtable on Responsible supply chains in the textile and garment sector. We will support this forum for dialogue among all governments and stakeholders in these sectors and are ready to contribute financially to the development of further guidelines for this sector.

Over the coming weeks, the European Commission will be working on a full assessment of where we stand today. Once that is done we hope to call a meeting this autumn of all parties to the Compact as well as other stakeholders to get their perspective and set the agenda going forward.

Separately, the EU has also recently established ecological criteria for the award of the EU "Eco label" for textile products produced in observance of international standards developed by ILO, Standards, the UN Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multi-National Enterprises. We have updated EU legislation on public procurement. Contracting authorities may take into account criteria linked

to the production process of the works, services or supplies to be purchased and they may also require that specific labels are used certifying environmental, social or other characteristics, as long as this is done in a non-discriminatory manner and equivalent labels are accepted.

the private sector both in Bangladesh and in buyer countries is working with trade unions to implement their own commitment through the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. In particular, they are making good progress on inspections of factories according to common standards and an operating manual for assessing building, fire and electrical safety

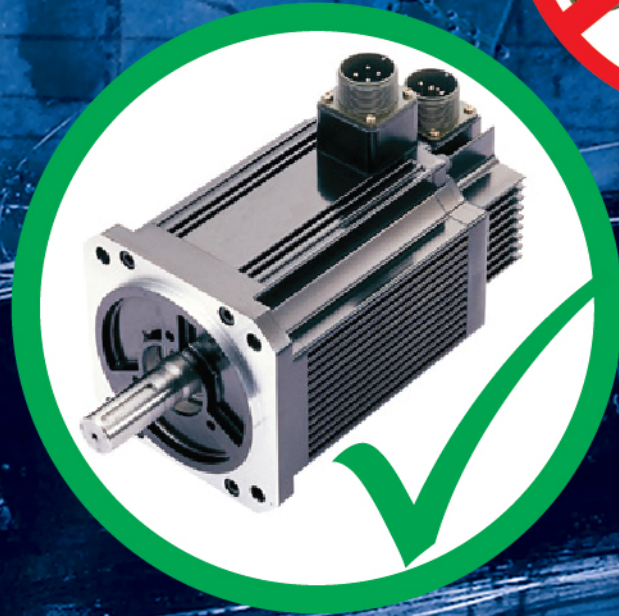


আপনি কি জানেন সুইয়িং মেশিনে
ক্লাচ মটর ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে
আপনি কতটা অপচয় করছেন?

clutch
motor



servo
motor



প্রতি ১০০ টি ক্লাচ মটরে
এ বার্ষিক ক্ষতি :
বিদ্যুৎ অপচয় : ১৪৯৭১২ কিঃওঃ/ ঘন্টা
আর্থিক ক্ষতি : ১০৪,৭৯৮৫ টাকা
কার্বন নিঃসরণ : ৮৬ টন



১০০ টি ক্লাচ মটরের বদলে সার্ভো মটর installation-এ কেবল একবার খরচ হবে ৯,৩৩,০০০ টাকা।

সার্ভো মটর ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে অপচয় রোধ করুন, ব্যয় সাশ্রয় করুন, পরিবেশ বাঁচান।



trees

Toward Resource Efficiency & Environmental Sustainability. An initiative of

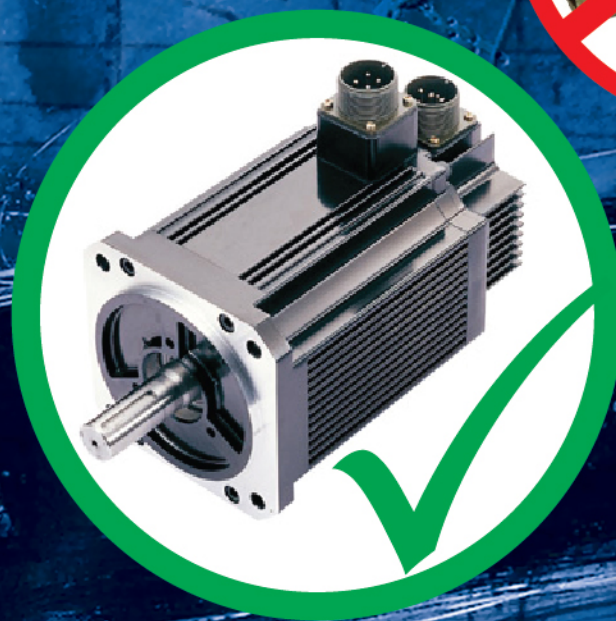


Do you know how much you are wasting by using clutch motors in sewing machines?

clutch motor



servo motor



ANNUAL LOSS FROM 100 CLUTCH MOTORS:

Energy waste: 149712 Kwhr

Financial loss: Tk 104,7985

Carbon emission: 86 Ton



The installation cost of 100 Servo motors instead of clutch motors is only Tk 933,000 once.

Stop wastage, cut down your expenditure and protect the environment by using servo motor



trees Toward Resource Efficiency & Environmental Sustainability. An initiative of



Demand and supply gap between education and employment

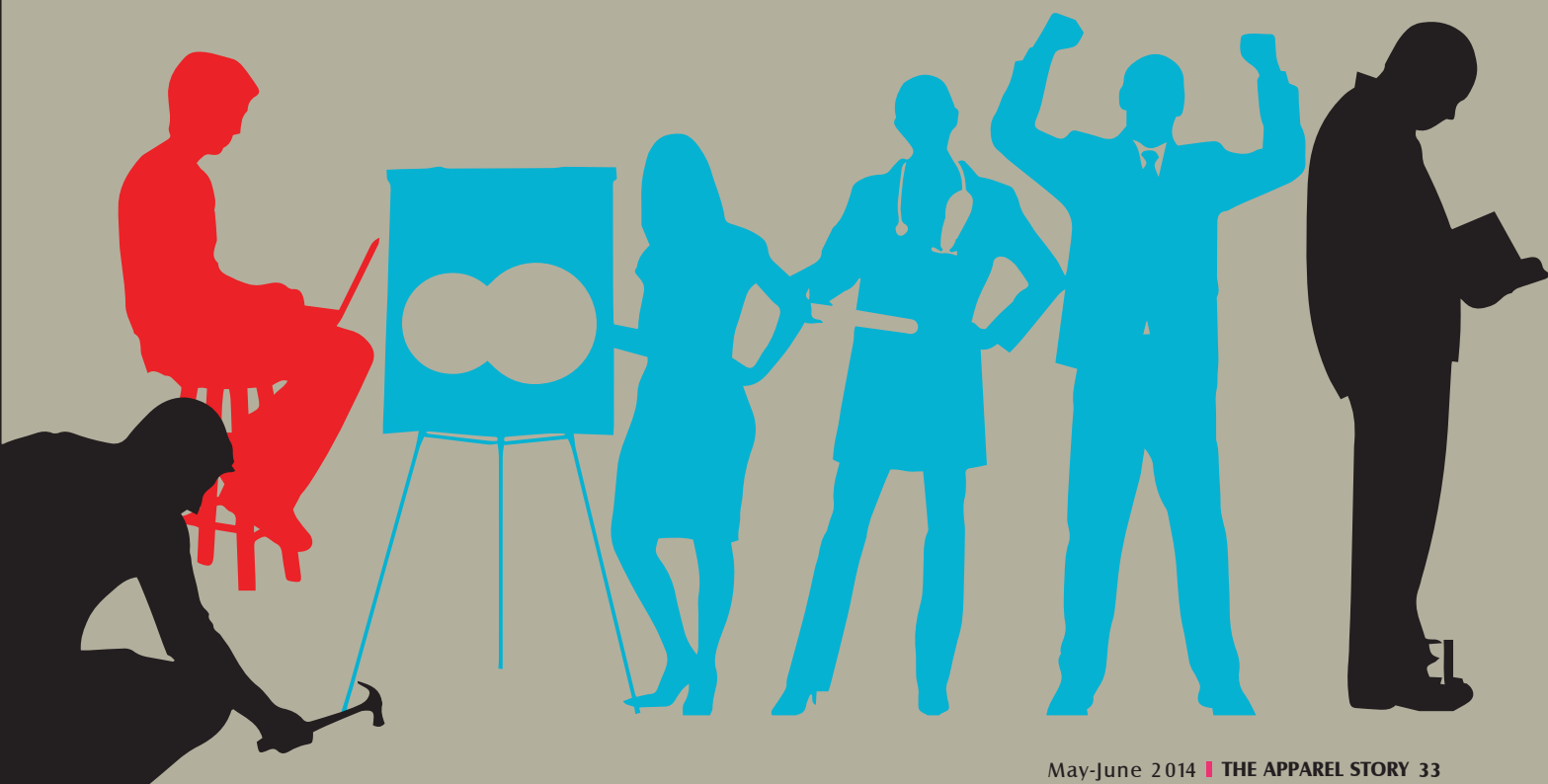
By Nabila Jamal Rusha

Labor force in any country plays a significant role in development and growth by producing goods and services. The experience of the developing role indicates that the countries which are developing at a higher rate are due to their skilled labor force. The glaring examples are China, Korea, India, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Bangladesh is a least developed country with a vast population of around 148 million in a small territory of 1,44,000 square kilometer with a population density of 1,028 per square kilometer, the highest in the world except the city states. As Bangladesh is lagging behind in natural resources, the development of the country depends mainly on its huge population. The development process is faster when there is high skilled labor force in a country. The skilled labor force is the human resources which can develop the country in one hand and earn, preferably a good amount of foreign exchange, on the other hand. A lot of skilled manpower is deployed in the overseas employment, and they are already contributing to the country development to a greater extent. That is why in

recent years, worker's remittance is one of the highest source of foreign exchange earnings of Bangladesh.

When input is processed in a computer, there is usually an output. But it's only significant when the output is just not any output but more of a value-added output. To think that input has everything to do with the output is wrong. The key focus is on the work "processing" which needs to be defined and analyzed. Processing means doing a series of actions that produce something meaningful or that lead to a particular result. So if the output has to be valuable, it is the processing that needs to be done properly that will give the desired results. So if a large population is considered an input, then skilled labor which is properly distributed among various sectors is the desired output. So the processing in between includes education, technical skill, vocational trainings etc that needs to be given to the active population for them to be skilled. It is their skills that will be employed in the development of the country, both economically and socially, only then Bangladesh can strike a balance between its



neighboring countries whose growth has been a phenomenal example to all.

Education develops human skill for providing quality services to the community. Education is also termed a human capital and it makes people fit for professional jobs. Education is recognized as one of the basic human needs. It has direct bearing to the overall welfare of individuals as well as households and society. Bangladesh is a country with an estimated literacy rate of 57.91 percent (Report of the Household Income & Expenditure Survey 2010). But unfortunately only 1.75 percent passed graduate or equivalent level, 0.98 percent passed postgraduate level, 0.12 percent obtained engineering and medical degrees and 0.09 percent obtained diploma and vocational certificate.

GDP is an accurate indication of an economy's size, while GDP per capita has a close correlation with the trend in living standards over time, and the GDP growth rate is probably the single best indicator of economic growth. Bangladesh has a GDP of around 115.6 billion USD. Economic growth of Bangladesh is compiled of three main sectors and the main sectors of GDP are mentioned below.

As a developing country, Bangladesh has several production sectors which have greater contribution to GDP. They are:

- Agriculture (18.64%)
- Industry (28.61%)
- Service (52.76%)

Agriculture includes farming crops, animals, fishery and foresting contributions. Contribution of Agriculture to GDP is 18.64% (current prices) for the fiscal year 2008-2009. Although its share is predictably declining, agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry) accounts for one third of GDP and agricultural products constitute 32 percent of the total value of exports.

Industry is the second largest sector in the percentage contribution to GDP which includes garments and knitting sectors, factories, leather industry, food and beverage etc. The contribution of industry sector to GDP is 28.61% (current prices) for the fiscal year 2008-2009 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2008-2009).

Service is the largest sector in the

percentage contribution to GDP. It includes all service activities. It consists of trade service, construction, transport, storage and communication, housing, public administration and defense, education, health, financial intermediates such as bank, insurance and other social and personal activities. Service organization's contribution to GDP of Bangladesh is 52.76% (current prices) for the fiscal year 2008-2009 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2008-2009.)

Since the Liberation War of 1971 the scenario of GDP of Bangladesh is changing gradually. Bangladesh was an agricultural country. Earlier it had a great contribution to GDP. But gradually the contribution is changing. Now garment sector is one of the biggest contributors to GDP. In the last decade, the country has recorded GDP growth rates above 5 percent due to development of microcredit and garment industry. Although three fifths of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector, three quarters of exports revenues come from producing ready-made garments.

To attain middle-income status Bangladesh needs to push up its GDP growth per annum from 6 percent to around 7.5-8 percent; so it is mandatory to underscore the importance of increasing investment in physical infrastructure and human development, and enhancing productivity growth and the outward orientation of the economy. Inadequate infrastructure remains a major bottleneck to growth, which needs to be addressed urgently. To accommodate 2.7 million unemployed and 1.8 million new entrants every year in job market, Bangladesh must create an enabling environment for expansion of labor-intensive economic activities. Implementation of policy and institutional reforms to enhance labor productivity and skills is critical.

Sustaining growth is also subject to handling the challenges posed by unplanned urbanization. Urbanization offers opportunities to accelerate growth, but it also comes with risks to sustainability if not managed properly. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to have a large population that comes



both as a blessing and also pose a dangerous threat.

According to Labor Force Survey 2010, Bangladesh has an economically active population of around 56.7 million, among which 54.1 million are employed and 2.6 million are unemployed. From the literate population, only 1.75 percent passed graduate or equivalent level, 0.98 percent passed postgraduate level, 0.12 percent obtained engineering and medical degrees and 0.09 percent obtained diploma and vocational certificate. With around 9 agricultural universities and colleges in Bangladesh specializing in agricultural education giving out thousands of students every year, it is of deep concern that the performance of this sector is gradually decreasing. Rather than traditional farmers and workers, if these institutions can provide scientists and researchers who might help explore this sector in a more innovative way, it will be a great achievement for the nation, given that it can boost export earnings and accelerate development.

There are 113 universities and colleges that are either specialized in engineering education or offer engineering degrees, courses or diplomas. This indicates that there must be thousands of engineering students graduating every year. So the question arises, is there enough jobs for all these engineering students. For years there has been a trend in engineering students who are doing post graduation in areas that are not at all related to their previous fields. Like doing MBA after BSc or MSc and then working in a bank as a risk manager, that has no technical part to it.

Aristotle once said that 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts'. Hence an organization cannot drive towards its success without the joint effort of everyone in the organization. So if Bangladesh is

considered an organization and its development and sustainable growth the desired outcome, then the human resources must work together and in a coordinated way to achieve the goal. Importance of human resource management is well-established and it's high time that Bangladesh manages its human resources through availability of specialized education, through filling the gaps by supplying resources as per need than as per the tradition. The education system of the country should be based on what it needs right now and what it should develop to remain competitive in the future. If we are not planned and coordinated then what's the point of increased level of literate people who will not find decent jobs for themselves after they are done with their studies. What can be done with so many particular graduates if they cannot find jobs in their own fields? What can we possibly achieve if they cannot add value in the field that they have studied so well?

The readymade garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh has consistently been the biggest earner of foreign currency for last couple of decades. It is the most important export-oriented industry in Bangladesh and has seen tremendous growth as well as created huge employment opportunity and self dependency for our semi-skilled and unskilled labor force. Nearly 4.4 million workers are there in the garments industry and at least 80% of them are women. About 20 million more directly and indirectly dependent on the sector. Bangladesh is the second largest apparel exporter in the world. But to keep pace with the international dynamic world, continuous research, training, development and building skilled human capital is essential. Unfortunately it seems only 6.7 million of the total 56.7 million economically active population and 54.1 million of employed population are working in the manufacturing industry in which apparel is just another product in the basket.

Nowadays, textile education has become very important in Bangladesh because of high demand of textile engineers and textile related employees for enhanced efficiency of the factories. Textile education in Bangladesh can be roughly divided into three categories. They are-

vocational level, undergraduate level and postgraduate level. Besides different courses, diplomas, professional trainings are also offered by different institutes on textile related subjects.

Keeping pace with the expansion of the textile industry, the number of institutions providing textile education should be increased and these institutes should go through major restructuring. At the moment China is the largest exporter of RMG in the world and sharing nearly 50% of world market. Due to excessive labor cost, China is gradually losing that market. The beneficiary of this huge market will be countries like Bangladesh. If that happens then millions of jobs will be created not only in the field of textiles but also in other related fields. To see that miracle happens we must do a lot of home work so that qualified, knowledgeable and skilled manpower is developed; if not then we may not be able to remain in the race with others. Issues regarding existing textile education

There are some issues regarding current textile education in Bangladesh, which are hindering the development of qualified human capital for the industry. Though a good number of institutes provide textile education, still the number of qualified teachers has not increased comparing with the number of students. There is a shortage of specialized teachers' training institutes in this sector and almost no scope for proper teachers' evaluation. The second problem is regarding the syllabus and modern technology usage, as there is a huge scope of improvement regarding the syllabus, technology usage, proper teaching method etc. There is lack of structured course-curricula and the curricula are not updated as frequently with the dynamic market. On third comes the lack of sufficient research and publication. No consistent research program is carried by the HRD institutes of this sector. Occasionally some researches are done in accordance with the need of different institutions. There is only one specialized textile journal called 'Bangladesh Textile Journal'. The number of doctorates in this sector is very small and the faculties related to this sector are not regular in research and publication.

Though there are some flaws in the

current textile education, still the industry has provided good employment opportunities over the years. There is still a high demand for specialized people like Production Industrial Engineers, Merchandisers, and people with expertise in commercial, customs and UD. If the demand for products is higher, the demand for people will also be higher. Unfortunately education on textile and apparel is still not a common thing in most universities. There are courses like Biology and Social Studies in business education but not even a non-credit course on textile or apparel whereas the RMG sector itself is bringing business of billion dollars.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in achieving some goals in education but it needs to focus on the quality of education and its development. The country is coming up with more literate people every year but it is also the country's responsibility to provide these literate people with decent jobs. Being semi-skilled at whatever jobs they get, they will not be able to add value and produce quality output. With the increased competition worldwide, it is important for Bangladesh to produce skilled people that can take Bangladesh further by not only investing in one sector but diversifying in various sectors. As the saying goes that one should not put all the eggs in one basket, hence Bangladesh should start looking to diversify their portfolio. This can only be done through our educated and skilled labor force. With their firsthand knowledge and education they can help diversify our sources of foreign earnings and our export baskets. It is important to take note that Bangladesh will gain nothing if a huge population of educated and skilled people is employed in a sector whose contribution is negligible and diminishing with time. It is important that these people are redistributed if necessary and employed at places where their skills are truly valued and utilized. Our students should be given more opportunities to select their areas of education with knowledge of the current market than just choosing field of studies through tradition. With such steps and actions, Bangladesh can truly gain a set of skilled labor force and with proper human resource management, these resources can take the country and the nation to a higher level.

Productivity Improvement Cell of BGMEA

By Md. Jannatul Ferdouse



Members of the Productivity Improvement Cell of BGMEA.

Readymade garments (RMG) sector plays a vital role in the economic growth of Bangladesh. It is a matter of pride that Bangladesh is the second largest garment exporting country in the world. Another important fact is that a huge number of people are engaged in this sector. For sustainable growth, better productivity and improvement of workers' livelihoods, BGMEA has decided to improve productivity as well as ensure better working environment for workers. Because of the recent rise in the minimum wage and increased operational cost, productivity improvement has become a must as price of apparel is not increasing in line with the increasing cost of doing business. Hence BGMEA has introduced Productivity Improvement Cell where there is a group of Industrial Engineers who are assigned to perform efficiency improvement of individual factories. The "Productivity Cell at BGMEA" is a wholly owned concern of BGMEA. The main aim of establishing this cell is to capacitate the productivity team through proper training as well as productivity related applications, so that they become well equipped to serve the BGMEA member factories to improve their requirements for increasing productivity as well as efficiency at a substantial extent and also provide productivity related trainings.

At present productivity team is being trained up

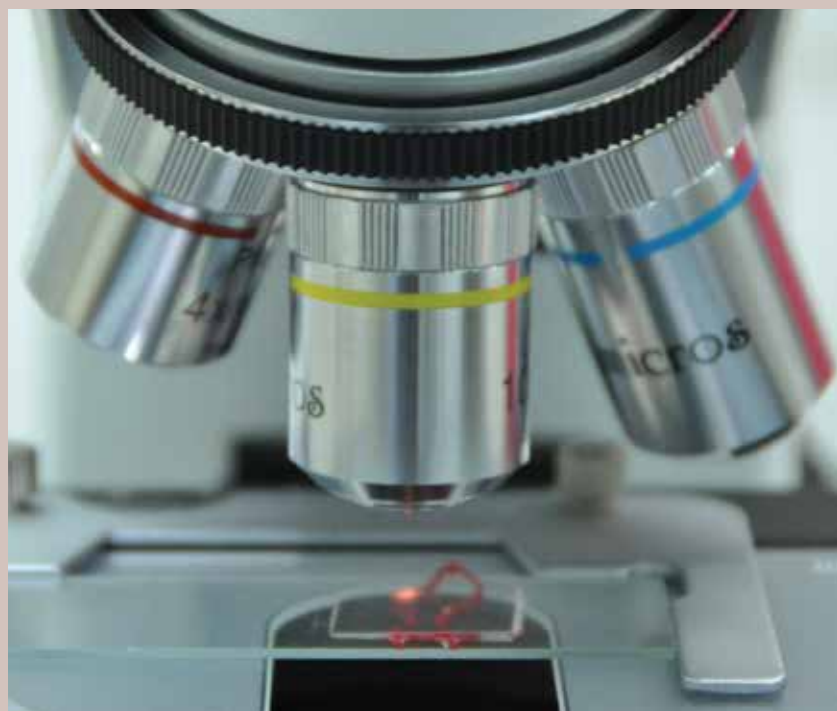
so that as early as possible they can provide output for increasing productivity. BGMEA has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with different organizations like UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), Impact, RBC (Rajesh Bheda Consultancy), GIZ etc.

There are various fields where the industrial engineers can work such as supply chain management, Product Design and Development, Quality Control and Management, Production System Design, Plant Layout and Process Lay Out, Operations Management, Operations Research, Inventory Control System. Each and every topic is equally important in RMG sector for improving productivity. In garment there are huge scope for industrial engineers where they can provide their service. Proper planning as well as proper execution of the planning can be done by industrial engineers. BGMEA is looking for the time when the productivity team will be able to gain such kind of knowledge so that the team can be able to report about the entire scenario of a factory as well as the improvement scope of that factory. The total capacity of a factory, manpower efficiency, line efficiency most importantly how maximum profit can be obtained using minimum resources are the main aims of industrial engineering. Using minimum number of workers a factory can achieve daily target by implementing tools and techniques of industrial engineering. Reaz Bin Mahmood, Vice President (Finance), BGMEA, said: "Productivity improvement can increase competitiveness and ensure sustainable growth which will create a greater scope of healthy industry, more employment and improved livelihoods. Hence this cell marks an important new stage in the transformation of the Bangladesh RMG sector."

Reducing testing failure risk of textile products

By Yeasin Khan

In August 14, 2008 the then US President George W. Bush signed a law named "The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) of 2008". The legislative bill was known as HR 4040, sponsored by Congressman Bobby Rush. The law imposed new testing requirements on manufacturers of textiles and apparels and sets new acceptable levels of test. The Act also increased fines and specified jail time for some violations. The law includes some costly tests like Phthalate, Lead, Flammability, Small parts, Sharp point and Edge which are mandatory for children products manufacturers. On the other hand in EU, 27 countries launched REACH (The Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 which came into force on 1st June 2007. It imposed that the products manufactured in the EU or imported into the EU should ensure that there is sufficient protection for human health and the environment from chemical substances. There are 151 chemical substances included as hazardous and restricted under this regulation as updated on 16 December 2013. Some important test parameters which are applicable on garment products are Formaldehyde, AZO compound, Allergenic & Carcinogenic compound, APEOs, Phthalate, Inorganic Metal compounds and many others. Beside these regulatory restrictions, every brand has their own quality requirements to ensure their customer safety and satisfaction which includes huge testing of both physical and chemical parameters. All above quality requirements are to



be met by apparel and garment manufacturers. Our simple practice is to submit finished product to testing lab to test as per customer and regulatory requirements. In case of any failure to meet buyer or regulatory requirements, claim raises to garment manufacturer's shoulder. So, ensuring of quality to meet requirements should be started from fibre, yarn, fabric and accessory stages.

We are very familiar with product recall and stock lot. If someone raises a question, why, then the answer is easy that it was due to failure to meet customer requirements or regulatory requirements of export countries. No solution is in finished stage. So,



what should do for the next batch/style?

We should find possible ways to reduce or eliminate risk of failure in finished products. It might be an important ways to confirm the quality of raw materials before going to bulk production. If you are buying/importing yarn, fabric or accessories/trims, then you are the buyer for manufacturer of those items. Therefore, you may fix the acceptance level of test parameters for better performance which might meet your buyer requirements. Ask your supplier to have test report meeting end buyer requirements and take buyer acceptance before using such materials. If so, in case of failure to meet buyer requirements in finished stage the responsibility will be shared by all (buyer, supplier and manufacturer). The important test

parameters in ground stages are below:

- Fibre Diameter (Fibre, Yarn or Fabric Sample)
- Fibre Length
- Fibre Content on Yarn
- Yarn Twist
- Yarn Count
- Yarn Breaking Force/Extensibility
- Yarn Evenness
- Yarn Hairiness
- Yarn Friction
- Color Fastness of dyed Yarn/fabric
- Mechanical test on fabric
- RS Test on Dyed Yarn/Fabric/Accessory/Trim

In case of failure to meet above parameters, the manufacturer may take proper corrective action at ground level. Therefore, confidence will grow that there will be no risk on finished product. Let us know how to develop the important parameters among above.

Fibre content:

Declaration of content in finished product is a regulatory requirement of USA, Canada and EU countries. So, appropriate content should be confirmed in yarn stage. In yarn pilot production stage we may proceed for laboratory testing. Suppose, an end buyer wants a finished product with labeling of 65% polyester and 35% cotton, the manufacturer purchased fabric and printed content label as above declaration. After completing production it was found by lab test result that the actual content is 59% polyester and 41% cotton. In this stage either content labeling should have to be changed or product will be denied by buyer to ship. If such dissimilarities identified in yarn pilot production stage then proper corrective action could be taken to solve this or can be negotiated.

Yarn twist:

Twist is used to hold the fibre together and impart the desired properties of the twisted yarn. It is generally expressed as the number of turns per unit length of yarn, e.g. turns per inch (tpi), turns per metre (tpm), etc. The change of twist affects the properties of yarn as well as fabric strength and softness. Required TPI should be fixed based on the strength, pilling and hand feeling requirement of end buyer. For example, if tear strength, tensile



strength, bursting and seam strength of end buyer are comparatively higher for a specific product, then slight higher twisted yarn will be better to meet the requirements of above test parameters.

Yarn count:

Count is a numerical value, which express the fineness of yarn. Therefore, the concept of yarn count value indicates how fine or thick the yarn is. It is generally expressed as 132X84;40X32. It means number of warp yarn is 132 per inch and the warp yarn count is 40, the number of weft yarn is 84 per inch and the count value of weft yarn is 32. If a contract is confirmed with seller and buyer like above, then the count value should be tested before going to bulk production of yarn. In pilot yarn production stage the count value can be easily adjusted as per contract to avoid failure result in finished stage.

Yarn breaking force/extensibility:

Yarn breaking force means a force in which the yarn breaks down and extensibility means maximum extension at breaking force. The strength and elasticity of fabric depends on strength and extensibility of yarn. So, based on required strength of fabric, yarn strength can be specified to meet strength requirement of finished fabric. If a yarn breaking strength is 900 cN and a fabric produced by this yarn is not meeting buyer strength requirements of fabric, then a yarn with more strength should be used. The strength of yarn can be increased by using more twist in yarn and using fibre with long staple length.

Color fastness

Same as above, fastness of color can be confirmed in yarn stage for yarn dyed fabric and in fabric stage for solid dyed fabric. If any print, appliqué or motif is used in finished product, we may prepare the identical panel of garment and apply applicable tests for fastness and cross staining confirmation. Better selection of dye stuff, fixing of color materials and finishing after treatment would improve the result. Remove the excess and free dyestuff through wash treatment also help to recover the quality

Restricted Substance (RS) test:

All RS's enter garment through dyes and finishes. Select renowned brand or guaranteed chemical suppliers and identify the presence of restricted chemicals in yarn or fabric stage by laboratory testing. Similarly, make aware accessory supplier to have test following buyers' and regulatory requirements before confirmation of order and take acceptance from buyers before using such accessories. Accessories and trims manufacturers can also test the raw materials (metal, plastic, ink/paint) before going to production. Finished garment exporters should keep record of passed test results of all used component (yarn, fabric, trims, accessories and any others) for specific period of time as a reference.

Finally, we need to be more aware of faults at yarn and accessory stage, which will help to enhance quality and credibility, build image of products and protect recall.

The writer is Manager, BGMEA Laboratory.

Finished garment exporters should keep record of passed test results of all used component (yarn, fabric, trims, accessories and any others) for specific period of time as a reference



What to do for realizing the potential of our RMG industry?



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McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm and trusted adviser to the world's leading businesses, governments and institutions, forecasts that the RMG sector could hit a whopping \$45 billion mark by 2020. According to their research they believe that Bangladesh could be the next China in term of export in the readymade garment industry. Tamanna Mahin of The Apparel Story talked to people of different professions to know their thoughts on the forecast.



Deena Shahabuddin

Private service holder

I believe that the country's potential is sky high. I have faith in the possibility that we as a nation can make it happen. We are hard working people. However, I believe that the government has many things to do for the development of the RMG sector. I hope that the authorities concerned would facilitate the RMG factories with proper infrastructure. The industry's overhead costs should be lowered so that the factories can earn a higher profit and in return help society further. I applaud the RMG industry as it has given the women of this country power. As for BGMEA, I would like to see them performing all necessary things to make the sector's journey smoother and have it contribute more to the country's economy.



Imtiaz Ahmed

Business analyst for Jahurul Islam Group

I think minor improvements in infrastructure, better roads, better access to virtual communication, better sources of gas, electricity and water, better usage of the massive labor force and training can help this industry. As I graduated with a major in Marketing, I believe that this industry is the face of this

country in the world economy. I suggest that the brand name Bangladesh has made for itself with perseverance, practice and perfection should be maintained by each and every single person of the country. I also think that the biggest challenge for BGMEA is maintaining all the existing factories. In my opinion, it is a challenge to ensure that every single RMG factory is under the same code of conduct and maintaining the desired level of safety. This is where the factory owners should come forward. It is their responsibility to make sure that their factories are meeting the requirements set by BGMEA. They should report to BGMEA time to time and ensure that their factories are performing at its best. I think such a small adjustment is quiet able to achieve the \$45 billion target as we are almost nearing \$25 billion at the moment.



Ulfat Shahabuddin

Teacher at a English medium school

I was flabbergasted when I read somewhere that RMG sector accounts for 79% of the country's total export. Right after the Liberation War the country was in shambles. The leading industries of the economy were shattered and left in ruins. I have witnessed the birth and the progress of the RMG industry right in front of my own eyes. I remember that there was a time when the garment business became hype; however, I also clearly see the hype never dying out. I think if the country can attain political stability and if BGMEA can ensure proper working conditions for the workers then there is no holding back. For me, if the people of the country are happy, the economy is happy in return! So the motto should be to ensure the peoples' happiness.



Kazi Nuruddin Ahmed

A retired General Manager of a Jute Mill

I remember a time when in the early 90s the jute industry and the RMG industry were head to head in the export competition. Now, 20 years later, the jute industry is nonexistent. I must point out how the government did not do all it could to make the jute industry flourish. The government has a major role to play in making the dream come true. It would be in their hands to maintain a good relationship with the buyer countries and establish a rapport so that they do not go looking elsewhere. If we can deliver the best at the most competitive prices then we will definitely be the leaders in garment export some years down the line. With the help of BGMEA and the government, new liaisons should be made and sustained. We need to venture out into new markets. There are many new markets that Bangladesh is yet to penetrate and if we can right the impact while we debut then no one can deny us the future that McKinsey & Company has predicted for us.



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Safety in BD garment factories not as bad as thought: Survey

A significant proportion of garment factories abide by workplace safety standards but there are still some critical safety concerns that need urgent attention, a recent survey found.

Following the recent spate of accidents in the sector, the ministry of labour and employment commissioned the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the garment sector with respect to industrial relations, workplace safety and compliance.

The study found that about 80.8 percent of the buildings had approved structural designs and 85.9 percent approved factory layouts.

It has been found that 92 percent of the factories have updated fire safety licenses. Almost all the factories do have valid fire extinguishers and maintain records of fire-fighting demonstration.

Around 93 percent and 99 percent of the factories respectively had the necessary number of hose reels for fire fighting and alarm system for fire or other disasters. Additionally, 87.9 percent of the factories had water reservoir in the roof to fight fire.

It has been observed that electric generator is located outside of the factory in case of 55 percent of the factories.

The survey methodology involved sending a two-page questionnaire to the 6,304 member factories of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association between the first week of June 2013 and end of July 2013.

Based on the information collected through the mailed questionnaire, a representative sample of 100 factories was drawn following stratified random sampling procedure for detailed survey.

Because of time and resource constraint, the sample survey was limited to the Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj districts that account for 80 percent of the BGMEA member factories and nearly 94 percent of the BKMEA member factories.

Structured questionnaires were sent to the management of the sample factories and to five randomly selected workers of each sample factory to get their perception on the pertinent issues.

Additionally, one focus group discussion with managers and workers was done separately to understand their knowledge gap towards compliance issues.

The research organization handed in the detailed report to the labour ministry last week, and the ministry is due to sit with the platforms of international retailers—Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh—to discuss the findings, according to an official from the labour ministry.



BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam and Chief Executive Officer of the Orion Holding Tang Xiaoji signed the MoU on behalf of their respective sides in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Beijing on 10 June. As per the MoU, the Orion Holding will construct the garment village at Gazaria in Munshiganj district.

BGMEA signs MoU with Chinese company for industrial park

The BGMEA and Oriental International Holding, a Chinese company, have signed a billion dollar agreement to develop a new garment industrial park in Munshiganj.

"A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Chinese company in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang," BGMEA Vice President (Finance) Reaz Bin Mahmood said.

BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam and chief executive officer of the Orion Holding Tang Xiaoji signed the MoU on behalf of their respective sides.

Reaz Bin Mahmood said the industrial park will be built on 470 acres of land in Gazaria at an approximate cost of \$1.2 billion.

Under the MoU, the Chinese company will conduct a complete feasibility study within three months and a framework agreement will be signed between the two parties.

"Oriental will also pay money to the government to procure the land," he said.

The company will develop land, roads, power plant and necessary constructions and build structures for selling it to the members of BGMEA and BKMEA.

After completion of feasibility study, within three months OIH will produce all relevant documents from their authority and financiers for financing the project and full fund for the land payment and other costs.

The government has allocated 470 acres of land at Baushia in Munshiganj for setting up a readymade garment industrial park.

It will have roads, water, power and gas supply, telecommunication, effluent treatment plant, transportations, hospital, hotel and factory sheds.



Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed poses for photograph with the winners of BGMEA-BUFT Journalism Fellowship-2014 at a ceremony at the BGMEA Complex on 23 June 2014. Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique and BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam, and Office Bearers of BGMEA, among others, were present on the occasion.

6 journalists awarded BGMEA-BUFT Journalism Fellowship

Six journalists from print, online and electronic media were awarded BGMEA- BUFT Journalism Fellowship-2014 for their constructive reports on the country's readymade garment industry. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed announced the names of the fellows at a program held at Noorul Quader auditorium of BGMEA Complex on 23 June.

The fellows selected by a three member jury board are Zahedul Islam Majumder, staff reporter of Ekattor TV, Rajib Ahmed, senior reporter of the Kaler Kantha, Monira Munni, staff reporter of the Financial Express, Ekram Kabir, executive editor of Natunbarta.com, Shah Suhel Ahmed, chief reporter of the Daily Sylhet Surma and F. Shahjahan, reporter of the Daily Satmatha, Bogra.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AASM Arefin Siddique was present at the program as special guest. BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam, Second Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim and Vice President (Finance) Reaz Bin Mahmood were present at the award giving ceremony.

BUFT Trustee Board Chairman Mozaffar Uddin Siddique, Boishakhi Television chief executive officer Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, the Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta and the Financial Express advisory editor Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury also attended the program.

Workplace Safety: EU lauds progress in Bangladesh

The European Union in a statement lauded Bangladesh's progress in improving workplace safety and establishing labour rights following the Rana Plaza tragedy last year.

"In particular, they are making good progress on inspections of factories according to common standards and an operating manual for assessing building, fire and electrical safety," Karel De Gucht, EU trade commissioner, said in a speech at the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) ministerial meeting in Paris on Thursday.

The EU, however, believes more needs to be done to meet international safety standards. "Of course, the reality is that there is still much more to do," Gucht said. Following the Rana Plaza collapse, Bangladesh signed "Sustainability Compact" with the EU involving the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva on July 8 last year for the improvement of safety standards and labour rights.

Under the agreement the EU observes the progress for one year before taking any trade measure against Bangladesh.

"... I am also proud to report that much of that programme has been put into practice," Gucht said. Of the major progress, Bangladesh has amended its labour law improving labour rights, Gucht said, adding that the country has also upgraded its system for factory safety inspection and begun the recruitment process of hundreds of new inspectors. "Inspections of the factories have started and their results are being made public. Many new unions have registered and workers are starting to organise," he said.

"For our part, the European Union has extended its 16-million-euro programme to promote Better Work and Standards in Bangladesh, as well as its 15 million-euro Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme that also helps with rehabilitation of some of the victims of Rana Plaza," the EU statement said.

Besides, the private sector both in Bangladesh and in buyer countries is working with trade unions to implement their own commitment through the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, Gucht added.

He urged the government to accelerate the recruitment of inspectors and publish the inspection results.

"All the enabling conditions must be in place, not only in law but in practice, for workers to organise into trade unions and make their voice heard at the factory level. Inspections must be followed by structural improvements to improve safety. Bangladeshi industry has a key role to play here," Gucht said. "I welcome the statement by governments calling for further contributions to the Rana Plaza Arrangement by international retailers and Bangladeshi manufacturers as well as by the Government of Bangladesh," he said. The EU will assess the development over the coming weeks and hold a meeting of all parties to the Compact, the tenure of which expires on July 8, as well as other stakeholders to get their perspective and set the agenda going forward. Gucht said the EU has an obligation to act because it grants duty-free and quota-free tariff preferences to Bangladesh which have been a boon to the country's export performance.

The European Union was and still is the largest client of Bangladesh's garment business. "We imported over 9 billion euros worth in 2013," he said.



Roberto Azevedo, Director General of World Trade Organisation, speaking at a meeting at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on 3 June. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam are also seen.

WTO Chief hopeful of duty-free access for LDCs

The duty-free access of Bangladesh's garment items to the US market largely depends on the successful completion of the World Trade Organisation's Doha Round of negotiations, WTO's director general said on 3 June.

"I have already held meetings with the developed countries and asked them to successfully complete the Doha Round," Roberto Azevedo said.

He said they expect 'a good outcome' from a meeting in December in Geneva.

Azevedo, who was in Dhaka on a two-day visit, was speaking at a meeting with businesspeople at Hotel Sonargaon. Currently, being a least developed country, Bangladesh enjoys duty-free access for 97 percent of its products to the

US, but the country's main export item—garments—is not entitled to the privilege.

As a result, garment exporters have to pay 15.61 percent duty on exports to the US, Bangladesh's single largest export destination.

Bangladesh paid \$746 million to the US customs as duty in 2012. China, despite being a developed nation, pays 3 percent duty for exporting its garment products to the US. The US duty benefit for Bangladesh's 97 percent products was agreed in the Hong Kong ministerial conference of the WTO in 2005.

Azevedo said the WTO is not an organisation that can put pressure on any country. Md. Atiqul Islam, President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters

Association (BGMEA), said removal of tariff barriers is one area where many have helped.

"We urge the WTO to ensure that non-tariff barriers are not used against LDCs. The 'rules of origin' are unnecessarily complex in cases," Islam said.

Mohammad Hatem, acting president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the preferential rules of origin are often considered too restrictive and inflexible in the case of LDCs, making it difficult for them to take advantage of an intended preference. Azevedo also met Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed at his secretariat in Dhaka.

"If the Doha Round is completed, an automatic mandate will be in place for duty-free access for all products originated from the least developed countries," he said at a press conference after the meeting with the commerce minister.

Tofail Ahmed said Bangladesh's garments not enjoying duty benefit in the US market is a challenge. "We accepted the challenge and are performing well. We have successfully eliminated child labour from the garment sector," Ahmed said.



Caption: BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam, Second Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim and Vice President (Finance) Reaz Bin Mahmood are seen at the 31st Annual General Meeting of BGMEA.

31st AGM of BGMEA held

The 31st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) was held at Noorul Quader auditorium of BGMEA Complex on 22 June 2014. BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam chaired the AGM.

The accounts of BGMEA for the year 2013 were adopted and the budget for the year 2014 was approved in the meeting.

BGMEA Second Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi), Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim, Vice President (Finance) Reaz Bin Mahmood, directors and general members of BGMEA attended the meeting.



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BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam speaking at a press conference arranged by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) on June 1 to brief media about their recent Japan visit. FBCCI President Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, among others, was present at the press briefing.

Md. Atiqul Islam, President of BGMEA, and Nur E Hafza, Chairman of Sonali Life Insurance Company Ltd, signed an agreement in the city on June 4. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed was present at the program as chief guest. Sonali Life Insurance and BGMEA signed the deal for insurance coverage for garments workers.



A delegation of Li & Fung led by Spencer Theodore FUNG, Group Chief Operating Officer, met with BGMEA leaders at BGMEA Complex on June 3.



NBR and Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) jointly arranged a pre-budget meet at a city hotel on May 8. Finance Minister AMA Muhiith was present at the program as chief guest. FBCCI President Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed and BGMEA President Md. Atiqul Islam, among others, were also present at the meeting.



The Office Bearers of BGMEA are seen presenting a bouquet to Air Vice Marshal M Sanaul Huq. A delegation of National Defence Course led by Air Vice Marshal M Sanaul Huq visited BGMEA on May 5.



A milad mahfil was organized at BGMEA to pray for late Md. Mahbubur Rahman, former Director of BGMEA and MD, Tung Hai Sweaters Ltd. on the occasion of his death anniversary.



BGMEA leaders, including its Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim, presenting a bouquet to Environment and Forests Minister Anwar Hossain Manju at his office.



A delegation of the Ethical Trading Initiatives visited BGMEA on June 18. BGMEA Vice President (Finance) Reaz Bin Mahmood, among others, is seen with the delegation.



Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed inaugurated Intertek's Softline Laboratory at Tejgaon Industrial Area in Dhaka on 25 June 2014. British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Robert Gibson and BGMEA Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim were present at the inaugural ceremony as guest of honor and special guest respectively.



BGMEA Second Vice President SM Mannan (Kochi) is seen providing financial assistance to the victim family members of Mirpur Bihari Camp.



BGMEA leaders, including its President Md. Atiqul Islam, met with Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu at his office.



BGMEA Vice President Md. Shahidullah Azim along with the winners of BGMEA Facebook Quiz Fest pose for photograph after handing over prizes to them at a program at BGMEA conference room on June 28.

BANGLADESH'S RMG EXPORTS TO WORLD,

FY 2012-13 & 2013-14

Value in Million US\$

Month	ALL COUNTRIES								
	Woven Year		Growth Rate	Knit Year		Growth Rate	Total (Woven+Knit)		Growth Rate
	2012/13	2013/14		2012/13	2013/14		2012/13	2013/14	
July	993.84	1262.38	27.02	1001.07	1253.76	25.24	1994.91	2516.14	26.13
August	765.85	796.05	3.94	792.53	848.15	7.02	1558.38	1644.20	5.51
September	697.17	985.26	41.32	746.23	1058.29	41.82	1443.40	2043.55	41.58
October	761.48	820.49	7.75	873.16	862.01	-1.28	1634.64	1682.50	2.93
November	710.04	889.35	25.25	653.96	877.61	34.20	1364.00	1766.96	29.54
December	1042.68	1229.98	17.96	908.94	1048.87	15.39	1951.62	2278.85	16.77
January	1147.64	1195.20	4.14	944.96	1045.83	10.67	2092.60	2241.03	7.09
February	979.71	1049.64	7.14	811.24	915.76	12.88	1790.95	1965.40	9.74
March	991.77	993.37	0.16	854.68	920.69	7.72	1846.45	1914.06	3.66
April	835.17	944.95	13.14	795.11	972.38	22.30	1630.28	1917.33	17.61
May	997.72	1092.26	9.48	1008.37	1115.72	10.65	2006.09	2207.98	10.06
June									
Total:	9923.07	11258.93	13.46	9390.25	10919.07	16.28	19313.32	22178.00	14.83

BANGLADESH'S RMG EXPORTS TO WORLD

FY 2011-12 & 2012-13

Value in Million US\$

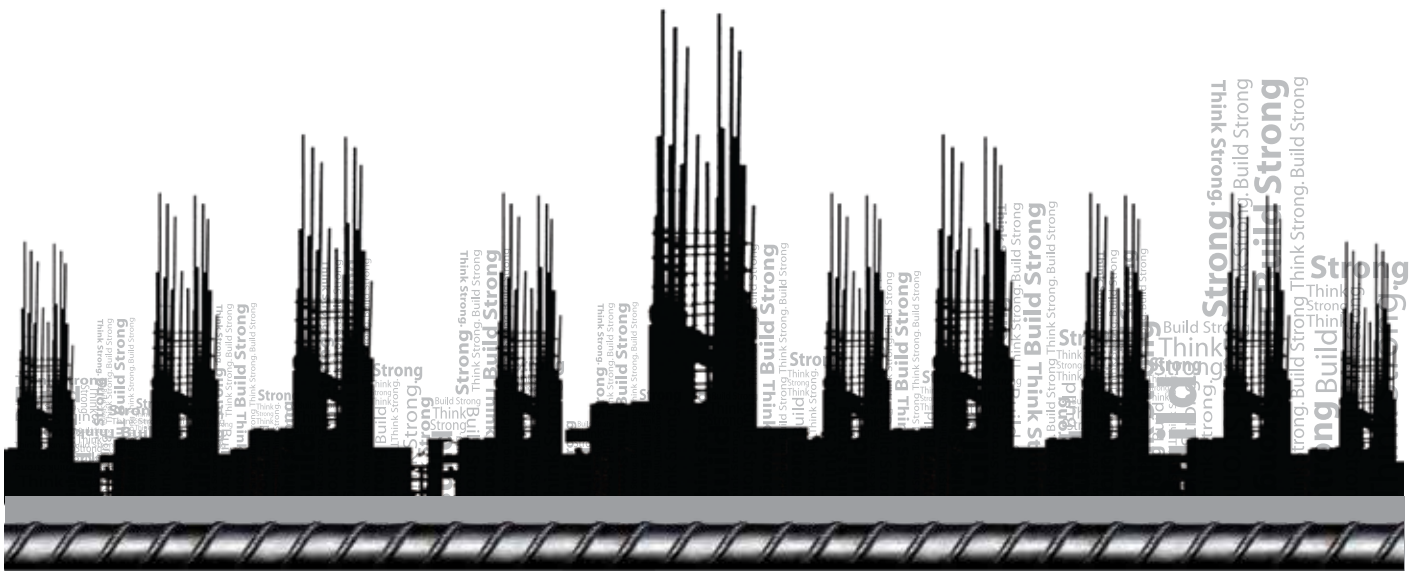
Month	ALL COUNTRIES								
	Woven Year		Growth Rate	Knit Year		Growth Rate	Total (Woven+Knit)		Growth Rate
	2011/12	2012/13		2011/12	2012/13		2011/12	2012/13	
July	888.00	993.84	11.92	1007.88	1001.07	-0.68	1895.88	1994.91	5.22
August	870.63	765.85	-12.03	1052.43	792.53	-24.70	1923.06	1558.38	-18.96
September	475.93	697.17	46.49	519.21	746.23	43.72	995.14	1443.40	45.04
October	704.70	761.48	8.06	796.05	873.16	9.69	1500.75	1634.64	8.92
November	626.91	710.04	13.26	621.73	653.96	5.18	1248.64	1364.00	9.24
December	890.80	1042.68	17.05	794.23	908.94	14.44	1685.03	1951.62	15.82
January	930.81	1147.64	23.29	773.48	944.96	22.17	1704.29	2092.60	22.78
February	873.29	979.71	12.19	732.09	811.24	10.81	1605.38	1790.95	11.56
March	847.52	991.77	17.02	699.16	854.68	22.24	1546.68	1846.45	19.38
April	721.72	835.17	15.72	698.68	795.11	13.80	1420.40	1630.28	14.78
May	866.63	997.72	15.13	875.98	1008.37	15.11	1742.61	2006.09	15.12
June	906.40	1116.78	23.21	915.43	1085.63	18.59	1821.83	2202.41	20.89
Total:	9603.34	11039.85	14.96	9486.35	10475.88	10.43	19089.69	21515.73	12.71

Source: EPB

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