বণিক বার্তা

10 OCT 2025

বাণিজ্য উপদেষ্টার সঙ্গে যুক্তরাজ্যের বাণিজ্যবিষয়ক দূতের বৈঠক

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

বাণিজ্য উপদেষ্টা শেখ বশিরউদ্দীনের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেছেন যুক্তরাজ্যের বাংলাদেশবিষয়ক বাণিজ্য দূত ব্যারোনেস রোজি উইন্টারটন। গতকাল বিকালে সচিবালয়ে তার অফিসে বৈঠকে বাংলাদেশ ও যুক্তরাজ্যের মধ্যকার বাণিজ্য, বিনিয়োগ ও অর্থনৈতিক সহযোগিতার বিভিন্ন দিক, এলডিসি গ্র্যাজুয়েশন ও হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরের তৃতীয় টার্মিনাল চালুর বিষয় নিয়ে বিস্তারিত আলোচনা হয়।

বাণিজ্য উপদেষ্টা বলেন, 'স্বল্পোন্নত দেশের (এলডিসি) তালিকা থেকে ২০২৬ সালের নভেম্বরে উন্নয়নশীল দেশে উন্নীত হতে চলেছে বাংলাদেশ। এটি আমাদের অর্থনৈতিক যাত্রার একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মাইলফলক হবে এবং এ পরিবর্তন বিপুল পরিমাণ সুযোগ তৈরির পাশাপাশি কিছু চ্যালেঞ্জও তৈরি করবে। সম্ভাব্য চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলায় বাংলাদেশ যুক্তরাজ্যের সহযোগিতা প্রত্যাশা করে।'

শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরের তৃতীয় টার্মিনাল চালুর বিষয়ে উপদেষ্টা বলেন, 'দ্রুততম সময়ে শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরের তৃতীয় টার্মিনাল চালুর বিষয়ে সরকার আন্তরিক। বেসামরিক বিমান পরিবহন ও পর্যটন মন্ত্রণালয় এটি নিয়ে কাজ করছে।' টার্মিনালের গ্রাউন্ড হ্যান্ডলিং কার্যক্রম পরিচালনার জন্য অপারেটর নিয়োগ করা হবে বলেও তিনি উল্লেখ করেন।

Apex Foods rides shrimp export rebound to 13pc profit growth in FY25

FE REPORT

Shrimp exporter Apex Foods posted a 13 per cent year-on-year rise in profit to Tk 36.54 million in FY25, driven by renewed international demand that boosted Bangladesh's overall shrimp exports.

While the frozen food exporter's yearly revenue figure has not been disclosed yet, its nine-month revenue was up 3 per cent year-on-year to Tk 1.70 billion in the period to March this year.

The company's finance income also contributed significantly to the overall profit gain, as it jumped 44 per cent to Tk 3.67 million in the nine months to March this year compared to the same period of the previous year.

Company Secretary of Apex Foods Kamrul Islam said profit increased due to higher finance income amid rising interest rates on bank deposits, coupled with higher revenue income. Moreover, a favourable exchange rate and effective cost-minimizing measures also supported profit growth.

In the year to June this year, shrimp exports from the country increased 19 per cent year-on-year to $296 million.

The industry witnessed a return to a growth trajectory after a persistent decline since FY22. Export orders had been on the decline due to the double blow caused by the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, according to sources in the industry.

Hence, the surge in shrimp exports and the company's revenue might have resulted from increased demand from importers.

Industry insiders, however, say the higher value of annual exports was possibly an outcome of higher prices and a stronger US dollar rather than a real increase in export volume.

"Strong dollar turned out to be a blessing for the frozen food exporter, while higher interest rates helped the company achieve profit growth," said Akramul Alam, head of research at Royal Capital.

The dollar-taka exchange rate was Tk 118 in June last year, which increased to Tk 122 in June this year.

Therefore, even if the country exported the same quantity of the frozen item, the overall worth of exports would have gone higher due to the appreciation of the dollar against the local currency.

Tariqul Islam Zaheer, senior vice president of the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association, said that although shrimp exports rose year-on-year in FY25, overall exports remained lower than expected.

Meanwhile, the stock price of Apex Foods dropped 5.27 per cent to Tk 232 per share on Thursday on the Dhaka Stock Exchange following the announcement of a 20 per cent cash dividend for FY25, unchanged from the year before.

Investors will get Tk 2 per share in cash dividends from the company's profit of Tk 6.41 per share for the year, meaning the company will retain most of the profits, according to a stock exchange filing on Thursday.

The net operating cash flow, a measure of a company's ability to generate cash from its operations, turned negative at Tk 59.16 per share, compared to a positive Tk 23.90 in the previous year. The deterioration was due to lower collection and higher expenses, according to the company.

The net asset value, which refers to the excess of total assets over total liabilities, slid to Tk 126.05 per share as of June this year, from Tk 127.82 a year ago, due to a decrease in the value of investments in the equity market.

Mr Zaheer said the industry was still facing challenges, including lower survival rates, disease control, and competition from other countries such as India. Lack of quality and compliance with international standards are other challenges that curb the growth of the shrimp farming industry.

"Without addressing the fundamental issues like the quality of shrimp fry, disease control, and hatchery regulation, we cannot expect sustainable growth in the sector," Mr Zaheer continued.

Although the challenges are not unique to Apex Foods, its profit margin is significantly lower than that of its listed peer Gemini Sea Foods. Apex Foods' profit margin was 1.58 per cent, while Gemini Sea Foods' stood at 7.61 per cent as of FY24.

Apex Foods, as it claims, is an export-oriented value-added shrimp processing company. It operates a modern shrimp processing plant and exports 100 per cent of its produce mainly to European and North American markets.

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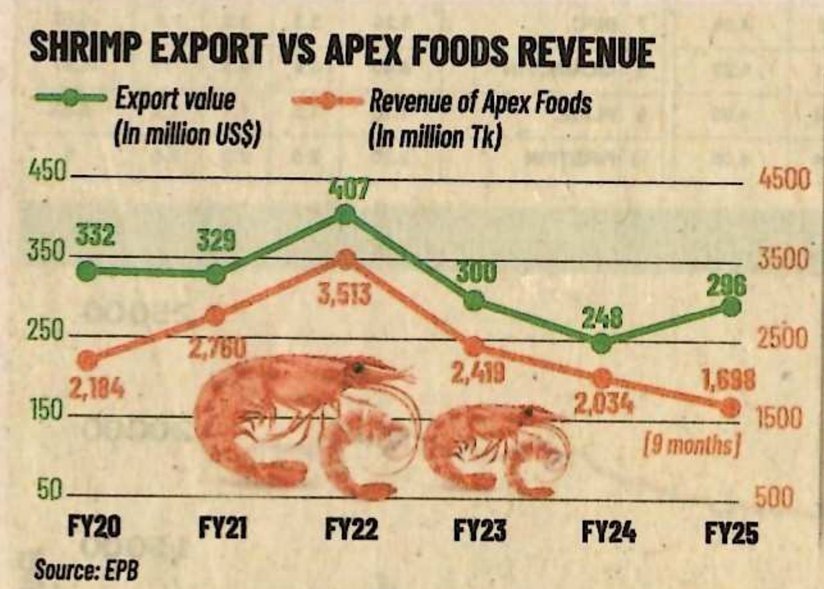
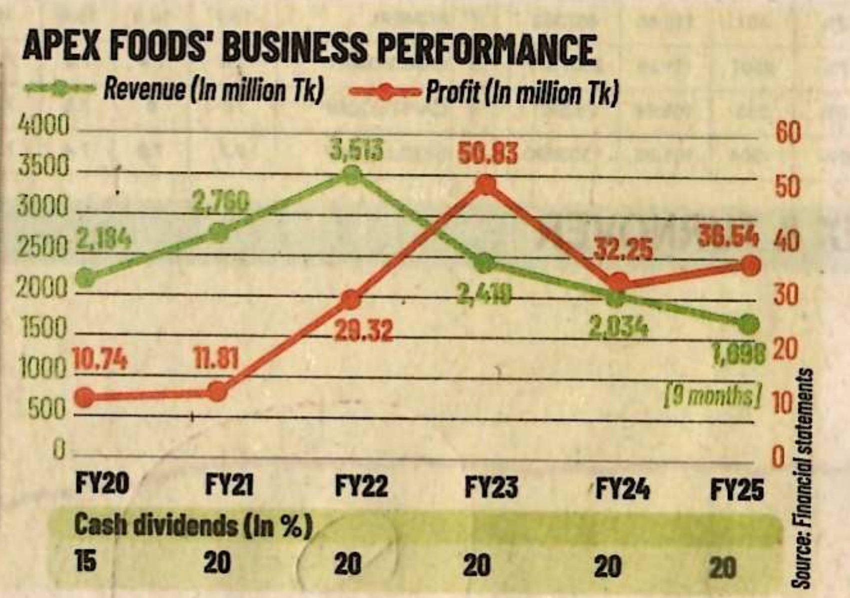
SHRIMP EXPORT VS APEX FOODS REVENUE



Source: EPB

APEX FOODS' BUSINESS PERFORMANCE



The Financial Express

10 OCT 2025

GOLDEN FIBRE REGAINING LOST GLORY

Jute price tops Tk 4,000 per maund in Rajshahi

Photo shows workers busy arranging jute in a godown at Nohata Bazar in Paba upazila of Rajshahi district - FE Photo

OUR CORRESPONDENT

RAJSHAHI, Oct 09: Once known as the 'golden fibre' of Bangladesh, jute seems to be regaining its long-lost glory in Rajshahi. On Thursday, the price of raw jute reached a record high at Tk 4,000 per maund across several local markets - the highest in recent memory.

The sharp rise in price has brought cheer to farmers and optimism to traders, signaling a revival in the region's traditional cash crop economy.

Over the past few weeks, bustling jute trading has been reported at Nohata, Kesharhat, Kakonhat, Baneshwar, Taherpur, and Tanore markets. Alongside local intermediaries, five private jute mills in the district have been directly purchasing raw jute from growers, helping stabilise market demand and prices.

Compared to last year, farmers are now earning Tk 1,200-1,500 more per maund, according to traders.

- Bustling jute trading is on in the local markets
- Private jute mills buying raw jute from growers
- Compared to last year, farmers are earning Tk1,200-1,500 more per maund this year

Mukul Ahmed, a jute trader at Nohata Bazar in Paba upazila, said, "Last year, fresh jute sold for Tk2,600 to Tk 2,800 per maund. This year, price has jumped to Tk 3,600-4,000. The market has become vibrant again, and farmers are motivated to increase acreage next season."

Md. Kalam, a grower from Baneshwar in Puthia upazila, shared, "Including seeds, fertilisers, labour and irrigation, and land lease, my total cost per bigha was around Tk 20,000. With favorable weather, I got 9-10 maunds of yield per bigha and made a profit of Tk 16,000-18,000 after costs. Many in my area have made similar gains this season."

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Rajshahi, jute has been cultivated on 17,305 hectares of land this year - exceeding the initial target by 120 hectares. Adequate rainfall during the retting period ensured better fibre colour and quality, while average yields reached 9-10 maunds per bigha.

Ummes Salma, deputy director of the DAE, said, "Favorable weather and attractive market prices have made jute farming profitable this season. Jute remains one of Bangladesh's most promising and sustainable cash crops, with growing domestic and export demand. We're supporting farmers with improved seeds, modern cultivation methods, and pest management."

The Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) is also actively monitoring local markets to prevent price manipulation by middlemen. "We're ensuring that farmers receive fair prices for their produce," said ShahanaAkter Jahan, deputy director of DAM.

The Jute Department's Assistant Director, Nadim Akter, noted that the government's enforcement of the Mandatory Packaging in Jute Products Act 2010 and the liberalised raw jute export policy have both helped stabilise domestic prices. "We are ensuring market information reaches farmers in time and encouraging greater domestic use of jute products," he added.

Rajshahi currently hosts seven jute mills, of which five remain operational.

The largest - Rahman Jute Spinners in Puthia - has a daily production capacity of 100 tonnes, followed by Rahman Jute Mill (20 MT), Hasen Jute Mill (18 MT), Nohata Jute Mill (15 MT), and Aman Jute Fibres (15 MT). The remaining two mills are currently inoperative.

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10 OCT 2025 The Daily Star

Bangladesh cashes in on US soybean glut as China turns away

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh is reaping the benefits of a trade war between Washington and Beijing, with local importers snapping up cheap soybeans from the United States after China reduced its purchases drastically.

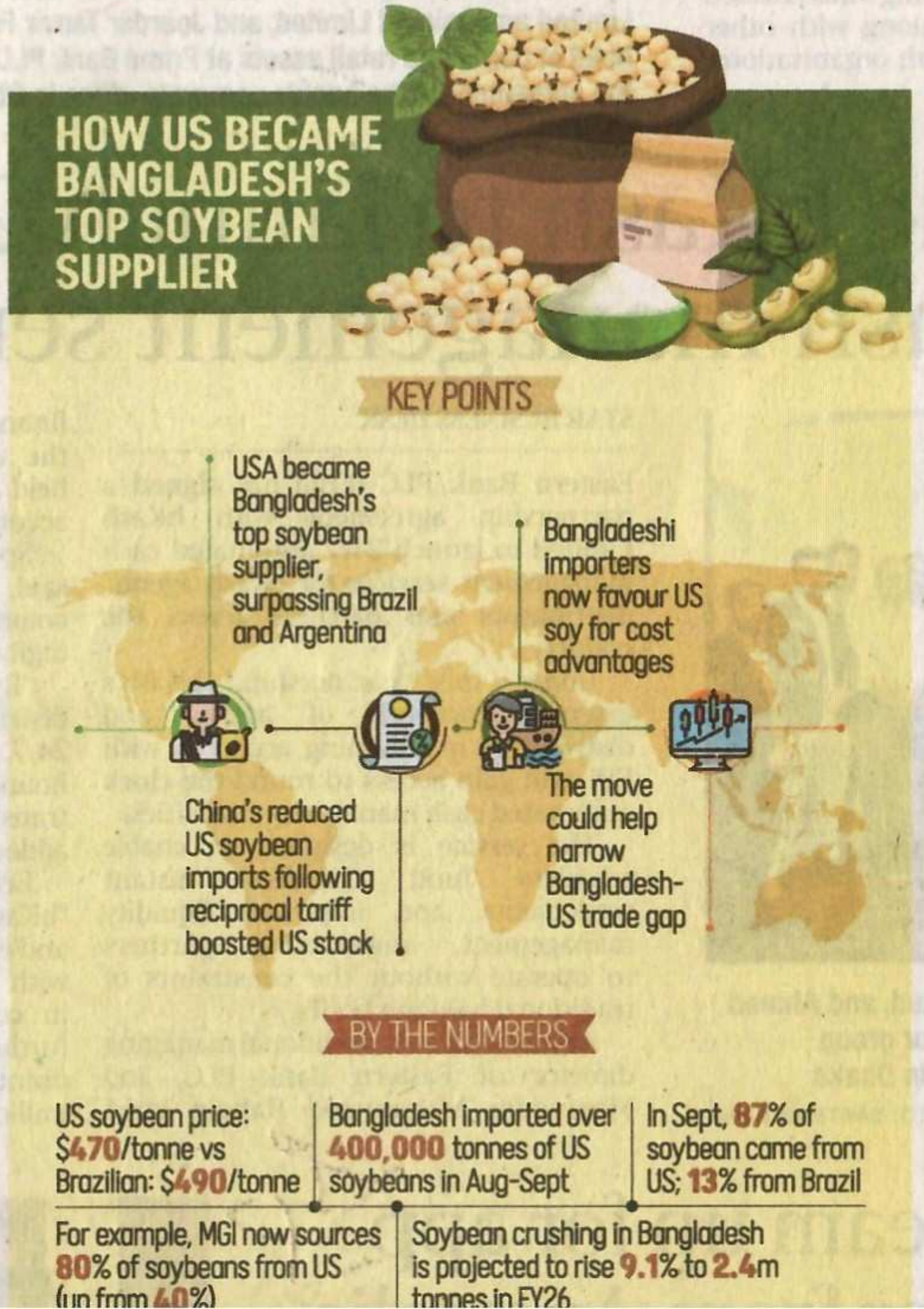
China, once the biggest buyer of American soy products, has reduced imports following US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs, which strained trade relations between the two economic powers.

Local soybean importers, millers, crushers, and traders say they are taking advantage of the US soybean glut, as China's absence from the US market has left American farmers with excess stock.

Traditionally, Bangladesh sourced soybeans from low-cost Latin American suppliers such as Brazil and Argentina. But recent price hikes there, followed by increased Chinese demand, have made those options less attractive.

China, the world's largest soybean importer, has not booked a single shipment from US farmers this season, Bloomberg reported.

This unusual move has affected the US growers, as they rely heavily on the Chinese



China's usual demand.

Amid surging Chinese demand, Brazilian traders have increased their prices, said Md Taslim Shahriar, deputy general manager of Meghna Group of Industries (MGI).

"This came about following China's imposition of a 20 percent retaliatory duty on imports of US soy seeds," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

"Sometimes the price gap is $40 per tonne between Brazilian and US soy seeds. Local importers are enjoying zero-tariff facilities on imports of American soy seeds," he added.

Before the tariff took effect on August 7, MGI sourced 60 percent of its soybeans from Brazil and 40 percent from the US.

"This year, 80 percent of our soy seeds may come from the USA because of the price advantage," Shahriar said.

The quality of US soybean seeds is also "far better" than Brazilian and Argentine varieties, said Amirul Haque, managing director of Delta Agrofood, one of the country's major soybean crushers.

"The price difference is $20-$30 per tonne between US and Brazilian seeds, which in international trade represents a significant margin and competitive edge," he said.

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In 2024, the United States accounted for about one-fifth of China's soybean imports, worth more than $12 billion, representing more than half the total value of US soybean exports.

Without that market, growers have been left with fewer buyers and weaker prices, according to a Bloomberg report.

Reuters reported that US soybean exports to Bangladesh rose sharply to just over 400,000 tonnes, still only a fraction of

BY THE NUMBERS

US soybean price: $470/tonne vs Brazilian: $490/tonne

Bangladesh imported over 400,000 tonnes of US soybeans in Aug-Sept

In Sept, 87% of soybean came from US; 13% from Brazil

For example, MGI now sources 80% of soybeans from US (up from 40%)

Soybean crushing in Bangladesh is projected to rise 9.1% to 2.4m tonnes in FY26

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In the current international market, US soybean seeds are selling for around $470 per tonne, compared with $490 for Brazilian seeds, Haque added.

He said the growing focus on US soybeans could help reduce the trade deficit between Bangladesh and the United States.

"This is because the Trump administration wants to narrow the trade deficit between the two countries," said Haque, who

took part in the reciprocal tariff negotiations on behalf of the country's private sector. During those talks, Washington imposed a reduced 20 percent tariff on Bangladeshi goods entering the US, tied to efforts to reduce the trade imbalance.

Trade between the two countries remains heavily in Bangladesh's favour, with exports to the US crossing $8.2 billion a year, while imports from the US total around $2 billion.

Khabibur Rahman, country team lead for Bangladesh at the US Soybean Export Council (USSEC), confirmed the surge in US soybean imports following the reciprocal tariffs. "Over the last two months, soybean imports in Bangladesh have boomed because of the advantageous price."

In August and September, Bangladesh imported 400,000 tonnes of soybean seeds, up from 200,000 tonnes in the previous two months, said Rahman.

In September alone, 114,000 tonnes came from the US, accounting for 87.11 percent of total imports that month. Brazil supplied 16,800 tonnes, or 12.89 percent, he said.

"Even in July, before the tariffs took effect, 45.84 percent of soybeans were imported from the US and 54 percent from Brazil. The picture is now completely reversed," he added.

Bangladesh's soybean crushing is forecast to rise 9.1 percent to 2.4 million tonnes in the 2025-26 marketing year, Rahman said.

Garment exports to non-traditional markets stall amid global slowdown

The Financial Express
10 OCT 2025

MONIRA MUNNI

Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) exports to non-traditional markets recorded sluggish growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, reflecting persistent global demand weakness and economic uncertainty across key economies.

RMG EXPORT SNAPSHOT IN Q1
(In US Dollar)

Exports to non-traditional markets increased by **0.77% to 1.65b**

Total exports **9.97b**

4.79% (YoY)

BY PRODUCT TYPE

Woven 2.99%↑

Knitwear 1.45%↓

TRADITIONAL MARKETS

United State	8.60%↑
European Union	3.14%↑
United Kingdom	6.74%↑
Canada	13.63%↑

TOP-PERFORMING MARKETS

China	59.52%
Saudi Arabia	34.38%
Chile	14.37%
Japan	10.56%
Brazil	9.66%
South Africa	9.72%

MARKETS WITH DECLINE

Turkey	31.30%
Mexico	22.16%
Korea	13.48%
Australia	8.13%

Shipments to non-traditional destinations edge up less than 1.0% in Q1, FY26 amid weak demand and economic uncertainty

Official data show that exports to new destinations - including Japan, Australia, India, Korea, China, Mexico, and Turkey - rose by only 0.77 per cent year-on-year to US$1.65 billion during July-September quarter (Q1) of FY2025-26.

The figure stood at US$1.64 billion in the same period a year earlier, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data show.

Industry insiders attributed the marginal rise to weak consumer demand in advanced and emerging markets alike, driven by high living costs, sluggish global growth, and ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Of the total earnings, woven garments outperformed knitwear in Q1. Woven garment exports increased by 2.99 per cent to US$847.37 million, while knitwear shipments fell by 1.45 per cent to US$808.91 million.

China emerged as the fastest-growing destination, with RMG exports soaring by 59.52 per cent to US$71.14 million. The surge was driven by an 85.88 per cent jump in woven garment exports, although knitwear shipments dipped by 3.83 per cent.

Fazlul Hoque, former president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said the muted performance reflected a broader slowdown in the global apparel market.

"The global economy remains sluggish, and so are the non-traditional markets," he told The Financial Express.

"Uncertainty and disruptions, including the impact of new US tariff regimes, have dampened demand."

Hoque, also managing director of Plummy Fashions, shared his recent experience in Australia, saying that rising living costs have forced consumers to prioritise essential needs over clothing purchases.

Mohiuddin Rubel, additional managing director of Denim Expert Ltd, said the first quarter is typically a "lean period" for apparel shipments. He added that exports to major traditional markets such as the US, EU and Canada also slowed during the same period.

Despite the overall weakness, several non-traditional destinations showed notable growth.

Exports to Saudi Arabia, Chile, Brazil, Japan, and South Africa rose by 34.38 per cent, 14.37 per cent, 9.66 per cent, 10.56 per cent, and 9.72 per cent respectively, EPB data show.

Japan retained its position as the largest non-traditional destination, importing apparel worth US$334.91 million during the quarter.

Bangladesh earned US$216.59 million from India (up 1.27 per cent), US$48.87 million from Saudi Arabia, US$44.46 million from Brazil, and US$34.63 million from South Africa.

In contrast, exports to Australia, Turkey, Korea, and Mexico declined by 8.13 per cent, 31.30 per cent, 13.48 per cent, and 22.16 per cent respectively.

Meanwhile, exports to the United States, Bangladesh's single largest apparel market, increased by 8.60 per cent to US$2.01 billion during the quarter under review, up from US$1.85 billion in the same period a year ago.

Shipments to the European Union rose by 3.14 per cent to US$4.74 billion, while exports to the United Kingdom grew by 6.74 per cent to US$1.21 billion.

Canada imported apparel worth US$336.70 million, reflecting a 13.63 per cent rise.

Overall, Bangladesh's total RMG exports grew by 4.79 per cent year-on-year to US$9.97 billion in the first quarter of FY2025-26, compared with US$9.51 billion during the same period of the previous fiscal year.

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