বণিক বার্তা
1 8 MAY 2026

ইউএসডিএর পূর্বাভাস

বিশ্ববাজারে কমবে তুলার সরবরাহ চাহিদা ছয় বছরে সর্বোচ্চে পৌঁছবে

বণিক বার্তা ডেস্ক ■

উৎপাদন কমায় ও ব্যবহার বাড়ায় বিশ্ববাজারে তুলার সরবরাহ কমতে শুরু করেছে। ২০২৬-২৭ বিপণন বর্ষে তুলার বৈশ্বিক চাহিদা বেড়ে ছয় বছরের মধ্যে সর্বোচ্চে পৌঁছতে পারে। যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কৃষি বিভাগের (ইউএসডিএ) সাম্প্রতিক ওয়ার্ল্ড এগ্রিকালচারাল সাপ্লাই অ্যান্ড ডিমান্ড এস্টিমেটস প্রতিবেদনে এ তথ্য জানানো হয়েছে। বিশ্ববাজারে এ পরিবর্তনের ফলে বাংলাদেশসহ তৈরি পোশাক উৎপাদনকারী দেশগুলোতে তুলা সংগ্রহ ও দামের ক্ষেত্রে নতুন চাপ তৈরি হতে পারে বলে মনে করছেন সংশ্লিষ্টরা। খবর ফাইবার টু ফ্যাব্রিকস।

ইউএসডিএর পূর্বাভাস অনুযায়ী, ২০২৬-২৭ মৌসুমে বিশ্বব্যাপী তুলা উৎপাদন হতে পারে ১১ কোটি ৬০ লাখ বেল (প্রতি বেলে ৪৮০ পাউন্ড বা ২২০ কেজি)। আগের মৌসুমের তুলনায় এটি প্রায় ৫ শতাংশ কম। একই সময়ে তুলার বৈশ্বিক ব্যবহার বা চাহিদা বেড়ে ১২ কোটি ১৭ লাখ বেলে পৌঁছতে পারে। প্রধান উৎপাদন ও রফতানিকারক দেশ যুক্তরাষ্ট্র, ব্রাজিল, চীন, পাকিস্তান ও অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় খরা ও অন্য কারণে উৎপাদন কম হওয়ায় এ সংকট তৈরি হয়েছে। ভারত ও আর্জেন্টিনায় উৎপাদন কিছুটা বাড়লেও তা বৈশ্বিক ঘাটতি পূরণে যথেষ্ট নয়। ফলে বিশ্ববাজারে তুলার সমাপনী মজুদ ৭ কোটি ১৮ লাখ বেলে নেমে আসতে পারে, যা বাজারের অস্থিরতা আরো বাড়িয়ে দেবে।

বাজার বিশ্লেষকরা বলছেন, বিশ্ববাজারে জ্বালানি তেলের দাম বাড়ায় পলিয়েস্টার ও নাইলনের মতো কৃত্রিম বা সিন্থেটিক সুতা তৈরির খরচ অনেক বেড়ে গেছে। এর ফলে সুতা ও পোশাক নির্মাতাদের কাছে কৃত্রিম আঁশের চেয়ে প্রাকৃতিক তুলার গ্রহণযোগ্যতা বেড়েছে। ফলে বাংলাদেশ, ভিয়েতনাম, ইন্দোনেশিয়া ও তুরস্কের মতো বড় পোশাক রফতানিকারক দেশগুলোয় তুলার চাহিদা অনেকাংশে বাড়বে।

২০২৬-২৭ মৌসুমে বিশ্বব্যাপী তুলা উৎপাদন হতে পারে ১১ কোটি ৬০ লাখ বেল (প্রতি বেলে ৪৮০ পাউন্ড বা ২২০ কেজি)। আগের মৌসুমের তুলনায় এটি প্রায় ৫ শতাংশ কম। একই সময়ে তুলার বৈশ্বিক ব্যবহার বা চাহিদা বেড়ে ১২ কোটি ১৭ লাখ বেলে পৌঁছতে পারে

আন্তর্জাতিক বাজারে সরবরাহের এ সংকটের মধ্যেও বাংলাদেশ বিশ্বের অন্যতম তুলা আমদানিকারক দেশ হিসেবে নিজের অবস্থান ধরে রাখবে। ইউএসডিএর প্রতিবেদন অনুযায়ী, চলতি ২০২৫-২৬ বিপণন বর্ষে বাংলাদেশ ৮১-৮৫ লাখ বেল তুলা আমদানি করতে পারে। দেশের তৈরি পোশাক খাতের ধারাবাহিক প্রবৃদ্ধি এবং পোশাক রফতানি বৃদ্ধির কারণে স্থানীয় স্পিনিং মিলগুলোতে সুতা উৎপাদন বেড়েছে। এ ক্রমবর্ধমান চাহিদাই তুলা আমদানির ওপর নির্ভরতা আরো বাড়িয়েছে।

তবে বিশ্ববাজারে তুলা সরবরাহ কমে যাওয়ার প্রভাব স্থানীয় মিল ও স্পিনারদের ওপর পড়তে পারে। সরবরাহ সংকট ও প্রতিকূল আবহাওয়ার কারণে ২০২৬ সালের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে তুলার দাম অনেক ওঠানামা করতে পারে। যেমন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে ২০২৬-২৭ মৌসুমে উৎপাদন কমে ১ কোটি ৩৩ লাখ বেলে নামতে পারে এবং দেশটির সমাপনী মজুদ কমবে। ফলে মার্কিন বাজারে তুলার গড় দাম গত মৌসুমের তুলনায় পাউন্ডপ্রতি ৬১ থেকে বেড়ে ৭৩ সেন্টে দাঁড়াতে পারে।

বর্তমানে বিশ্ববাজারে প্রায় ১ কোটি ৫০ লাখ বেল তুলা রফতানি করে শীর্ষস্থান ধরে রেখেছে ব্রাজিল। দ্বিতীয় অবস্থানে থাকা যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের রফতানির লক্ষ্যমাত্রা ১ কোটি ২৩ লাখ বেল। অন্যদিকে চীন ধীরে ধীরে তুলা আমদানি কমিয়ে কৃত্রিম আঁশ ব্যবহারের দিকে ঝুঁকছে। ফলে বিশ্ববাজারে তুলা সরবরাহ এখন বাংলাদেশ ও ভিয়েতনামের মতো উদীয়মান দেশগুলোর দিকে চলে আসছে।

ইন্টারন্যাশনাল কটন অ্যাডভাইজরি কমিটির মতে, সরবরাহ কমলেও বস্ত্র উৎপাদনকারী দেশগুলোর বাড়তি তৎপরতার কারণে তুলার বৈশ্বিক বাণিজ্য আরো বাড়বে। বাংলাদেশের জন্য এটি যেমন নতুন ক্রয়াদেশ পাওয়ার সুযোগ তৈরি করেছে, তেমনি কাঁচামালের বাড়তি দামের কারণে উৎপাদন খরচ বাড়ার ঝুঁকিও তৈরি করছে।

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DHAKA AIRPORT

Cargo exports hit as 3 of 4 scanners out of order

RASHIDUL HASAN *and* REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Exports through Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) have been severely disrupted as three of the four Explosive Detection System (EDS) scanners remain non-functional.

With only one scanner operational, cargo clearance has slowed substantially, delaying shipments.

The problem began in April when all four scanners stopped functioning, said Kabir Ahmed, former president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA). One was repaired later.

"It is very difficult to complete the vital scanning of export cargo with only one EDS as three are damaged," he said.

The pressure is mounting as the ongoing Iran war has increased reliance on air shipments, particularly garment exports, to meet strict deadlines set by international retailers and brands.

Currently, 400-600 tonnes of cargo are brought daily to HSIA for airlifting, mainly to the EU and US. In peak seasons, the volume rises to about 1,200 tonnes a day, while in lean periods it drops to 200-250 tonnes.

Kabir urged the government to address the issue urgently as it directly affects national exports.

SM Ragib Samad, executive director of HSIA, said that two of the scanners have long been beyond repair, while another developed technical faults last month.

"We are trying to repair this EDS scanner machine, and it will likely be in service by May 25," he added.

EDS screening is mandatory for cargo exports to European Union countries.

Cargo bound for non-European destinations, including the Middle East and Africa, is screened through separate "Non-RA3" scanners. Of the six such machines, three are operational, one is out of service, and two have been reported "temporarily inactive". Sector insiders said the inactive scanners are functional and can be reactivated if demand rises.

To manage the crisis, airport authorities are increasingly relying on Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) squads as an emergency alternative.

Exporters, however, have expressed concern over the prolonged breakdown and sought urgent repairs.

Nisher Khan, chairman of the airport cell of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said, "The airport authorities have been assuring that one EDS may be repaired soon."

He added that garment exporters are rushing to ship goods ahead of Eid to ensure timely payments and meet strict lead times, as factory production will pause during the holiday.

"There is heavy pressure of waiting goods at HSIA, and one scanner is not enough to complete the vital screening," Nisher said.

Empowering CMSMEs can bolster our economic foundation

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MD RAKIBUL HASAN

The World Bank's Bangladesh Development Update, released last month, rings out a warning bell for us. The country has been weathering severe difficulties because of an economic slowdown and rise in poverty for three consecutive years, further worsened by external shocks. As per the report, our GDP growth is expected to decline to 3.9 percent by the end of FY2026. The inflation rate has remained above eight percent throughout the fiscal year. In December 2025, the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio reached 30.6 percent. The national poverty rate grew to 21.4 percent in 2025 from 18.7 percent in 2022. Large exporters continue to face disruption in the global supply chain, currency instability, and externalities stemming from conflicts in the Middle East that have spiked the costs of energy, contributed to inflation, and therefore constrained poverty alleviation efforts.

In this situation, the cottage, micro, small, and medium enterprises (CMSME) sector is a major buffer for the country's economy. But within the current set-up, founding a small business requires various permits and certifications. For CMSMEs, complications in administrative procedures, VAT issues, and high regulatory costs are significant obstacles. It's high time Bangladesh transitioned from its current subsidy-centric system to deregulation and reforms focused on fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector.

The county has already made some inroads in this regard. The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), recently launched BanglaBiz Phase 2, a digital platform streamlining the process of establishing a business in the country. The business starter package under BanglaBiz Phase 2 offers services to acquire five major permits: name clearance, temporary bank account opening, company incorporation, e-TIN, and trade licence. This allows entrepreneurs to establish a business in three days.

A similar system was launched by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in January 2025, called the Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) system. The NBR made the BSW system mandatory for the submission of certificates, licences, and permits for imports and exports starting on July 1, 2025, by bringing 19 government agencies under it. It is necessary to integrate the system in the backend and apply risk based methods if there are to be major reductions in clearance times. For CMSMEs, instituting a "compliance holiday" of two to three years may encourage innovative enterprises.

The SME Houses of Azerbaijan is a prime example of such an integrated system. The SME Houses offer centralised services including business registration, licensing, financial consulting, and access to export markets. They have been recognised as efficient in simplifying business processes. Bangladesh can adapt this proven model and implement it in local industrial clusters or district levels, building on the foundations laid by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

Modernising the country's industrial clusters and strengthening local supply chains can meaningfully reduce import dependency and enhance competitiveness. A circular economy, whereby waste generated from big factories is used as raw materials in small factories, should be encouraged as it helps to lower production costs, minimise imports, and save foreign currency. Traditional collateral-based lending must give way to digital credit scoring and cash-flow-based approaches. In December 2025, Bangladesh Bank reduced the mandatory provisioning requirement for short-term agricultural and CMSME loans to 0.50 percent, allowing scheduled banks to maintain this lower provision until December 31, 2026. The relaxation was introduced to support banks in financing cottage, micro, and small enterprises which are considered vital for employment generation and inclusive growth. The experiences of South Korea and Singapore show how shifting to cash-flow- and alternative-data-based approaches can transform small industry financing. Bangladesh's expanding digital payment and credit bureau infrastructure provide a solid base to build upon.

Due to unstable energy supply, decentralised renewable energy sources have become more popular. The government approved new net metering guidelines for 2025, allowing 100 percent of the sanctioned load for net-metered rooftop solar—up from 70 percent previously—and extending net metering eligibility to single-phase consumers for the first time. In December, the Power Division issued a revised circular making rooftop solar installation mandatory for buildings with at least 1,000 square feet of usable roof space seeking new electricity connections. Clusters that utilise independent renewable sources tend to have more reliable operations and reduced costs.

It is clear that the CMSME sector can no longer be viewed through the lens of aid or welfare. It is a highly potential and productive ecosystem, capable of driving inclusive growth, job creation, and economic diversification beyond the RMG products. The recent developments—the Bangladesh Bank's relaxed provisioning rules, rollout of BanglaBiz and BSW platforms, and the new rooftop solar policy—show that elements of smart deregulation are already underway. Nevertheless, rapid execution, complete digitalisation, and stabilisation of the banking system can take this progress all the way.

The World Bank's 2026 assessment highlights the need for immediate policy and institutional reforms to create employment and continue inclusive growth in the country. We need to restore macroeconomic stability, boost revenues, strengthen the financial sector, and improve the business environment. Through the use of single window systems, integrated hubs, digital finance, decentralised energy sources, and circularity, the country will be able to move from fragility to resilience. The new government's early signals on improving the business environment are encouraging. The coming months will determine whether the CMSME sector can live up to its potential and become the driving force behind a stronger economy.

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Plastic waste, reverse logistics, and the textile opportunity

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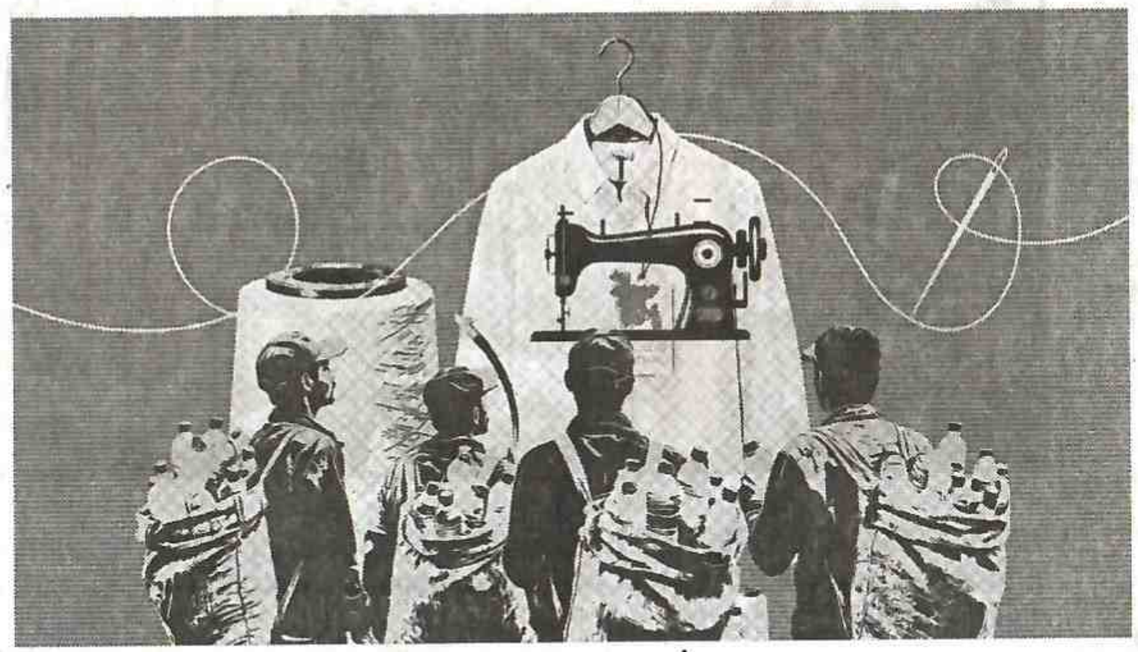

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

Bangladesh's garment industry stands at a critical turning point. For more than three decades, the country built its economic success on low-cost manufacturing, efficient exports, and strong integration into global apparel supply chains. Today, Bangladesh is the world's second-largest garment exporter, with the RMG sector serving as the backbone of exports, industrial employment, and foreign exchange earnings. But the global textile economy is changing rapidly. International buyers are no longer focused only on lower costs and production speed. Increasingly, they are seeking recycled raw materials, supply-chain transparency, lower carbon footprints, and circular production systems.

For Bangladesh, this shift creates both a challenge and an extraordinary opportunity. Ironically, part of that opportunity may already be floating in our rivers, clogging urban drainage systems, and scattered across city streets in the form of discarded plastic bottles.

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The issue is clearly not an absence of waste. Nor is it a lack of entrepreneurial capability. The real problem is that Bangladesh has built world-class forward logistics but weak reverse logistics. This means that our supply chains work exceptionally well in one direction. Raw materials enter

regulators are also introducing stricter sustainability requirements regarding recycled contents, traceability, and waste reduction. Future export competitiveness will increasingly depend not only on labour cost, but also on environmental performance and material circularity.

Bangladesh can either continue treating plastic bottles and textile scraps as low-value waste streams, or it can recognise them as the industrial raw materials of the future.

Importantly, global investors are already beginning to recognise the latent value embedded in Bangladesh's waste streams. One notable example is Recover, a Spanish textile recycling company that has expanded operations

when economic incentives exist. What remains absent is policy coordination and industrial integration.

Recycling and fibre-production machinery still face relatively high import duties compared to incentives available for conventional export manufacturing equipment. Waste segregation at the source also remains weak. Reverse logistics systems lack traceability and formal organisation. Dedicated sorting hubs and recycling infrastructure remain limited despite growing global demand for recycled textile inputs. This is where policymakers need to think differently.

Plastic waste should no longer be viewed merely as an environmental burden. It should be treated as strategic industrial feedstock for Bangladesh's next-generation textile economy. Reducing duties on recycling machinery, supporting domestic recycled polyester production, encouraging municipal segregation systems, and investing in organised recycling zones could help retain significant economic value within the country. At the same time, informal waste workers must be integrated into future systems rather than displaced by them. Thousands of livelihoods already depend on bottle and waste collection. Formalisation should improve safety, income stability, and operational efficiency while preserving the economic role these workers already play.

The benefits of building a circular textile ecosystem extend far beyond environmental improvement. Domestic recycling can reduce dependence on

Bangladesh is the world's second-largest garment exporter, with the RMG sector serving as the backbone of exports, industrial employment, and foreign exchange earnings. But the global textile economy is changing rapidly. International buyers are no longer focused only on lower costs and production speed. Increasingly, they are seeking recycled raw materials, supply-chain transparency, lower carbon footprints, and circular production systems.

For Bangladesh, this shift creates both a challenge and an extraordinary opportunity. Ironically, part of that opportunity may already be floating in our rivers, clogging urban drainage systems, and scattered across city streets in the form of discarded plastic bottles.

Every day, thousands of waste collectors across the country recover used Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) mineral water and beverage bottles from homes, roadsides, canals and landfills. This informal recovery network operates quietly but remarkably efficiently. Local businesses clean and process these bottles into plastic flakes, much of which is exported abroad, primarily to countries with advanced recycling industries. Those flakes are then converted into polyester fibre and re-enter global textile supply chains. Sometimes, they even return to Bangladesh as recycled textile inputs at significantly higher prices.

In simple terms, Bangladesh exports waste and imports value-added fibre derived from the same material. From an economic perspective, this is difficult to justify. At the same time, Bangladesh spends billions of dollars annually importing cotton, polyester fibre, and textile raw materials. Yet, enormous quantities of recyclable material generated within the country

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

remain underutilised.

The issue is clearly not an absence of waste. Nor is it a lack of entrepreneurial capability. The real problem is that Bangladesh has built world-class forward logistics but weak reverse logistics. This means that our supply chains work exceptionally well in one direction. Raw materials enter factories, garments move through ports, and exports reach global markets with remarkable efficiency. But modern industrial systems do not end with export. Materials must also move backward—to be sorted, recovered, reprocessed, and reintegrated into production. This backward movement is reverse logistics and, in Bangladesh's textile sector, it remains fragmented, informal, and undervalued. Addressing this challenge is becoming increasingly urgent because the textile industry itself is changing.

Globally, human-made fibres now dominate textile consumption, while cotton's share continues to decline due to rising water stress, climate risks and volatile commodity prices. Recycled polyester, much of which is derived from PET bottles, has become central to global sustainability transition.

Major brands including H&M, Zara, Adidas, and Nike are rapidly increasing the use of recycled materials based on climate commitments and circular economy targets. European scraps as low-value waste streams, or it can recognise them as the industrial raw materials of the future.

Importantly, global investors are already beginning to recognise the latent value embedded in Bangladesh's waste streams. One notable example is Recover, a Spanish textile recycling company that has expanded operations in Bangladesh in partnership with local industry players. Recover specialises in converting textile waste into recycled fibre suitable for spinning and garment manufacturing. The significance of such investment is that it signals how international organisations already see Bangladesh as a future hub for circular textile production.

The logic is straightforward. Bangladesh possesses one of the world's largest concentrations of textile manufacturing and recyclable textile waste. Instead of exporting this material abroad for processing, international firms increasingly see economic value in building recycling capacity closer to the source of waste generation. This is precisely where Bangladesh's opportunity lies.

The country already has industrial clusters, garment expertise, logistics networks, entrepreneurial capability, and an active informal recycling economy. Waste collectors and traders have already demonstrated that large-scale material recovery is possible

industrial feedstock for Bangladesh's next-generation textile economy. Reducing duties on recycling machinery, supporting domestic recycled polyester production, encouraging municipal segregation systems, and investing in organised recycling zones could help retain significant economic value within the country. At the same time, informal waste workers must be integrated into future systems rather than displaced by them. Thousands of livelihoods already depend on bottle and waste collection. Formalisation should improve safety, income stability, and operational efficiency while preserving the economic role these workers already play.

The benefits of building a circular textile ecosystem extend far beyond environmental improvement. Domestic recycling can reduce dependence on imported raw materials, ease pressure on foreign exchange reserves, create new industrial jobs, and strengthen Bangladesh's long-term position in global supply chains. Reverse logistics could itself become a major growth sector involving transportation, sorting, warehousing, recycling, and material traceability services.

Most importantly, this transition aligns environmental necessity with economic opportunity. In the past, Bangladesh transformed itself into a global garment powerhouse by investing in ports, industrial zones, logistics systems, and export infrastructure. The next phase of competitiveness may depend on whether the country can build the reverse systems required for a circular economy.

The world is gradually moving towards textile systems where waste becomes raw material. The countries that learn to recover value from waste will shape the future of global textile trade. Bangladesh still has time to become one of them.

New Zealand assures post-LDC market access for Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

New Zealand will continue duty-free and preferential market access for Bangladeshi goods after the country graduates from the least developed country (LDC) category, David Pine, New Zealand's non-resident high commissioner in Dhaka, said yesterday.

New Zealand has been giving special importance to ensuring market access for Bangladeshi goods after the graduation, he said at a meeting with Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir at the secretariat in Dhaka, according to a ministry press statement.

He said that given the current global scenario, export market diversification is important, but so is diversifying import sources, adding that both countries stand to benefit from expanded bilateral trade.

New Zealand goods, he added, are known for reliability, high standards, food safety, and being free of genetically modified organisms, and the country is interested in establishing a stable, long-term trade structure.

Bangladesh exported $99.73 million worth of goods to New Zealand in fiscal year 2024-25, around 90 percent of which were garment items, according to the Export Promotion Bureau. In the July-April period of the current fiscal year, the figure stood at $78.93 million.

Both sides also expressed interest in exploring a trade deal such as a free trade agreement, to boost investment and bilateral trade, states the ministry statement.

Meanwhile, minister Muktadir said employment generation, and rapid growth of investment are important for Bangladesh's sustainable LDC graduation.

He also noted that it is important to maintain the competitiveness of garment exports and ensure preferential market access for the country's major apparel items.

The minister also asked the high commissioner to encourage entrepreneurs from his country to choose Bangladesh as an investment destination, as the Bangladesh government has taken many measures to ease doing business.

Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate from the LDC category on November 24 this year, though it has

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At the same time, Bangladesh has also been lobbying some of its trading partners to sign

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Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate from the LDC category on November 24 this year, though it has applied to the UN for a three-year deferment to 2029.

Some countries such as the UK, Canada, and Australia have already assured that they will continue preferential market access for Bangladeshi goods even after LDC graduation.

At the same time, Bangladesh has also been lobbying some of its trading partners to sign trade deals to retain duty-free market access in the post-LDC period.

Bangladesh risks losing $17.5 billion worth of exports annually after LDC graduation, as nearly 75 percent of its exports are LDC-induced.

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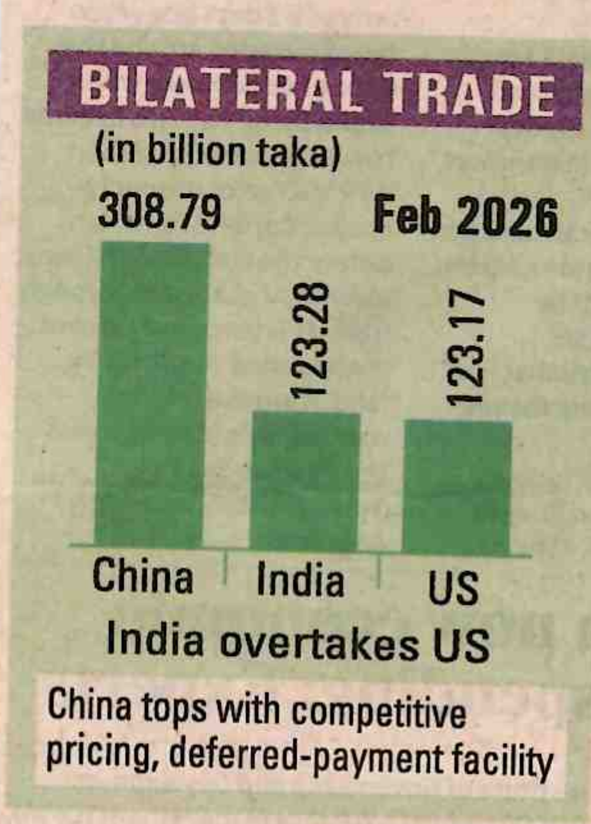
18 MAY 2026

CHANGING FOREIGN TRADE DYNAMICS

India outbids US to become 2nd-biggest BD trading partner



JASIM UDDIN HAROON

Neighbouring India outbids the United States of America to marginally emerge as Bangladesh's second-largest trading partner by February count, in a changing foreign trade dynamics.

The United States had secured the position in January, according to the latest data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

India accounted for 8.47 per cent or Tk 123.28 billion of Bangladesh's total external trade -- both export and import.

The US closely followed with an 8.46-percent share, or Tk 123.17 billion, the data show.

China, however, retains its longstanding position as Bangladesh's largest trading partner, accounting for 21.21 per cent, equivalent to Tk 308.79 billion, of the country's total trade in February.

Bangladesh mainly imports industrial raw materials, capital machinery and a wide range of finished products from China to support its manufacturing sector and growing domestic consumer market.

Chinese products continue to dominate sectors such as electronics, machinery, textile raw materials, clothing raw materials and chemicals as the imports are associated with competitive prices along with deferred - payment facility.

Imports from India largely consist of essential commodities, including rice, onions, sugar and other food items, alongside industrial raw materials required for local industries.

Bangladesh also imports cotton, yarn and various intermediate goods from the neighbouring country due to geographical proximity and relatively lower freight costs.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh primarily imports LPG, grains and agricultural produce from the United States, the world's largest economy.

The US also remains one of the key destinations for Bangladesh's garment exports, particularly readymade garments.

Among Bangladesh's other major trading partners, Indonesia ranked fourth, driven mainly by imports of industrial raw materials, edible oils and coal.

Brazil stood as the fifth-largest trading partner during the month, accounting for nearly 4.0 per cent of Bangladesh's total trade.

Bangladesh mainly imports soybean, edible oils, sugar and other agricultural commodities from the South American country.

People familiar with the developments told the FE that the country's trade pattern reflects its heavy dependence on imported raw materials and food commodities to support industrial production and meet domestic consumer demand.

"China, India and the US are likely to remain dominant trading partners in the near term due to strong economic linkages and rising bilateral trade volumes," says one trade official.

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GETTING WORK ORDERS FROM GLOBAL BRANDS

BGBA urges removing high duty on garment samples

MONIRA MUNNI

The imposition of higher duty on garment samples is making it difficult for buying houses to secure work orders from global apparel brands. It also adds to the financial burden on them and erodes buyer confidence.

To help sustain further growth, encourage new entrepreneurs to enter the trade, and assist garment makers in getting global work orders, the trade body for buying houses has urged the government to withdraw the import duty.

Garment samples are physical or digital prototypes of clothing used during apparel production to validate fit, design, and quality.

They bridge the gap between initial design sketches and final bulk manufacturing, ensuring the end product meets the requirements.

Bangladesh Garment Buying House Association (BGBA) also proposed issuing passbooks to its members -- as given to members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) - to bring duty-free samples.

BGBA President Abdul Hamid in a recent pre-budget proposal to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) said the association had been playing an important role in creating foreign markets for locally made ready-made garments (RMG) and other products, as well as contributing to the collection of about 25 per cent or around $15 billion worth of work orders.

By attracting buyers, BGBA members collect purchase orders for garment products, which are produced at factories in the country and then exported, he explained.

A buying house usually works with five to 10 buyers and imports at least 100 to 300 RMG samples from buyers every month based on their needs and season.

But a wide range of duties on samples are creating obstacles to obtaining purchase orders from foreign buyers, which is very costly, especially for new entrepreneurs, he explained, requesting the government to withdraw the duty, which for many samples goes up to 100 per cent.

Echoing the BGBA leader, its Vice President AKM Saifur Rahman told The Financial Express that as a result of high duty and the release cost of samples, new entrepreneurs are not coming into the trade. Rather, their number is gradually decreasing despite huge opportunities in the buying business in Bangladesh, he said.

Mr Rahman, also the managing director of Wikitex BD, said his company had to pay about Tk 0.25 million per month only for samples and all houses could not afford that.

Responding to a question, he said buying houses usually collect samples using their own addresses as part of their business strategy.

He said the BGBA has some 2,000 registered members and they can be given passbooks as like BGMEA members to import garment samples without any duty for obtaining purchase orders.

Mr Rahman also proposed the government put a limit either on the value or the volume, explaining that a buying house could be allowed to import 350-400 garment samples per year without customs duty.

The government through the textile and jute ministry could strictly monitor potential misuse, he added.

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HEAVY DUTIES STALL RMG GROWTH

Problem
- High import duties (up to 100%) on garment samples

Impacts
- Obstacles to securing global work orders
- New entrepreneurs feel discouraged

BGBA proposals
- Issue passbooks to bring duty-free samples
- Set limit for duty-free imports

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18 MAY 2026

New Zealand assures BD of extending DFQF facility after LDC graduation

FE REPORT

New Zealand has assured Bangladesh of extending duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) facility and preferential market access even after its graduation from LDC.

The country has also expressed its strong interests in further expanding bilateral trade and investment between the two nations.

Non-resident high Commissioner of New Zealand to Bangladesh David Pine made the assurance and willingness while meeting with the Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir at the latter's secretariat office on Sunday.

During the meeting, both the sides discussed the effective utilisation of existing regional frameworks and signing of the proposed comprehensive bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), aiming to further strengthen the mutual cooperation.

Mr. Muktadir emphasised that rapidly increasing investment and creating employment opportunities are essential to ensure Bangladesh's successful graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) status.

He further noted that Bangladesh has taken significant initiatives to ease the process of doing business, adding that New Zealand investors could benefit greatly by investing in Bangladesh's high-potential sectors.

The Minister stressed that regardless of the LDC graduation timeline, Bangladesh requires substantial annual investments to help sustain its economic growth.

High Commissioner David said in the current global context, diversification is equally vital for both import and export sources.

Such a strategy would allow both the nations to reap greater mutual benefits, he observed.

He further said New Zealand has attached special importance to ensuring that Bangladesh's existing duty-free and preferential market access remains undisrupted even after its graduation from the LDC category.

Additional Secretary of commerce ministry, Ayesha Akther, was also present during the meeting.

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