সমকাল
07 JUL 2026

শুল্ক অস্থিরতার মাঝেও যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রপ্তানি বেড়েছে ৪ শতাংশ

আবু হেনা মুহিব

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে পণ্য প্রবেশে প্রেসিডেন্ট ডোনাল্ড ট্রাম্পের পাল্টা শুল্কের জেরে গত বছরের এপ্রিল থেকে টালমাটাল হয়ে ওঠে রপ্তানি বাণিজ্য। চার দফায় বাংলাদেশের পণ্যের ওপর শুল্ক হারে পরিবর্তন আনা হয়। এতে প্রধান বাজারে রপ্তানি ধরে রাখা নিয়ে অনিশ্চয়তা তৈরি হয়। এর মধ্যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্য চুক্তি নিয়ে ব্যাপক সমালোচনা হয় বিভিন্ন পক্ষ থেকে। এসব কিছু ছাপিয়ে শেষ পর্যন্ত গত অর্থবছরে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে ৯ বিলিয়ন বা ৯০০ কোটি ডলারের বেশি রপ্তানি করেছে বাংলাদেশ।

দেশের সার্বিক রপ্তানি আগের অর্থবছরের চেয়ে ১ শতাংশ কম হয়েছে। তবে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে বেড়েছে ৪ শতাংশেরও বেশি। একক মাস হিসেবে গত জুন মাসে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রপ্তানি বেশি হয়েছে ৪১ শতাংশ, যা বাংলাদেশের প্রধান রপ্তানি বাজারগুলোর মধ্যে সবচেয়ে বেশি।

রপ্তানিকারকরা জানিয়েছেন, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে চীন ও ভারতের ওপর পাল্টা শুল্ক বাংলাদেশের তুলনায় অনেক বেশি। এত বেশি শুল্ক দিয়ে ওই সব দেশ যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রপ্তানিতে ভালো করতে পারছিল না। অবশ্য প্রেসিডেন্ট ডোনাল্ড ট্রাম্প আরোপিত বিশ্বব্যাপী পাল্টা শুল্ক গত ২০ ফেব্রুয়ারি অবৈধ ঘোষণা করেন দেশটির সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। এর পর থেকে বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে প্রতিযোগী দেশগুলোর শুল্কের ব্যবধান কমে আসে। তবে কম শুল্কের সুবিধায় ব্র্যান্ড-ক্রেতাদের দেওয়া রপ্তানি আদেশের কাজ অব্যাহত থাকে।

রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরোর উপাত্ত বলছে, ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রপ্তানির মোট পরিমাণ দাঁড়িয়েছে ৯০৫ কোটি ডলার। ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে দেশটিতে রপ্তানির পরিমাণ ছিল ৮৬৯ কোটি টাকা। এক বছরের ব্যবধানে রপ্তানি বেড়েছে ৩৬ কোটি ডলার। তৈরি পোশাক এবং পোশাক-বহির্ভূত প্রায় সব পণ্যের রপ্তানি সে দেশে বেড়েছে। ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে রপ্তানির পরিমাণ ছিল ৭৬০ কোটি ডলার। ২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরে রপ্তানির পরিমাণ ছিল ৮৫২ কোটি ডলার। এর আগে ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরে ১ হাজার ৪২ কোটি ডলারের পণ্য রপ্তানির পরিসংখ্যান দেখানো হয়। অবশ্য বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক ও ইপিবির যৌথ তদন্তে দেখা যায়, ওই অর্থবছরসহ কয়েকটি অর্থবছরের রপ্তানি পরিসংখ্যানে ভুল ছিল।

নারায়ণগঞ্জভিত্তিক প্যাসিফিক সোয়েটার্সের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক মোহাম্মদ রাশেদ সমকালকে বলেন, গত বছরের ৯ জুলাই ৩৫ শতাংশ পাল্টা শুল্ক আরোপের সময় রপ্তানি আদেশের ৬০ হাজার পিস টি-শার্টের উৎপাদন কাজ স্থগিত রাখার অনুরোধ করে একটি বড় মার্কিন ব্র্যান্ড। এরপর গত বছরের ১ আগস্ট পরিবর্তিত ঘোষণায় পাল্টা শুল্ক ২০ শতাংশে নামানোর পর কাজ শুরু করতে বলে ব্র্যান্ডটি। এভাবে ক্রেতারা ফিরতে শুরু করেন।

ঢাকাভিত্তিক মার্কিন বায়িং হাউস লিয়াং ফ্যাশনের মোট রপ্তানি আদেশের ৯৯ শতাংশই যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের। প্রতিষ্ঠানটির একজন শীর্ষস্থানীয় কর্মকর্তা সমকালকে বলেন, শুল্ক হ্রাসের ঘোষণার দিনই মার্কিন একটি ক্রেতা প্রতিষ্ঠান ৭৬ হাজার ৬০০ পিস লং প্যান্ট ও শর্টসের রপ্তানি আদেশের কাজ আবার শুরু করতে বলে। এভাবে একের পর এক ক্রেতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের রপ্তানি আদেশ পেয়েছেন তারা।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের অধীন সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান অফিস অব টেক্সটাইল অ্যান্ড অ্যাপারেলের (অটেক্সা) সর্বশেষ পরিসংখ্যান বলছে, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে পোশাক রপ্তানিতে চীনকে টপকে বাংলাদেশ এখন দ্বিতীয় প্রধান রপ্তানিকারক দেশ। ভিয়েতনামের কাছে আগেই প্রথম স্থান হারিয়েছে চীন।

গত বছরের ২ এপ্রিল যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে প্রবেশে বাংলাদেশসহ ৬০ দেশের পণ্যে বাড়তি শুল্ক আরোপের ঘটনা দিয়ে অস্বস্তি শুরু হয়। তখন বাংলাদেশের পণ্যে ৩৭ শতাংশ পাল্টা শুল্ক আরোপের কথা বলা হয়, যা কার্যকর হওয়ার কথা ছিল ৯ এপ্রিল। তখন মোট শুল্ক ভার দাঁড়ায় ৫২ শতাংশে। ওই হার কার্যকরের দিন তিন মাসের জন্য দেশভিত্তিক বাড়তি শুল্ক আরোপের ঘোষণা স্থগিত করা হয়। তিন মাসের এ শুল্ক বিরতির সময়সীমা শেষ হওয়ার আগে গত ৯ জুলাই বাংলাদেশসহ ১৪ দেশের ওপর নতুন করে পাল্টা শুল্ক ২ শতাংশ কমিয়ে ৩৫ শতাংশ করা হয়। গত ১ আগস্ট থেকে এ হার কার্যকর হওয়ার কথা ছিল। এর মধ্যে সরকারের সঙ্গে দফায় দফায় আলোচনায় ১ আগস্ট বাংলাদেশের পণ্যে পাল্টা শুল্ক ২০ শতাংশে নামিয়ে আনা হয়, যা ওই দিন থেকেই কার্যকর হয়।

গত ১২ ফেব্রুয়ারি শুল্ক ইস্যুতে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে একটি চুক্তি করে সরকার। এতে শুল্ক কমে ১৯ শতাংশ হওয়ার কথা। তবে গত ২০ ফেব্রুয়ারি মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট ডোনাল্ড ট্রাম্প আরোপিত বৈশ্বিক শুল্কনীতিকে অবৈধ ঘোষণা করেন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। এর পরই বাংলাদেশসহ ১৫ দেশ এবং ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন উৎপাদন খাতে অতিরিক্ত সক্ষমতা তৈরি করে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাণিজ্যকে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত করছে কিনা–তা নিয়ে তদন্ত শুরুর ঘোষণা দেয় দেশটির বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধির দপ্তর ইউএসটিআর। সে কার্যক্রম এখনও চলছে।

আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্যে পণ্য শনাক্তকরণ কোড হারমোনাইজ কোড (এইচএস কোড) ব্যবহার করে বিভিন্ন দেশের কাস্টমস কর্তৃপক্ষ পণ্যের শ্রেণি বিভাগ, শুল্ক নির্ধারণ এবং পরিসংখ্যান সংগ্রহ করে থাকে। এইচএস কোড অনুযায়ী মোট ৯৮ ধরনের পণ্য বাংলাদেশ থেকে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে রপ্তানি হয়ে থাকে। এর মধ্যে তৈরি পোশাক প্রধান। পোশাকের হিস্যা ৮৮ শতাংশ। পোশাক-বহির্ভূত পণ্যের মধ্যে হোম টেক্সটাইল, ক্যাপ, প্লাস্টিক, ফার্নিচার, ওষুধ ও সিরামিক উল্লেখযোগ্য।

প্রথম আলো
07 JUL 2026

রপ্তানি সক্ষমতা বাড়াতে অগ্রাধিকার দিতে হবে

র‍্যাপিডের সেমিনারে অভিমত

এলডিসি থেকে উত্তরণ ও বাণিজ্য প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতা বিষয়ে জাতীয় প্রেসক্লাবে গতকাল এ সেমিনারের আয়োজন করা হয়।

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক, *ঢাকা*

স্বল্পোন্নত দেশের (এলডিসি) তালিকা থেকে উত্তরণের আগেই বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি সক্ষমতার ওপর ব্যাপক চাপ তৈরি হয়েছে। এলডিসি উত্তরণ হলে এই চাপ আরও বাড়তে পারে। এ পরিস্থিতি মোকাবিলায় দেশের রপ্তানির পরিমাণ ও রপ্তানি বৈচিত্র্য আরও দ্রুতগতিতে বাড়াতে হবে। অর্থাৎ রপ্তানি সক্ষমতা বাড়ানোকে সবচেয়ে জরুরি বিষয় হিসেবে বিবেচনায় নিতে হবে।

গতকাল সোমবার সকালে জাতীয় প্রেসক্লাবে বেসরকারি গবেষণাপ্রতিষ্ঠান রিসার্চ অ্যান্ড পলিসি ইন্টিগ্রেশন ফর ডেভেলপমেন্ট (র‍্যাপিড) আয়োজিত এক অনুষ্ঠানে এসব কথা বলেন বক্তারা। স্বল্পোন্নত দেশ (এলডিসি) থেকে উত্তরণ ও বাণিজ্য প্রতিযোগিতা সক্ষমতা বিষয়ে আয়োজিত এ সেমিনারে প্রধান অতিথি ছিলেন তথ্য ও সম্প্রচারমন্ত্রী জহির উদ্দিন স্বপন।

র‍্যাপিডের নির্বাহী পরিচালক ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক এম আবু ইউসুফের সঞ্চালনায় অনুষ্ঠানে অতিথি ছিলেন অর্থ ও বাণিজ্যবিষয়ক সাংবাদিকদের সংগঠন ইকোনমিক রিপোর্টার্স ফোরামের (ইআরএফ) সভাপতি দৌলত আকতার। মূল প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপন করেন র‍্যাপিডের চেয়ারম্যান এম এ রাজ্জাক।

সেমিনারে তথ্য ও সম্প্রচারমন্ত্রী জহির উদ্দিন স্বপন বলেন, 'রপ্তানিকে অগ্রাধিকার দিয়েই অর্থনীতিকে সাজাতে হবে। বর্তমানে রপ্তানি খাতে যে চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো আছে, সেগুলো এলডিসি উত্তরণের পর বাড়বে ছাড়া কমবে না। এলডিসি উত্তরণে তিন বছরের একটা বর্ধিত সময় পাওয়া যেতে পারে। কিন্তু এই সময়ে কোথায় কাজ করলে প্রকৃত অর্থে রপ্তানির সক্ষমতা বাড়বে, সেখানে গুরুত্ব দিতে হবে।'

র‍্যাপিডের চেয়ারম্যান এম এ রাজ্জাক বলেন, দেশের রপ্তানি বাণিজ্যে বড় ধরনের ভাটা দেখা দিয়েছে। গত চার বছরে দেশের রপ্তানি আয় বাড়েনি, বরং কমেছে। বৈশ্বিক বাণিজ্যের গতি ও প্রতিযোগী দেশগুলোর তুলনায়ও বাংলাদেশ অনেক পিছিয়ে।

এম এ রাজ্জাক বলেন, রপ্তানিতে বাংলাদেশের প্রধান বাজার—ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন (ইইউ) ও যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে খুব দ্রুত আইনকানুন পরিবর্তন হচ্ছে। বিশেষ করে ইউরোপের বাজারে প্রতিযোগী দেশগুলো মুক্ত বাণিজ্যচুক্তির (এফটিএ) সুবিধা নিচ্ছে। ফলে বাংলাদেশ মারাত্মক প্রতিযোগিতার মুখোমুখি হয়েছে।

এলডিসি উত্তরণের চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবিলায় বাংলাদেশ স্মুথ ট্রানজিশন স্ট্র্যাটেজি (এসটিএস) করেছে। কিন্তু এসটিএসে যেসব সংস্কার ও কাজের কথা বলা হয়েছে, সেগুলো বাস্তবায়নে গতি আনা যায়নি বলে মন্তব্য করেন এম এ রাজ্জাক। তিনি বলেন, জাতিসংঘের সিডিপি (কমিটি ফর ডেভেলপমেন্ট পলিসি) বাংলাদেশকে এলডিসি উত্তরণে অতিরিক্ত সময় দেওয়ার কথা বললেও কিছু শর্ত দিয়েছে। এসব শর্তের কার্যকর বাস্তবায়ন না হলে অতিরিক্ত সময় পাওয়া কঠিন হবে।

ইআরএফের সভাপতি দৌলত আকতার বলেন, দেশি-বিদেশি বিনিয়োগকারীরা বলেন, বাংলাদেশে করের হার কম মনে হলেও প্রকৃতপক্ষে তাঁদের অনেক বেশি কর দিতে হয়, যা কার্যকর করহার। হয়তো কাগজে-কলমে করের হার ২৫ বা ২৭ শতাংশ, কিন্তু সব মিলিয়ে কার্যকর করের হার গিয়ে দাঁড়ায় ৫৫ শতাংশে। এই জায়গায় কাজ করতে হবে।

The Daily Star
07 JUL 2026

Modern mango processing plant opens in Gabtoli

First-of-its-kind vapour heat treatment plant may help boost exports

SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh is set to strengthen its fresh fruit exports with the launch of a modern vapour heat treatment (VHT) plant in Gabtoli, Dhaka, marking a key step towards expanding access for locally grown mangoes to premium international markets.

The plant can treat and process up to 12 tonnes of mangoes a day using internationally accepted phytosanitary protocols, paving the way for higher exports.

The facility, established by the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), was inaugurated yesterday by Agriculture Minister Mohammed Amin Ur Rashid. It is the first treatment plant of its kind in Bangladesh, according to the agriculture ministry.

A VHT plant is a chemical-free quarantine facility that uses high-humidity hot air, typically between 42°C and 50°C, to eliminate pests such as fruit flies and larvae from fresh produce. It complies with stringent international phytosanitary standards, enabling the export of fruits such as mangoes and dragon fruits to premium markets.

The minister said discussions had already been held with Biman Bangladesh Airlines to reduce export costs, while talks would be initiated with other international airlines to expand cargo facilities.

Mohammed Amin Ur Rashid said purification, quarantine certification and packaging would all be carried out at the facility, providing exporters with a one-stop service.

There would be no need to visit any other location to complete the export process. Once processed, the mangoes would be loaded directly from the facility and transported to the airport, he said.

A temperature-controlled short-term storage facility will be established at the airport to preserve the quality and freshness of export-bound agricultural produce, including mangoes, until shipment, he added.

China has expressed interest in importing jackfruit from Bangladesh and has already received a trial shipment. Several countries, including Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, have also expressed interest in importing Bangladeshi mangoes, he added.

A senior BADC official said the plant would process around 3 tonnes of mangoes or other agricultural produce per batch. After treatment, the fruits would be washed for 30 minutes before being dried. The process would enhance their colour, preserve quality and extend shelf life by eight to 10 days.

JUST 0.1% OF BANGLADESH'S MANGOES ARE EXPORTED

Mango exports remained stagnant at 230-310 tonnes a year between FY2017 and FY2020 before surging more than tenfold to a peak of 3,100 tonnes in FY2023, according to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) data.

The growth has been uneven. Exports fell to 1,321 tonnes in FY2024 before recovering to 2,194 tonnes in FY2025. Even at their peak, exports accounted for barely 0.1 percent of Bangladesh's total mango production.

Exports have reached 1,408 tonnes so far this fiscal year.

Mohammad Monsur, general secretary of the Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetables and Allied Products Exporters' Association, told The Daily Star that establishing the VHT plant at Gabtoli was a positive step.

However, locating the facility closer to the airport would have made logistics far more efficient and significantly reduced transportation and handling costs, he said. Its current location has made many exporters hesitant as it is likely to increase export costs.

The government has also yet to arrange for phytosanitary certificates to be issued directly from the facility. Introducing the service without delay would make the plant a genuine one-stop export hub and further streamline the export process, he added.

Bangladesh ranks seventh among the world's mango-producing countries, producing between 24 lakh tonnes and 26.72 lakh tonnes annually for a domestic market worth Tk 13,000 crore to Tk 14,000 crore.

Exports initially catered mainly to Bangladeshi communities in the UK, Italy and the Middle East but have since expanded, particularly after China expressed interest in sourcing more Bangladeshi mangoes.

Mexico, India, Brazil, the Netherlands and Peru remain the world's leading mango exporters. Industry insiders believe Bangladesh could raise exports to 8,000 tonnes with government support.

25 lakh tonnes of mangoes, and barely 0.1% make it abroad

A trader talks with a customer beside crates piled high with green mangoes at Padaganj Bazar in Mithapukur, Rangpur's largest mango market, recently.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

The Daily Star

S DILIP ROY

Despite being one of the largest mango producers in the world, with an annual surplus of 5 to 7 lakh tonnes, Bangladesh is failing to turn it into an export strength.

The country produces 24-25 lakh tonnes of mangoes annually for a domestic market worth Tk 13,000-14,000 crore, with domestic demand standing at around 18-20 lakh tonnes. Yet, its annual export has reached barely 0.1 percent of total production even in its best year.

Mango exports stayed flat at around 230 to 310 tonnes a year from fiscal year 2016-17 through FY2020, before growing more than tenfold to a peak of 3,100 tonnes in FY2023, according to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) data.

The growth, however, has been volatile, with exports falling to 1,321 tonnes in FY2024 before recovering to 2,194 tonnes in FY2025. In the current season, exports stand at 1,408 tonnes so far. Harvesting typically runs from mid-May through August, with peak availability stretching into July.

Officials and experts note that with stable production, supply is not the problem for exports can multiply within a few years if the aforementioned issues can be addressed.

According to the centre, also known as the Mango Research Station, Bangladesh grows an estimated 800 to 850 mango varieties, more than 100 of them commercially, across Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Kushtia, Jashore, Satkhira, Meherpur and Natore.

Dr Sorof attributed rising output to modern orchard management, grafted saplings, balanced fertiliser use, improved irrigation and science-based cultivation. "Many farmers are now replacing paddy and jute with commercial mango orchards. Mangoes are now produced not only in the plains but also extensively in the country's hilly regions."

Mango exports stayed flat at around 230 to 310 tonnes a year from fiscal year 2016-17 through FY2020, before growing more than tenfold to a peak of 3,100 tonnes in FY2023

"Bangladeshi mangoes are among the world's finest in taste and colour," he said. "What we need now is production that fully complies with international standards."

To close the gap, the DAE is running its Exportable Mango Production Project across 46 upazilas in 15 districts.

The initiative covers GAP implementation, PRA, GIS-based orchard mapping, farmer training, modern machinery distribution, and export-profile development for priority varieties, said Project Director Mohammad Arifur Rahman.

He said Bangladesh has the potential to become a leading global exporter with planned orchard management, climate-resilient varieties, better post-harvest preservation, upgraded packaging and stronger export infrastructure.

Bangladesh now exports mangoes to 27 countries, including Germany, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Italy, said the DAE official.

Several popular and commercially important varieties already carry Geographical Indication (GI) status: Haribhanga from Rangpur; Langra, Khirsapat (Himsagar), Fazli and Ashwina from Chapainawabganj;

A trader talks with a customer beside crates piled high with green mangoes at Padaganj Bazar in Mithapukur, Rangpur's largest mango market, recently.

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Officials and experts note that with stable production, supply is not the problem for mango exports. Fruit bound for export must clear a higher bar than domestic sale, including international standards for appearance, pest-freedom and food safety.

For the low mango exports, they point to a shortage of internationally compliant packhouses, inadequate cold-chain infrastructure, no standardised grading or packaging system, limited adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), pest and disease blemishes, and too few entrepreneurs pursuing export markets.

Dr Md Sorof Uddin, chief scientific officer at the Regional Horticulture Research Centre in Chapainawabganj, the country's only dedicated mango research facility, said exports can multiply within a few years if the aforementioned issues can be addressed.

According to the centre, also known as the Mango Research Station, Bangladesh grows an estimated 800 to 850 mango varieties, more than 100 of them commercially, across Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Kushtia, Jashore, Satkhira, Meherpur and Natore.

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Stating that production has crossed 25 lakh tonnes this year, he said the larger harvest pushed supply up and prices down slightly from last year, though growers are still profitable on volume. "Premium-quality mangoes continue to command higher prices in the market. Farmers who have adopted modern cultivation methods and produced high-quality fruit are receiving satisfactory returns."

DAE Director General Abdur Rahim said quality mangoes are now grown in nearly every household nationwide, but scaling exports will require wider GAP implementation and greater entrepreneurial participation.

"Bangladeshi mangoes are among the world's finest in taste and colour," he said. "What we need now is production that fully complies with international standards."

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Other significant varieties include Amrapali, Gopalbhog, Mallika, Katimon and BARI Mango-4.

THE MANGO CAPITAL AND NEW WAVES

According to the Mango Research Station, most of the mangoes produced in Bangladesh are consumed in the domestic market. Over 4.5 lakh tonnes of them comes from Chapainawabganj, widely known as the mango capital of Bangladesh. The district cultivates mangoes across roughly 37,000 hectares.

The Daily Star
0 7 JUL 2026

In its famous Kansat Bazaar – the largest mango market in the country and the second largest in Asia, where mangoes worth millions – are traded every day during peak season, officials said.

The market trades Gopalbhog, Khirsapat, Langra, Fazli, Amrapali, Ashwina and Gourmati varieties.

In recent years, thanks to the popularity of online trading, it has seen a new wave of entrepreneurs constantly taking orders over the phone, photographing their produce, and arranging deliveries to Dhaka and other parts of the country. This has led to a growth in internal exports even when shipment to other countries failed to pick up momentum.

One such entrepreneur is Zulfikar Ali. Noting that both production and sales have increased this season, he said, "Besides selling at Kansat market, I also sell mangoes online, allowing me to reach customers across the country."

Modern cultivation methods are also being adopted rapidly. Zahurul Islam, who has grown mangoes commercially for a decade on 12 bighas of land, said he earns more than Tk 700,000 annually from the crop.

"I adopted modern cultivation methods this season, although there were a few shortcomings. Next year I hope to produce even better-quality mangoes," he said.

The Daily Star

07 JUL 2026

Cost surge, weak demand squeeze plastic makers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's plastic industry has slowed sharply following the recent Middle East crisis, as rising raw material prices and weak consumer demand continue to hit manufacturers hard, industry leaders said.

The steep rise in the cost of imported plastic raw materials has severely affected producers, Shamim Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA), told journalists at the association's office in Dhaka's Paltan yesterday.

Before the conflict, key raw materials were imported at around \$800 to \$900 per tonne. Prices have now increased to between \$1,500 and \$1,600 per tonne, he said.

"The sharp rise in raw material costs is putting immense pressure on the industry. Higher production costs are also driving up the prices of finished products," Shamim said.

The country's plastic and packaging industry, worth around Tk 60,000 crore annually, recorded monthly sales of about Tk 5,000 crore before the conflict. This has now fallen to around Tk 3,750 crore, a decline of at least 25 percent, according to the BPGMEA.

Shamim said at least 25 percent of customers have reduced their orders since the conflict began, while some segments have seen demand drop by as much as 40 percent.

The packaging segment, which accounts for about 40 percent of the industry, has been the worst affected as demand for fast-moving consumer goods weakens amid lower household spending, he added.

"We are not the end product; we supply other industries," Shamim said. "When consumers buy less detergent, food or household products, demand for our packaging and plastic components drops immediately."

According to him, Bangladesh has around 6,000 plastic manufacturing units, of which 4,000 to 4,500 supply products to other sectors, including garments, pharmaceuticals, food processing and beverages. The industry serves around 30,000 businesses in total.

"Many people still think plastic means buckets, mugs and kitchenware. But plastic has become an essential part of industrial production and supply chains," he said.

He warned that any disruption in the sector would quickly affect the wider economy, as most manufacturing industries depend heavily on plastic packaging and components.

Shamim also alleged that customs authorities often assess imported raw materials at higher values than invoice prices to meet revenue targets, even though such materials are sourced from large international suppliers where under or over invoicing is unlikely.

On recycling, Shamim said Bangladesh has a relatively high plastic recycling rate in the region, but investment in waste-to-energy infrastructure remains behind neighbouring countries.

KM Iqbal Hossain, senior vice-president of BPGMEA, said manufacturers have been absorbing much of the increased production costs instead of passing them on to buyers.

"We are negotiating with our clients to raise prices because production costs have increased by at least 30 percent, but we have not yet fully adjusted our prices," he added.

Industry leaders said higher costs and weak consumer demand are putting severe pressure on profit margins, with many firms struggling to stay viable.

Iqbal also said Bangladesh is lagging in developing waste-to-energy projects. "Countries like Indonesia are rapidly expanding waste-to-energy projects. In Bangladesh, we have been trying to set up even one large-scale waste-to-energy plant for the past five years," he said.

Despite the slowdown in traditional plastic manufacturing, Shamim said the recycling segment continues to grow and is creating new jobs as businesses place greater focus on sustainability.

Iqbal criticised high industrial land prices, weak incentives and complex regulations, saying these factors are discouraging investment and job creation.

He questioned why industrial plots developed by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation are sold at prices much higher than acquisition costs, forcing entrepreneurs to spend heavily on land instead of production.

Comparing with neighbouring countries, Iqbal said governments in India provide industrial land, utilities and incentives to support manufacturing and exports.

He also highlighted challenges faced by plastic and toy manufacturers, saying many key components must be imported because local production is not commercially viable. However, manufacturers still pay commercial import duties on these inputs, reducing competitiveness against producers in countries such as China and Sri Lanka.

The Financial Express
07 JUL 2026

Urgent reforms needed as post-LDC export risks grow

FE REPORT

Says RAPID, pointing to market access uncertainty and tougher compliance requirements

Bangladesh's export competitiveness is coming under increasing pressure ahead of its graduation from the least-developed country (LDC) status due to uncertainty over post-graduation market access, tougher compliance requirements, and new free-trade agreements (FTAs) signed by competing exporting countries, according to the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID).

Weak infrastructure, high production costs, inefficient logistics, and slow export diversification are further constraining export growth, it says.

With Bangladesh preparing for LDC graduation, the research organisation has called for an urgent and coordinated competitiveness reform programme.

The observations came in a keynote paper presented at a workshop titled "LDC Graduation and Trade Competitiveness" and held at the National Press Club in the capital on Monday.

The presentation was delivered by RAPID Chairman Dr Mohammad Abdur Razzaque.

Speaking as the chief guest, Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon called for making the most of the possible three-year LDC graduation extension by strengthening export competitiveness, implementing policy reforms, and preparing for post-LDC challenges.

He also stressed that sustainable development would not be possible without economy-friendly politics.

"Politics must support the economy. Otherwise, discussions on these issues will remain merely theoretical," he said.

The minister said although Bangladesh had not yet formally graduated from the LDC category, effective preparations must begin immediately to address the challenges in the export sector. Those challenges were expected to intensify after graduation, he added.

Swapon noted that the government had applied to the relevant United Nations committee in February this year to defer the graduation until November 2029.

The additional period, he said, should not be viewed as an opportunity for delay but as a window to complete the necessary preparations for a smooth transition.

"The government's policymakers and relevant officials are already working on the issue," he said, adding that if the extension was approved, it would facilitate policy reforms, boost export growth, remove administrative bottlenecks, and help the country better adapt to the post-LDC environment.

Presenting the keynote, Dr Razzaque said Bangladesh's export sector was entering a far more challenging global trading environment as competition intensified and preferential market access gradually eroded.

He noted that competitors such as India and Vietnam were expanding their network of free trade agreements, strengthening their position in key export destinations, including the European Union, while Bangladesh risked losing its traditional competitive edge after graduation.

He warned that the withdrawal of duty-free market access following graduation could expose Bangladeshi exports to higher tariffs, undermining their price competitiveness unless the country undertook comprehensive reforms.

At the same time, he observed that global trade was increasingly being shaped by environmental, climate, and labour-related standards, making compliance an essential requirement for sustaining market access.

According to Dr Razzaque, Bangladesh can no longer rely solely on low production costs.

Enhancing productivity, improving trade competitiveness, and meeting evolving sustainability and compliance requirements would be critical to maintaining export growth in the post-LDC era, he said.

Doulot Akter Mala, president of the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF), attended the programme as the guest of honour.

She stressed the need for urgent strategic preparations ahead of graduation, saying the absence of a revised transition strategy, declining foreign direct investment (FDI), and weak competitiveness remained major concerns.

Mala also called for restoring business confidence through stable policies, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, strengthening research and development, and aligning budgetary commitments with the country's economic realities.

Dr M Abu Eusuf, executive director of RAPID, delivered the address of welcome.

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The Business Standard

07 JUL 2026

Bangladesh loses out as Cambodia, Vietnam capture China's apparel market share: RAPID

GLOBAL APPAREL MARKET SHARE BY SELECTED SUPPLIERS (%)

Year	Bangladesh	China	India	Cambodia	Vietnam
2015	7.92	36.45	3.97	2.42	6.11
2016	8.60	34.11	3.94	2.65	6.47
2017	8.73	32.93	3.96	2.84	6.84
2018	9.15	31.61	3.77	3.02	7.27
2019	9.57	29.79	3.80	3.13	7.90
2020	9.68	29.19	3.36	3.26	8.27
2021	10.42	27.31	3.60	3.05	7.87
2022	11.67	26.33	3.92	3.34	8.57
2023	10.86	25.06	3.79	3.28	8.26
2024	11.01	25.69	3.79	3.70	8.60
2025	11.54	23.56	3.66	4.26	8.97

Source: Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID)

RMG – BANGLADESH

TBS REPORT

Bangladesh is no longer the biggest beneficiary of China's shrinking share in the global apparel market, with Cambodia and Vietnam overtaking it in attracting orders over the past four years, according to a new study by Research and Policy Integration for Development.

The study also warned that Bangladesh's readymade garment exports to the European Union could decline by more than 43% after its graduation from the least developed country category if exports become subject to the EU's most favoured nation tariffs.

The findings were presented at a workshop organised by RAPID at the National Press Club in Dhaka yesterday.

According to the study, China's share of the global apparel market fell from 26.33% in 2022 to 23.56% in 2025. However, SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Bangladesh failed to capitalise on the shift. Its global market share remained almost stagnant, slipping slightly from 11.67% in 2022.

During the same period, Cambodia's share rose from 3.34% to 4.26%, while Vietnam's increased from 8.57% to nearly 9%.

"Bangladesh is no longer the automatic beneficiary of orders shifting away from China, signalling a weakening position in the global apparel market," said RAPID Chairman Dr MA Razzaque while presenting the keynote paper.

The study showed that between 2015 and 2022, Bangladesh had been the biggest winner from China's declining dominance. During that period, China lost nearly 10 percentage points of global apparel market share, while Bangladesh gained 3.75 percentage points. Vietnam and Cambodia gained 2.46 percentage points and 0.90 percentage points respectively.

The trend changed after 2022. While China lost another 2.77 percentage points of market share between 2022 and 2025, Cambodia captured 0.90 percentage points and Vietnam gained 0.40 percentage points. Bangladesh's share, meanwhile, remained virtually unchanged. Speaking to TBS, Razzaque attributed the slowdown to policy inconsistencies, an unfavourable investment climate, growing Chinese investment in Cambodia and Vietnam, and Bangladesh's limited capacity to produce man-made fibre and other high-value apparel products.

Industry leaders cited additional domestic challenges.

Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions Ltd, said Bangladesh has failed to compete with regional rivals in attracting new business despite China's declining exports.

"For the past two and a half years, Vietnam, Cambodia and China have pursued aggressive marketing strategies, while Bangladesh has failed to do so," he told TBS.

He said high business costs, persistent energy shortages and elevated bank lending rates have weakened the country's competitiveness, discouraging new investment.

"We do not see signs of improvement in the near future," he added.

EU tariff risk after LDC graduation

The study also warned that Bangladesh's exports could face a sharp decline after the country graduates from the least developed country status if it fails to secure a preferential trade arrangement with the European Union.

According to the study, Bangladesh's total exports to the EU could fall by more than 36%, while RMG exports could decline by over 43% if the country becomes subject to the EU's Most Favoured Nation tariffs and competing exporters continue to enjoy duty-free access through free trade agreements.

The European Union currently accounts for about half of Bangladesh's roughly $48 billion annual exports.

Bangladesh now enjoys duty-free access to the European Union under the Everything But Arms scheme. However, this preferential treatment will expire after LDC graduation and the transition period unless a new trade arrangement is secured.

Meanwhile, key competitors such as Vietnam and India have already signed free trade agreements with the European Union, enabling them to export many apparel products at zero or preferential tariffs.

Without a similar agreement, Bangladeshi apparel exports could face Most Favoured Nation tariffs of up to 12%, significantly eroding the country's price competitiveness in its largest export market, the study said.

The workshop was attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon as the chief guest. RAPID Executive Director Dr M Abu Yusuf moderated the programme, while Economic Reporters' Forum President Doulot Akter Mala also spoke.

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Bangladesh's plastic market loses Tk15,000cr as Mideast crisis hits supply chain

INDUSTRY – BANGLADESH

SALAH UDDIN MAHMUD

Bangladesh's plastic industry has suffered an estimated Tk15,000 crore decline in sales as the Middle East war, volatility in global petrochemical markets, and persistent domestic power and gas shortages disrupt production and weaken demand, according to industry leaders.

Manufacturers say delays in importing raw materials, rising production costs and sluggish domestic demand have forced many factories to cut output, while hundreds of small and medium-sized enterprises are struggling to survive.

According to the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the country's plastic market is currently worth around Tk60,000 crore, with packaging accounting for about 40% of the market.

"Our industry's average sales have fallen by more than 25%, while some companies have experienced declines of 35% to 40%," the association's President Shamim Ahmed told The Business Standard. "Overall, we estimate that the sector has lost around Tk15,000 crore in sales."

The association estimates that nearly 300 plastic factories have already suspended production, most of them SMEs unable to cope with disruptions in raw material supplies, unreliable gas and electricity services, and working capital shortages.

Although the current fiscal year's budget included some positive measures for the industry, Shamim said several key demands from manufacturers remained unaddressed.

To reduce dependence on imported virgin resin, manufacturers are increasing the use of recycled raw materials and exploring alternative sourcing markets.

According to the manufacturers and exporters association, recycled materials now account for about 38% of industry consumption. However, higher virgin resin prices have continued to push up production costs.

Bangladesh's plastic industry relies almost entirely on imported polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride and polyethylene terephthalate resins, most of which come from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait and Oman. Any disruption in the Middle East or shipping through the Strait of Hormuz directly affects supplies, raising freight, insurance and production costs.

Riad Mahmud, managing director of National Polymer, said international resin prices remain relatively stable, but global supply chains have been severely disrupted. Government-set tariff values on imports have also further increased costs.

Manufacturers have raised product prices by 7% to 8% to offset higher expenses, although intense competition has prevented larger price adjustments, he said.

Raw material delivery times have also lengthened significantly. Previously, shipments reached factories within 18 to 21 days after opening letters of credit. Now deliveries take at least six weeks, while many consignments arrive even later.

Because of raw material I SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

shortages and energy constraints, most factories are operating at only 60% to 80% of their installed capacity, Riad added.

KM Iqbal Hossain, senior vice-president of the manufacturers and exporters association, said the price of a 25kg bag of polyethylene terephthalate resin has climbed from around Tk3,000 a few years ago to nearly Tk5,200, meaning an increase of over 73%. However, manufacturers have been able to increase product prices by only 5% to 10%, forcing many companies to continue production at a loss.

According to the association, the circumstances have reduced production by 10% to 30% in many factories. Injection moulding, blow moulding, and extrusion units have been the hardest hit, while reliance on diesel generators has further increased operating costs and complicated the timely delivery of export orders.

Industry insiders say sales have declined most sharply in construction-related and household plastic products, while demand for food, pharmaceutical, agricultural and export-oriented packaging has remained comparatively stable.

Manufacturers say the crisis has exposed the risks of Bangladesh's heavy dependence on Middle Eastern petrochemical supplies. They argue that diversifying raw material sources, expanding the use of recycled resins, ensuring reliable energy supplies and strengthening policy support will be essential to maintaining the industry's long-term competitiveness.