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# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 24, 2019, KARTIK 8, 1426 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

## Cotton import from USA to soar

American traders predict

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA  
 Bangladesh's cotton consumption will continue to grow in the near future because of higher shipment of garment items stemming from the US-China trade war and for higher demand for natural fibre by Western consumers, said a top official of Cotton USA, an association of American cotton growers and traders.  
 "We see continuous growth of cotton consumption in Bangladesh," Bruce A Atherley, executive director of Cotton Council International (CCI), a platform of Cotton USA, told The Daily Star in an interview yesterday.



Bruce A Atherley

Bangladesh is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the China and US tariff war, he said.  
 The retailers and brands are coming back to Bangladesh with a lot of work orders as China became very expensive because of the trade war. Countries like Vietnam and Cambodia are also benefiting from the US-China trade war.  
 Another important reason is that the Bangladeshi spinning sector is very much unique in the sense that the majority of the yarn and fabrics are made from cotton.  
 "This is a very big advantage for Bangladesh as consumers, especially in the Western world, are coming back to natural fibre from man-made artificial fibre with the view to protecting the environment and for comfort."

The cotton fibres are biodegradable but the polyesters and other man-made fibres do not mix up with the soil and damage the water and soil quality.  
 "So, Bangladesh is in a good position for higher consumption of cotton," he said.  
 Over time, America's export of cotton to Bangladesh will grow because of good quality, competitive prices and timely delivery.  
 For instance, between 2015 and 2017 Bangladesh imported 226,000 bales of cotton each year, but the quantity tripled last year to 785,000 bales (one bale equals to 282 kilogram).

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Last year, Bangladesh imported 8.28 million bales of cotton worth \$3 billion.  
 Currently, Bangladesh imports 11 percent of its annual total requirement of cotton from the US, which was nearly 4 percent even three years ago.  
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## Bangladesh among least favourable nations for farmers

World Bank finds

STAR BUSINESS REPORT  
 Bangladesh has one of the least favourable regulatory environments for farmers although the country is still dependent on the agriculture sector for ensuring food security, poverty reduction and job creation, according to a new World Bank report.  
 Enabling the Business of Agriculture 2019—which was released recently—ranked Bangladesh 75th out of 101 countries as it scored 44.47 points on a scale of 0-100.  
 In South Asia, Bangladesh lagged behind India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. India is ranked 54th, Sri Lanka 65th, Nepal 69th, and Pakistan 70th.  
 Bangladesh is only ahead of Afghanistan, which was ranked 90th.

The report is a World Bank Group study collecting unique data on the regulations that affect the livelihood of farmers.  
 Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA) covers 101 countries across all regions. The data are current as of June 30, 2018.  
 Countries with relatively small agricultural sectors (defined as less than \$1 billion) are excluded, unless more than 100,000 people are employed in agriculture.  
 It provides data on eight quantitative indicators: supplying seed, registering fertiliser, securing water, registering machinery, sustaining livestock, protecting plant health, trading food, and accessing finance.  
 The EBA indicators assess whether governments make it easier or harder for farmers to operate their businesses and provide a tangible measure of progress and identify regulatory obstacles to market integration and entrepreneurship in agriculture.  
 The highest-scoring countries have regulation that caters to farmers' needs. The three top-scoring countries are member states of the European Union.  
 France, Croatia and the Czech Republic pair good regulations with efficient processes across all areas measured, although no country received a perfect score, the report said.  
 "All governments have room to improve laws, regulations and bureaucratic processes that affect domestic farmers," it said.  
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## Quality training can bridge skills gap

Analysts say at Prothom Alo roundtable

STAR BUSINESS REPORT  
 Quality training is needed to remove skills gaps in the private sector, said development partners, training providers and employers yesterday.  
 Besides, coordination among the training providers should be ensured to reap the full potential of training programmes in the country, they said at a

**At least 13 percent of Bangladeshi garment factories hire skilled people from India, Sri Lanka and many other countries**

locally sourced, foreigners would have to be brought in, causing a huge amount of money to be remitted out.  
 According to a survey of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), at least 13 percent of Bangladeshi garment factories hire skilled people from India, Sri Lanka and many other countries whereas a huge number of local people were searching for jobs but could not find any.  
 "The private sector doesn't want certificates but quality skills, so our government emphasised on it but the private sector will also have to work with us hand in hand," said Alam.  
 Md Faruk Hossain, executive chairman of the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), said many development partners, government entities and NGOs were providing training but there was a lack of coordination. As a result, some people got more training than they required and some none at all.  
 On the other hand, some people are availing the training but are not skilled enough or not aware of the market demand for which they remained unemployed, he said.  
 "So, coordination is needed among all the training providers," he said.  
 The NSDA is working on prioritising training, which would be the most in demand in the future, so that it could be provided properly, Hossain said, adding that the private sector should properly decide on the skills they needed.  
 Bangladesh is currently in an era enjoying demographic dividend, so skilled-based training is very important to provide jobs to youths, said Tuomo Poutiainen, country director for the ILO Bangladesh.  
 He said the training policy in the upcoming five-year plan should be inclusive, taking into account women and marginalised people.  
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roundtable at the Prothom Alo.  
 The newspaper organised the event on "Investment on skill development in 8th five-year plan" with support from the International Labor Organization (ILO). An eco-friendly banner made of jute was used in the programme.  
 Prof Shamsul Alam, a member of the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission, said the country had a large number of public and private universities and many institutions were providing training but the private sector suffered from a dearth of skilled labour.  
 It indicates that the education system needs huge reforms, he said.  
 He said the economy required people with technical, vocational and technological skills and if they were not

## Foreign funds sought for Delta Plan

STAR BUSINESS REPORT  
 The government sought financial support from the development partners to implement the ambitious Delta Plan that would need \$37 billion by 2030 for ensuring food and water security and fighting disasters.  
 The Planning Commission shared the plan with the development partners at the National Economic Council (NEC) conference room at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday.  
 Shamsul Alam, member of the General Economics Division (GED), made a presentation on the plan.  
 Representatives of multilateral, bilateral development partners, including the United Nations resident coordinator Mia Seppo, were present at the programme.

Ideally, the government wants to implement the plan with its own funds, but the plan needs vast amount of money and hence the development partners' support, Planning Minister MA Mannan said.  
 The government will welcome the development partners if they become interested, he said.  
 As per the Delta Plan, which was approved in September last year by the NEC, were primarily selected for implementation.  
 Of them, 65 would be infrastructure projects and 15 aimed at enhancing institutional capacity, efficiency and research.  
 The required fund for the projects would come from the government, Green Climate Fund, development partners, foreign direct investment and the private sector.

At present, the government spends 0.8 percent of the GDP for Delta management projects and programmes. To implement the plan, 2 percent of the GDP would be required.  
 Bangladesh is likely to get \$2 billion assistance from the Green Climate Fund every year.  
 Besides, about 0.5 percent from the private sector's annual income could be added to the Delta Plan fund.  
 Coastal, Varendra (Barind) and drought-prone, haor and flood-prone, Chittagong Hill Tracts, riverine and urban are the six areas to be given priority by the Delta Plan.  
 Due to climate change, the country's agricultural production may seriously be affected.  
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**PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Bank Asia Limited in its 420<sup>th</sup> meeting held on October 23, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. at Bank Asia Tower, 32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka has approved the un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the Third Quarter ended on September 30, 2019 and disclosed the following financial indicators of the Bank:

Particulars	January to September 30, 2019		January to September 30, 2018	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Net Asset Value (NAV) (Crore)	2,503.75	2,488.31	2,312.03	2,297.05
Net Asset Value (NAV) per Share	21.47	21.34	19.83	19.70
Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	15.79	15.86	4.69	4.50

  

Particulars	January to September 30, 2019		January to September 30, 2018		July to September 30, 2019		July to September 30, 2018	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Earnings per Share (EPS)	1.95	1.94	1.75	1.73	0.88	0.88	0.70	0.68

The details of un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the Third Quarter ended on September 30, 2019 will also be available in the website of the Bank at www.bankasia-bd.com

Dated: Dhaka  
October 23, 2019

**Bank Asia**

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Rangs Tower (2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> floor)  
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