

Bangladesh, Vietnam to drive global cotton trade next decade: report

SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh and Vietnam will drive global cotton trade over the next decade as mills increase their use of it in making yarn for export-oriented garments, said a recent global report.

World cotton trade is projected to expand steadily over the next decade by 1.6 percent annually and reach 12.3 million tonnes in 2034, said the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

“This growth is driven by the increasing demand for textiles in Asian countries, particularly Vietnam and Bangladesh, where mill use is expanding rapidly,” said the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2025-2034, released on July 15.

Bangladesh is projected to account for 18 percent of global raw cotton imports by 2034, registering a yearly 2.4 percent growth.

The country consumes over 1.7 million tonnes of cotton and imports more than three-fourths of its requirement.

The report said global use of raw cotton is projected to grow by 1.2 percent annually, driven by increasing demand for textiles in middle- and low-income countries.

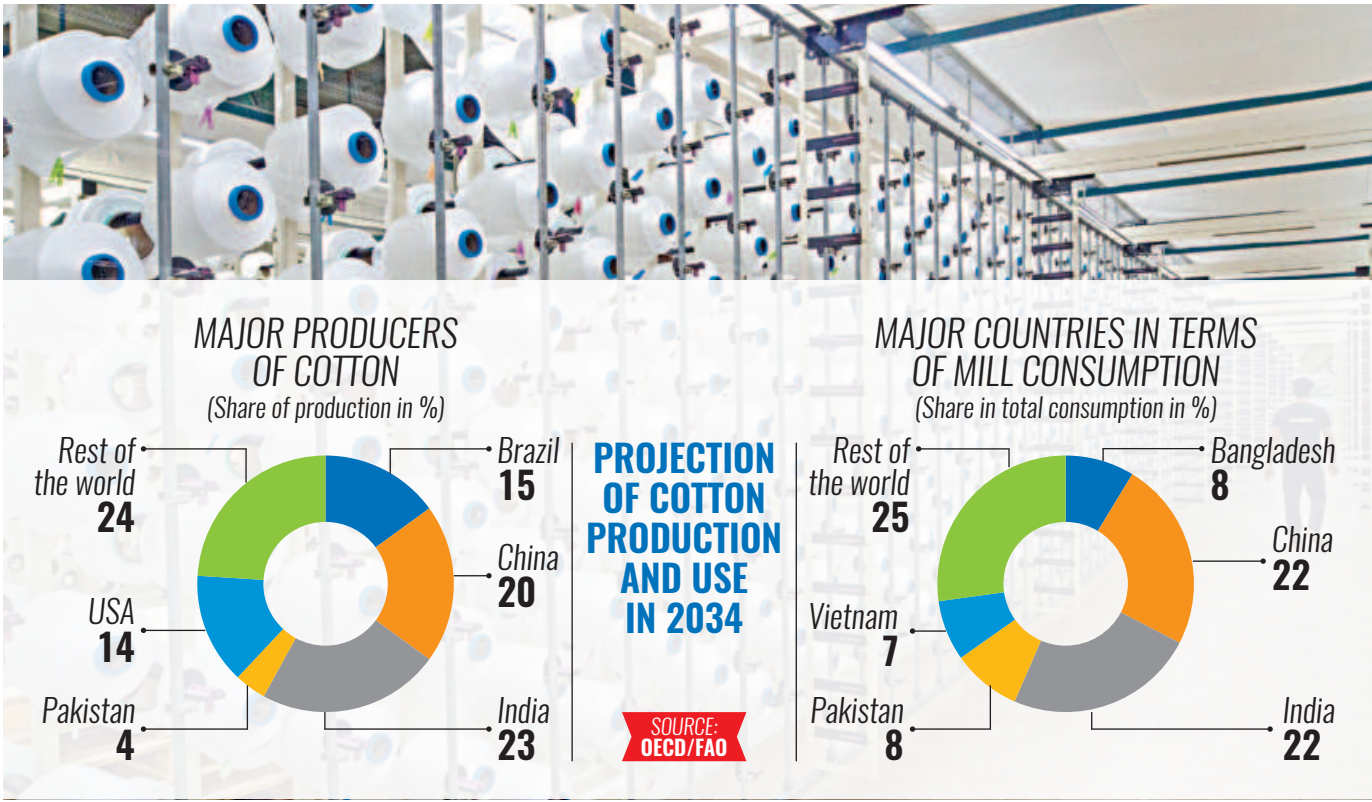
“Asia will remain the primary hub for the processing of raw cotton, with expansion in Vietnam, Bangladesh, and India fuelled by competitive labour and production costs,” it said.

Bangladesh and Pakistan are each projected to consume 8 percent of the world’s total cotton.

China is expected to gradually lose its dominance in global cotton processing, but it will remain the world’s largest cotton processor by 2034, followed by India.

China will consume 30 percent and India 22 percent by the end of the decade.

A rise in labour costs and stringent labour and environmental regulations has led to a gradual decrease in China’s



cotton mill consumption since 2010.

This decline was further exacerbated by the abolition of the support price system, a form of market intervention by the government, in 2014.

“This contributed to a move to other Asian countries, notably Vietnam and Bangladesh,” said the report.

It said since the phase-out in 2005 of the Multifiber Arrangement, countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam have experienced strong growth in their textile industries based on an abundant labour force, low production costs, and government support measures.

The Multifiber Arrangement was established in 1974 to impose quotas on the amount of clothing and textiles

that developing countries could export to developed nations in Europe and the United States.

The European Union’s duty-free access to least developed countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) boosted Bangladesh’s textile industry, contributing to its emergence as a major global exporter of apparel, particularly knitted and woven garments, said the report.

The expansion of textile industries in Asian economies is expected to continue to boost mill consumption growth over the coming decade.

Vietnam will take the lead in annual growth of mill use at 2.7 percent per year, followed by Bangladesh at 2.1 percent per

annum.

The OECD-FAO report said global cotton production is expected to grow by 1.3 percent annually, primarily driven by yield improvements, reaching 29.5 million tonnes by 2034.

“India is projected to surpass China as the world’s largest cotton producer, as it is expected that India will considerably increase cotton yields from its current low levels. Brazil and the United States will follow at similar levels of production,” it said.

“As major producers and exporters, Brazil and the United States are expected to meet the growing demand from Asian countries and will be the two largest exporters over the next decade,” it added.

Power of perspective

MAHTAB UDDIN AHMED

Two shoe salesmen were sent to a remote village to assess the market. The first returned, visibly deflated. “Hopeless! No one wears shoes there,” he said. The second came back beaming, saying, “Amazing! No one wears shoes there!” Same village, same people, same situation, different perspectives. One saw zero demand, the other saw untapped potential.

This age-old tale is more than a sales anecdote; it’s a mirror. In life and work, we all walk into villages of uncertainty. Some of us panic because the floor is bare, others see a market begging for footwear.

In Bangladesh, we have seen people build million-taka ventures out of things most wouldn’t give a second glance. One guy sells tea in clay cups with Wi-Fi and calls it “Chaaterpreneurship”. Another man leaves a corporate job to grow strawberries in Srimantapur and becomes a YouTube star. Meanwhile, their university batchmates complain that “nothing works in this country”. There is no point in staying here, so let’s view migration as an opportunity. No points for guessing whose village was full of barefoot people, and who saw it as an opportunity.

Perspective, it turns out, is not just feel-good philosophy; it’s measurable. A Harvard Business Review study found that people with a “growth mindset” are 34 percent more likely to succeed in leadership roles. Meanwhile, McKinsey research shows that companies that frame challenges as innovation opportunities outperform their peers by over 25 percent in revenue growth.

In our own corporate corridors, I have witnessed this firsthand. Two brand managers were handed the same struggling product. One wrote a report on why it should be discontinued. The other redesigned the packaging, ran a social campaign, and made it a Gen-Z trend. The product stayed. The second guy got promoted. And the first one? He is now giving unsolicited advice on LinkedIn.

Even in personal life, perspective changes everything. Is your teenager spending “too much time on the phone”? Or are they learning video editing and planning a digital agency? As a father, I can confirm: the first assumption gives you grey hair, the second gives you hope!

We often treat “perspective” as a soft skill, but it is actually a strategic advantage. Think of it as the lens through which you interpret reality. A foggy lens distorts opportunities into threats. A clear one sees both risk and reward, and chooses action over complaint.

Perspective can be trained. Read widely. Hang out with problem solvers, not problem reporters. Learn from failure without inviting it to dinner every night. And please, before saying “ekhone kichu hobe na” (nothing works here), ask yourself if you are the first salesman or the second.

In Bangladesh, streamlining perspective starts with reframing problems as possibilities. For instance, where some see traffic congestion, Pathao saw a logistics revolution. Where others saw rural illiteracy, 10 Minute School saw a digital learning opportunity. Corporates must foster this mindset by rewarding innovation, not just compliance.

In personal life, parents can encourage kids to explore unconventional careers instead of forcing the “doctor-engineer” track. Whether in boardrooms or tea stalls, shifting the conversation from “ki hobey?” (what will happen) to “ki korte pari?” (what can we do) can unlock growth. It’s about training the eye to see the shoeless feet not as a failure, but as a frontier.

In a world full of villages with barefoot people, somewhere between Gulshan boardrooms and Srimantapur rice fields, the ones who see possibilities are the ones who win. So, next time someone says “eta possible na” (it’s not possible) smile politely and check your shoes. You might be in a market no one else has noticed yet.

The writer is the president of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh and founder of BuildCon Consultancies Ltd



Dhaka stocks gain for third day

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange closed higher yesterday, extending its gains for the third consecutive session.

The DSEX, the main index of the bourse, rose 15.58 points, or 0.30 percent, to settle at 5,132.47. The other indices also rose. The Shariah-compliant DSES went up 0.69 percent to 1,119.79.

The DS30, comprising the blue-chip shares, increased 0.82 percent to close at 1,936.66.

Turnover, a key gauge of investor participation, hit Tk 789.68 crore, up from Tk 734.38 crore in the previous session.

A total of 225,649 trades were executed, while block transactions amounted to Tk 30.34 crore across 40 scrips.

Market breadth showed a mixed picture, with 153 stocks advancing, 180 declining, and 63 remaining unchanged.

Among A category scrips, the division also showed a mixed trading movement, with 71 gainers, 113 losers, and 34 unchanged.

The B-category saw 32 stocks rise and 38 fall, while there was no trading in the N-category.

Segment-wise performance was mixed. In mutual funds, 9 issues advanced and 14 declined. Corporate bonds saw just one issue decline, while the government bond market saw two issues decline.

Among individual performers, Rahima Food Corporation topped the gainers’ list with a 9 percent rise, while Padma Islami Life Insurance was the worst performer, dropping 9 percent.

Western Marine delivers two tugboats to UAE buyer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Leading shipbuilder Western Marine Shipyard Limited delivered two high-powered tugboats to a buyer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) yesterday.

Delivery of these two tugboats is part of the deal the shipyard made in 2023 for exporting a total of 8 ships to the UAE firm Marwan Shipping Limited.

The export value of the two tugboats — 40-metre-long ‘Khalid’ and 32-metre-long ‘Ghaya’ — stood at \$1.53 million, officials disclosed at the delivery ceremony held on board the Western Cruise ship anchored at the jetty of Chattogram Boat Club.

The UAE firm is supplying all the raw materials for building these ships and is only paying construction charges to the shipyard, they informed.

Speaking as the chief guest at the delivery ceremony, Lt Gen (retd) Abdul Hafiz, special assistant to the Chief Adviser for defence and the development of national harmony, said the global shipbuilding sector annually generates around \$400 billion worth of revenue.

“Half of the total market is for ships that Bangladeshi shipbuilders are fully capable of producing,” he said, urging local firms to aim for



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

capturing at least one percent of the \$200 billion global market. He thanked Marwan Shipping Ltd for keeping trust in the Bangladeshi workers’ skills.

Western Marine Managing Director Captain Sohail Hasan said the two tugboats, which are high-power offshore support vessels, have been constructed in line with the highest classification standards.

Ghaya has been constructed under French classification society Bureau Veritas, while Khalid was constructed under the classification of American Bureau of Shipping, Sohail informed.

Humaid Mohammed Abdullah

Darwish Al Tamimi, charge d’affaires of the UAE Embassy in Dhaka, and Marwan Shipping Ltd Managing Director Ahmed Almarzooqi also spoke at the ceremony.

The company signed a deal worth \$7.3 million in 2023 with the UAE-based buyer, Marwan Shipping, for the construction of four landing craft vessels, two tugboats and two oil tankers.

In January, a 69-metre-long landing craft named ‘Rayan’ was successfully delivered. The remaining five vessels are scheduled to be handed over between 2025 and 2026.

Trump says India trade agreement is close, Europe deal possible

REUTERS, Washington

The United States is very close to a trade deal with India, while an agreement could possibly be reached with Europe as well, but it is too soon to say whether a deal can be agreed with Canada, President Donald Trump said in an interview aired on Real America’s Voice on Wednesday.

To press for what Trump views as better terms with trading partners and ways to shrink a huge US trade deficit, his administration has been negotiating trade deals ahead of an August 1 deadline, when duties on most US imports are due to rise again.

“We’re very close to India, and ... we could possibly make a deal with (the) EU,” Trump said, when asked which trade deals were on the horizon.

Trump’s comments come as EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic was headed to Washington on Wednesday for tariff discussions, while an Indian trade delegation arrived in Washington on Monday for fresh talks. “(The) European Union has been brutal, and now they’re being very nice. They want to make a deal, and it’ll be a lot different than the deal that we’ve had for years,” he added.

Beneath China’s resilient economy, a life of pay cuts and side hustles

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese state firm employee Zhang Jinming makes up for a 24 percent cut to his salary by delivering food for three hours every night after work and on weekends — and hopes he can avoid awkward encounters with colleagues.

“Being a part-time delivery person while working for a state-owned enterprise isn’t exactly considered respectable,” said Zhang, whose real estate firm pays him 4,200 yuan (\$585) per month, down from 5,500 yuan.

While China has supported economic growth by keeping its ports and factories humming, the lack of real demand has hit profits, in turn squeezing workers like Zhang through wage cuts and forcing them to moonlight.

“There’s just no other way,”

added the 30-year-old, who rides his scooter until 11.30 pm, making 60-70 yuan per evening. “The pay cut has put me under huge pressure. Many colleagues have resigned and I took over their workload.”

China’s economy posted robust 5.2 percent growth in the second quarter, showing its export-heavy model has so far withstood US tariffs. But beneath the headline resilience, cracks are widening.

Contract and bill payment delays are rising, including among export champions like the autos and electronics industries and at utilities, whose owners, indebted local governments, have to run a tight ship while shoring up tariff-hit factories.

Ferocious competition for a slice of external demand, hit by global trade tensions, is crimping

industrial profits, fuelling factory-gate deflation even as export volumes climb. Workers bear the brunt of companies

cutting costs.

Falling profits and wages shrank tax revenues, pressuring state employers like Zhang’s



A delivery worker rides his motorcycle as rain falls in Beijing. With incomes under pressure, Beijing is struggling to meet its pledge to lift household consumption.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

to cut costs as well. In pockets of the financial system, non-performing loans are surging as authorities push banks to lend more.

For the most part, the lopsided nature of growth in the world’s second-largest economy is a product of policies that favour exporters over consumers.

Economists have long urged Beijing to redirect support to domestically focused sectors, such as education and healthcare, or boost household consumption — for instance, by bolstering welfare — or risk a slowdown in the second half of the year.

Max Zenglein, Asia-Pacific senior economist at the Conference Board of Asia, describes China as a “dual speed economy” with strong industry and weak consumption, noting the two are related.