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Currency Watch			
USD	EUR	GBP	JPY
85.73	92.61	110.79	0.57

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Tariff Ticker: Are Trump's Threats Toothless?

President Donald Trump's long-promised "Liberation Day" may end up looking a lot like a regular Wednesday.

The White House this weekend announced plans to narrow the scope of a bloated roster of tariff actions set to take effect April 2, including "reciprocal" duties on nations across the globe and sector-specific tariffs on goods like pharmaceuticals, automobiles and semiconductors.

A report from Bloomberg, which cited sources close to the administration, indicated that certain countries will now be exempt from new duties—and the targeted tariffs on critical industries are not likely to be announced on April 2 at all. The White House is still planning to debut its reciprocal tariff proposal that day, though the timing and details of the plan are still in flux.

Trump even indicated on Friday that there could be some leeway for China, saying that he's reserving room to "talk" about trade issues and hopes to meet with President Xi Jinping soon. "I don't change. But the word flexibility is an important word," he told reporters. "Sometimes it's flexibility. So there'll be flexibility, but basically it's reciprocal."

While specifics are scarce, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said the administration will likely impose reciprocal duties on about 15 percent of the nations that have a trade imbalance with the U.S. Twice-deferred 25-percent duties on goods from Mexico and Canada are also set to take effect on April 2, and the White House has repeatedly touted its intention to move forward with them.

As nebulous as the plan remains, Wall Street counted the White House's apparently softening stance as a win.

On Monday, U.S. stocks rallied, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average jumping 1.17 percent, or 490 points. Meanwhile, the S&P 500 was up 1.42 percent, for a jump of 80 points, and the Nasdaq Composite grew 1.81 percent, or 318 points.

Should Trump fully implement significant tariffs on Canada, Mexico, the European Union and China, revenue growth and profitability for most corporate sectors across the globe will face increased pressure, according to London-based economic research and credit ratings provider Fitch Ratings. While chemicals and automotive products from across the globe face the most immediate adverse effects when it comes to export volume to the U.S., increased competition and economic growth, non-food and discretionary retail goods (like apparel and footwear) from Latin America, China and Canada face a high risk of slower economic growth, the group announced Monday.

In anticipation of Trump's retaliatory duties, countries across the globe have been gearing up to impose tariffs of their own on American-made goods. It's largely yet to be seen how a pullback from the White House might impact those strategies, but new Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has shown he's not shying away from taking proactive action in defense of the country's economic interests.

On Sunday, Carney, the Liberal Party leader who replaced former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau nine days ago, announced a snap election amid the simmering trade war with the U.S. An election is necessary in order to build a unified resistance against America's aggression and to create a strong mandate against U.S. trade policies, he said.

With retaliatory duties worth about $60 billion already in place, Carney said the tariff proceeds will be used to support Canada's workforce and offer new protections, bolster infrastructure projects including clean energy, and establish "new trade corridors with reliable trading partners." Should the U.S. move forward with its retaliatory duty plan and levy more tariffs on Canada, Carney has said the country is prepared to move forward with $100 billion in new duties.

"There is so much more to do to secure Canada, to invest in Canada, to build Canada, to unite Canada. That's why I'm asking for a strong, positive mandate from my fellow Canadians," he said, calling Trump's trade actions and threats against Canadian sovereignty "the most significant crisis of our lifetimes." Carney has asked that Canada's governor general dissolve parliament and call for an election on April 28.

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Mar 24, 2025

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UK manufacturing output falls in March as order books remain weak: CBI

UK's manufacturing output volumes declined sharply in the three months to March, with a weighted balance of -18 per cent compared to -12 per cent in the previous quarter, according to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Looking ahead, manufacturers expect output to remain broadly unchanged in the next three months (-2 per cent) to June.

Output fell in 14 of 17 sub-sectors in the three months to March, CBI said in a press release.

Total order books in March were reported as below normal at -29 per cent, remaining significantly beneath the long-run average of -13 per cent, as per CBI's latest monthly Industrial Trends Survey (ITS).

Export order books, though still below normal, improved to -29 per cent from -36 per cent, yet remained under the long-term average of -18 per cent.

The average selling price expectations were stable at +22 per cent, staying well above the historical average of +7 per cent. Stocks of finished goods were considered more than adequate at +16 per cent, an increase from +4 per cent in February and above the long-run average of +12 per cent.

"Conditions in the UK's manufacturing sector remain subdued. Although there are some pockets of strength, notably in the aerospace and defence sectors, many firms continue to report that their order books remain weak," said Ben Jones, lead economist at CBI.

"Manufacturers responding to the survey reported that customers are generally nervous about proceeding with capital investments and are conserving funds ahead of upcoming increases to National Insurance and minimum wages, leading orders to be cancelled or at least delayed until later in the year."

"While output expectations are not as gloomy as at the turn of the year, the sector looks set to remain in a holding pattern in the short-term. Next week's spring statement and continuing challenges to the public finances means a lot of the growth the country needs will have to come from the private sector.

But businesses need a reason to grow and invest in uncertain times," added Jones. "A number of measures could help boost confidence-setting an ambitious R&D spending target so the government can position the UK as a world leader for innovation or ensuring that the apprenticeships levy is fully flexible to allow companies to invest in a range of employee training, will go some way to delivering the sustainable growth the country needs."

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 25, 2025

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Egypt and Turkey: A Rising Denim Powerhouse Duo

"Two different continents sharing the same denim culture."

That is how Cemil Kolunsag, a board member of Istanbul-based Cross Textiles, the parent company of CRS Denim Egypt, describes Turkey and Egypt—an increasingly powerful sourcing and manufacturing duo for the $66.67 billion global denim market.

With rising production costs and supply chain uncertainties, denim brands are looking for cost-effective, reliable alternatives. Egypt, due to its proximity to Europe and trade advantages, is experiencing a significant influx of interest and foreign investment, particularly from Turkey's denim manufacturing sector.

In January, Turkish ready-made garment manufacturer Denim Rise revealed plans to invest $8.8 million in a new factory within Egypt's Qantara West Industrial Zone. The Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCZONE) reported that the facility, set to open in the second half of 2025, will create 1,000 jobs and export 70 percent of its production.

Last year Eroğlu Holding unveiled plans to establish a $40 million ready-made garment factory in the same zone. The plant is expected to create more than 3,000 jobs. Additionally, Sharabati Denim, which produces denim and flats in Egypt and Turkey, announced a new production facility in Sadat City designed to accommodate around 2,000 workers. The facility includes two spinning halls, a warping and sizing hall, a gabardine weaving hall, and a shuttle loom weaving hall.

"There is the need to have a more stable cost situation, which is not the case in Turkey at the moment," said Alessandro Moretti Ciacci, Sharabati Denim's sales and marketing director. The competitive market is pushing many garment makers to look for an alternative in the Mediterranean area for quick and sustainable service, he added.

Sharabati produces an expansive range of denim and flats in both Egypt and Turkey. Production capacity is 100 million meters in Egypt and 45 million in Turkey. The company also has warehousing facilities in Tunisia and Morocco. Ranging from lightweight shirting fabrics to heavy weights, the mill's collection has wide appeal across a variety of brands. Capsules like Dream of Nile, a denim line made with Egyptian cotton, and Loomers,

a line of selvedge fabrics produced on vintage Rutti shuttle looms, resonates with clients seeking specialty fabrics.

In addition to having production facilities in Tekirdag and Tokat, Turkey, Cross Textiles has operated CRS Denim Egypt in Port Said for the last 15 years. The fully integrated facility aims to be a solution provider to clients by managing spreading, cutting, sewing, dry process, washing, finishing, ironing and packaging operations. CRS employees 2,200 people and has the annual production capacity is 6 million jeans. It's clients European and American powerhouses in denim, including one of "the three big," Kolunsag said.

"We find that Egypt is very well suited for denim production. "What we make in CRS we also make in Cross, and vice versa," he said. "With that said we tend to make more bottoms and less tops in CRS than in Cross, simply based on demand."

In recent years, DNM has seen a growing interest from denim brands and designers in Egypt. Sedat Sualp, deputy general manager of DNM Denim, said this surge is driven by the country's cost efficiency, commitment to sustainable manufacturing practices, increasing infrastructure investments, and its strategically advantageous location. Transit times to the U.S. and EU are on par with other Mediterranean countries, while EU customers benefit from much shorter transit times compared to supplies from the Far East. Moreover, he said Egypt's position as a crossroads between the Far East and Europe enhances its ability to source raw materials and chemicals efficiently.

"The ease of raw material supply, the growing demand for production capacity in Turkey, and rising costs are driving companies to expand their operations in Egypt," Sualp said.

DNM Denim was established in 2011 in Damietta, Egypt, as a 100 percent Turkish capital investment initiative of Eroğlu Global Holding to produce denim fabric.

It has a production capacity of 31 million meters of denim fabric per year in 150,000 square meters. To further meet the needs of new and existing clients, Sualp said DNM is currently increasing capacity up to a total of 3.5 million meters/month (up from 2.6 million meters/month), with full operational capacity planned for the end of 2025.

Advantageous trade agreements like Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement with the U.S. and its duty-free trade access to the EU provide Turkish firms with a significant competitive edge. The QIZ initiative allows Egypt to export products to the U.S. duty-free if the products contain inputs from Israel, making it highly competitive for American brands.

Cost competitiveness is another area where Egypt excels. Sualp said lower labor and energy costs, along with investment incentives, make Egypt an attractive manufacturing hub. Labor costs are on par with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Egypt's skilled workforce and eco-friendly production technologies are drawing the attention of sustainable brands as well. "In the last few years, the focus has been sustainability, price and lead time," Kolunsag said. "We see this continuing, and as brands are under increasing pressure both regarding EU-regulations and customer price sensitivity, the price and lead time parameters became more important than ever."

As sustainability becomes a priority, Alice Tonello, R&D and marketing manager for Tonello, said Egyptian manufacturers investing in responsible production and advanced technology are set to gain a competitive edge.

The Italian finishing technology firm, which recently exhibited at the Denimandjeans Egypt trade show, is one of the companies providing innovative and sustainable technologies to help Egyptian factories enhance efficiency, meet global standards, and position themselves as reliable suppliers for top brands.

"While low-cost machinery remains common in the market, export-driven manufacturers are realizing the need to invest in high-quality equipment to compete internationally," she said. "By supporting this shift, we contribute to the long-term competitiveness of the Egyptian denim industry."

Egypt is also home to the largest cotton and textile producers on the African continent and in the world. Thanks to this tradition, Andrea Venier, managing director of the chemical firm Officina39, said the Egyptian textile industry is increasingly becoming a major player in the global textile market.

"Driven by a market seeking new production hubs, Egypt can certainly be one of the textile platforms of the future. The Egyptian government is strongly supporting the textile sector, to the extent that several manufacturing companies are interested in starting production in the country. This obviously shifts the focus to the entire supply chain and everything around it," he said.

Although Officina39 is still familiarizing itself with the Egyptian market, Venier remains optimistic about the growing focus on innovation, cutting-edge solutions, and sustainability. "During our visits to potential Egyptian clients, we found a market eager for new products and innovation. With local textile companies seeking to expand their product lines both in quantity and quality, we've decided to invest time and resources to develop our business here," Venier said.

While these advantages have encouraged increased investment in the country's garment sector, producing denim in Egypt does come with a unique set of challenges.

"Despite improvements in the business environment, political and economic uncertainties remain factors to consider for long-term investments," Sualp said. He named complex bureaucracy, infrastructure limitations, and currency fluctuations that impact costs as some of the hurdles. While labor is affordable, he said finding skilled workers for specialized production can be difficult.

Moretti Ciacci added that it is important for companies to good management, and possibly a local partner or an experienced advisor to help navigate bureaucracy. "For sure, Egypt's supply chain needs to be expanded and fine-tuned to have the quality and service appropriate for export, but it will be improving very fast when considering the level of know how being transferred there," he said.

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Mar 24, 2025

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USA: Retailers Grow Concerned Over Proposed Port Fees for Chinese Ships

Ahead of a pivotal two-day Congressional hearing that began Monday morning, retailers, ports, manufacturers, ocean carriers and farmers alike have all weighed in on the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) proposal to tack on fees for Chinese ships calling at U.S. ports.

Those proposed fees have been met largely with concern among the U.S. retail and container shipping industries. Top worries include increased freight rates, restrictions on exports, fewer port calls and potential job losses, along with lengthier delivery times to due mass ship diversions.

In a joint comment, the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) urged the Trump administration to consider other measures for addressing China's "unreasonable" dominance in the maritime sector. The firms advised USTR Jamieson Greer to conduct an economic impact analysis and other studies to example the ripple effects of possible policy changes.

NRF and RILA members shared various concerns over the proposed remedies, with one retailer estimating that freight rates for shipments to the U.S. West Coast would be tacked on $500 to $1,500 per container. East Coast rates would be higher, the unidentified retailer said.

"The fees will disproportionately impact importers that import fewer items per container such as furniture, home improvement, etc.," the retailer said.

Another retailer said that along with several tariffs added for Chinese goods, as well as steel and aluminum tariffs, the new port fees would subject some imports to additional duties between 90 and 95 percent.

"While the individual effect on the economy from the fines by themselves may not be much, combined with all of the other tariffs, they will have a devastating effect on our business," the company said.

As of Monday morning, more than 330 total comments were filed with the USTR on the ramifications of the proposals, which were the result of a nine-month probe into China's shipbuilding, maritime and logistics practices.

That investigation found that China's dominance of those industries has been "unreasonable" and harmful to U.S. economic interests, putting the country in violation of Section 301 trade laws. Among the arguments, the USTR has said China displaces foreign firms, deprives market-oriented businesses and their workers of commercial opportunities and lessens competition across the industries—all while creating more international dependencies on China.

China now produces more than half of the world's cargo ships by tonnage, up from just 5 percent in 1999, the USTR probe said. Comparatively, the U.S. builds a paltry 0.1 percent, and doesn't currently have a shipyard capable of meeting building capacity demands.

Container shipping expert John McCown noted the complexities of the USTR proposal as a massive detriment to everyone involved, indicating that the terminologies used throughout like "operator" and "Chinese-built" lend themselves to confusion among all stakeholders.

McCown also pointed out that many media reports commonly cite the "up to $1.5 million" in penalties that would be levied on Chinese-built ships, but that it is just one prong of multiple that often undersells how much a vessel would have to pay.

In one example of China's Cosco Shipping, which generated $6.7 billion in net profit in 2024, McCown highlighted that one vessel traversing the West Coast would cost the liner $3.5 million per port call. This would add up to $10.5 million for any voyage that involves three West Coast ports—typical of a 10,000-container Cosco ship travelling the trans-Pacific route.

"Different fees will apply to various carriers depending on their own circumstances, but it becomes abundantly clear that the minimums would be in the $1 million to $2 million range per port call," McCown said.

The one apparel brand and distributor represented among the commenting parties, strongly opposed the proposals on the back of the fees.

Perry Ellis International CEO and president Oscar Feldenkreis said in his submission that the fees would significantly raise the cost of imported goods, in that ocean carriers will either pass the costs onto importers via increased freight rates or reduced service to U.S. ports.

"Delays in shipments due to fewer port calls and higher shipping costs will force businesses like ours to either carry excess inventory—tying up capital and warehouse space—or face stock shortages that will disrupt operations and sales," Feldenkreis said.

The potential loss of business at American ports like Savannah, Charleston and Miami is a concern of many of the proposal's detractors.

Soren Toft, the CEO of the world's largest ocean carrier, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), previously said the company would stop servicing the Port of Oakland if the fees were put into place. Toft told attendees at the TPM 25 trade and logistics conference that MSC would instead focus solely on the major California ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

"We can't proceed to Oakland if that costs another million dollars," Toft bluntly said at the time.

Cary Davis, president and CEO of the American Association of Port Authorities, backed this up in his public comments, noting that ocean carriers would be incentivized to consolidate traffic to larger ports.

"Rather than unloading a third of cargo each at ports A, B, and C, a carrier may unload all cargo at port A, with two-thirds of it needing to be moved by truck or rail to ports B and C. The results could be devastating," Davis said. "Our nation's highways and railroads will be clogged with increased truck and rail traffic. Regional ports that support their local economies will see dramatic declines in throughput. Exporters that rely on small and medium-sized ports to get products to the global market will suddenly find that ships don't come to their region anymore."

Not all the comments went against the USTR proposal.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), which represents West Coast dockworkers, said the extra charges would encourage carriers to unload cargo outside the U.S. and then truck it across the borders with Mexico and Canada. This could lead to job losses at ports if container volumes dive.

But the union had another proposal to complement the port fees, recommending the USTR add a land border fee on cargo originating from China that ends up diverted to Canadian and Mexican ports.

"By implementing this fee, we can level the playing field and eliminate the financial incentive for Chinese ships to bypass U.S. ports," said Dan McKisson, chair of the ILWU Coast Longshore Legislative Committee. "This approach ensures that if shippers choose to route cargo through neighboring countries, they still contribute to trust funds supporting U.S. port infrastructure, rather than avoiding these essential investments."

McKisson, along with Alliance of American Manufacturing president Scott Paul, are both speaking at the congressional hearing Monday in support of the wider proposals.

The Alliance of American Manufacturing stood behind the USTR's proposed remedies, citing risks to national security and logistics networks, and negative impacts on maritime supply chains and the U.S. workforce.

"We cannot expect our companies or our workers to compete against countries," Paul said. "And we cannot allow our national defense to be undermined and attacked by non-market policies and practices. U.S. shipbuilding production has declined as artificially low prices of ships flood the market."

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Mar 24, 2025

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France' apparel imports at $24.58 bn in 2024, China retains top spot

Apparel imports by France edged down to $24.586 billion in 2024, marking a decline of 0.72 per cent compared to imports worth $24.766 billion in 2023.

China was the top supplier, accounting for 23.08 per cent of France's total apparel imports in 2024. Bangladesh, Italy, Turkiye, and Vietnam were the other countries among the top five suppliers.

Apparel imports from China increased by 1.58 per cent to $5.675 billion in 2024, up from $5.587 billion in the previous year. Imports from China had declined by 9.74 per cent to $5.674 billion in 2020 but had rebounded by 12.28 per cent to $6.371 billion in 2021.

The trade further increased by 3.76 per cent to $6.611 billion in 2022. However, inbound trade from China fell by 15.49 per cent to $5.587 billion in 2023, according to Fibre2Fashion's market insight tool TexPro.

Bangladesh, the second-largest supplier, held a 15.45 per cent share of France's apparel imports in 2024, with trade valued at $3.799 billion. This represented a slight increase of 0.34 per cent from $3.786 billion in 2023.

Inbound shipments from Bangladesh had fallen by 14.24 per cent to $2.646 billion in 2020. They then increased by 24.52 per cent to $3.294 billion in 2021 and jumped by 35.01 per cent to $4.448 billion in 2022. However, trade slowed by 14.89 per cent in 2023, according to TexPro.

Apparel imports from Italy, the third-largest supplier, were valued at $2.671 billion in 2024, accounting for 10.86 per cent of the total. Inbound shipments from Italy have shown a consistent upward trend since 2020, when they fell by 10.61 per cent to $1.735 billion.

Imports then rose by 18.54 per cent to $2.056 billion in 2021, by 6.72 per cent to $2.195 billion in 2022, and by 20.86 per cent to $2.652 billion in 2023.

France imported apparel worth $1.635 billion from Turkiye and $1.292 billion from Vietnam in 2024, representing shares of 6.65 per cent and 5.26 per cent respectively.

Imports from Turkiye declined by 5.92 per cent from $1.738 billion in 2023, while shipments from Vietnam increased by 12.65 per cent from $1.147 billion in the same year.

Among the next top five suppliers, imports from India were noted at $1,108.831 million (4.51 per cent), Cambodia $1,050.825 million (4.27 per cent), Tunisia $1,002.056 million (4.08 per cent), Morocco $968.332 million (3.94 per cent), and Pakistan $703.138 million (2.86 per cent) in 2024.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 25, 2025

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Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association unveils 10-yr strategic plan

The Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association's (MGMA) strategic plan for 2025-2034 envisages setting goals for the industry to penetrate global markets with high-quality, value-added products.

It aims at cultivating ethical and responsible operations, and expects to employ 1.2-1.6 million workers in the next decade, growing to a $15-billion industry.

The country's garment industry is estimated to be worth about $5 billion this year.

The strategic plan aims at creating a collaborative and innovative industrial environment for the country's garment sector to achieve long-term success by addressing current challenges.

It also includes a robust strategy to address key areas, including stakeholder networking and financial resources, developing a workforce for economic growth anticipated in the decade, training, upgrading technology and strengthening infrastructure, a domestic media outlet reported.

The country's garment sector earned $4.46 billion in export revenue last year—down by about $750 million year on year.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 24, 2025

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Dutch consumer confidence more negative in Mar 2025: CBS

The mood among Dutch consumers was more negative in March this year than in February, with consumer confidence standing at minus 34 in the month compared with minus 32 in February, according to Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

Opinions about the economic climate deteriorated, in particular. The recovery of consumer confidence after an all-time low in October 2022, ended in 2024. Since October, confidence has fallen for six consecutive months.

The consumer confidence indicator for March is positioned well below its long-term average for the previous twenty years (minus 10). The indicator reached its all-time high (36) in January 2000, while the all-time low (minus 59) was reached in September and October 2022.

Consumers were more pessimistic about the economy in February than they were in January. This component of the indicator fell to minus 57, compared to minus 54 in February.

Consumers' assessment of the economic situation for the next twelve months has deteriorated, in particular. But also the assessment of economic situation over the previous twelve months was slightly more negative.

Willingness to buy among consumers stood at minus 18 in March, down from minus 17 in February, a CBS release said.

Consumers' opinions on both their personal financial situation over the past twelve months and their assessment of the next twelve months were more negative.

Consumers were also more negative about making large purchases in March than they were in February.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 25, 2025

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Bangladesh: Govt moves to halt yarn imports through land ports

The government has initiated steps to ban the import of yarn through land ports to prevent misuse of the facility, as these ports lack the capacity to properly identify different categories of yarn, according to sources at the Ministry of Commerce.

Ministry officials stated that the decision follows a request from textile millers, who have long argued that yarn imports through land ports undermine local industry.

Instead, they proposed that yarn, a key raw material for the ready-made garment (RMG) industry, should be imported only through seaports.

Apparel exporters have expressed concerns that restricting yarn imports through land ports could negatively impact small and medium-sized factories that rely on them for easier and more cost-effective access to raw materials.

"The sudden ban will put additional pressure on small factories, particularly those in border areas, which depend on land ports for quick and flexible imports. This could lead to financial distress," said a senior official from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

BTMA's rationale for the ban

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), representing spinning and textile mill owners, made the request for the ban in a letter to Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed.

The letter, signed by BTMA President Showkat Aziz Russell, was forwarded to the National Board of Revenue in late January for regulatory consideration.

Showkat noted that a previous policy revision had allowed yarn imports through land ports but these ports lack the necessary infrastructure to scrutinise raw materials.

Additionally, the policy permitted partial shipments, which, according to industry observations, has led to widespread misuse, adversely affecting local mills.

"We have seen growth in apparel exports in the new fiscal year, yet local mills are struggling due to multiple challenges, including low orders," he said.

He also pointed out that while Bangladesh's textile industry faces difficulties, India's textile exports to Bangladesh have grown significantly, which he argued is detrimental to the country's interests.

"It is absurd that policies are being implemented against local industries and job creation. We believe the interim government will revise this decision to protect domestic industries," he added.

In its letter, BTMA warned that allowing continued yarn imports through land ports would cause irreparable damage to the country's textile sector, increasing reliance on imported yarn and leading to higher import costs and unemployment.

Concerns from apparel sector

Meanwhile, industry leaders warn that the move could disrupt the supply chain, increase production costs, and affect Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global apparel market.

Larger factories can source materials through seaports or local suppliers, but smaller manufacturers often lack these alternatives.

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Mohammad Hatem stated that textile millers have large stockpiles due to the previous government's decision to reduce cash incentives on local yarn.

He added that apparel exporters are unwilling to accept such low incentives and that local textile millers are not competitive in pricing compared to their counterparts in other countries.

Citing research data, he noted that the price of 30 single yarn in Bangladesh is $3.40 per kg, whereas it is $2.90 per kg in India and $2.96 per kg in Vietnam.

Hatem also raised concerns about the volume of yarn imports through land ports and the percentage they constitute of total imported yarn.

He warned that a ban on yarn imports via land ports would negatively impact small and medium-sized factories, as well as fast fashion apparel manufacturers since seaports require a longer lead time.

BKMEA Executive President Fazlee Shamim Ehsan told TBS, "While we understand the government's concerns, a complete ban may not be the best approach. Instead, improving monitoring and customs procedures at land ports would be a more effective solution."

Exporters and industry leaders have urged the government to reconsider the decision, suggesting phased implementation or exemptions for smaller factories to mitigate the impact.

Challenges facing textile sector

The textile sector is already facing difficulties due to rising gas and electricity prices, the dollar crisis, soaring interest rates, reduced export incentives tied to LDC graduation conditions, and the depreciation of the taka.

Meanwhile, yarn and fabrics entering the local market at dumping prices from India through various land ports have created new challenges for domestic textile mills.

The BTMA letter highlighted the risks of yarn imports, noting that land ports such as Benapole, Bhomra, Sona Masjid, and Banglabandha lack proper infrastructure, yarn count measuring equipment, skilled manpower, and effective oversight.

As a result, import and export trade is not being efficiently managed.

Additionally, textile mills face unfair competition due to the marketing of unauthorised yarn, often imported through land ports with false customs declarations.

This practice not only harms local industries but also results in significant revenue losses for the government.

The letter further stated that the policy permitting partial shipments has been widely misused, allowing multiple imports under the same letter of credit beyond approved limits.

BTMA suggested that shifting yarn imports to seaports would help protect the domestic textile sector and preserve valuable foreign exchange.

Seaports, they argued, have superior infrastructure, including high-quality scanners and yarn count measuring machines, and typically process imports within 13 to 15 days.

During a meeting at the Ministry of Commerce yesterday (24 March), its secretary, Mahbubur Rahman, requested BTMA to provide supporting documents regarding allegations of dumping practices by Indian exporters.

He noted that India has imposed anti-dumping duties on several goods from different countries, including Bangladesh, and assured that if the claim is substantiated, the government will take necessary action.

BKMEA Executive President Fazlee Shamim Ehsan echoed the proposal for imposing anti-dumping duties, advocating for stronger regulatory measures to ensure fair trade practices.

Source: tbsnews.com– Mar 24, 2025

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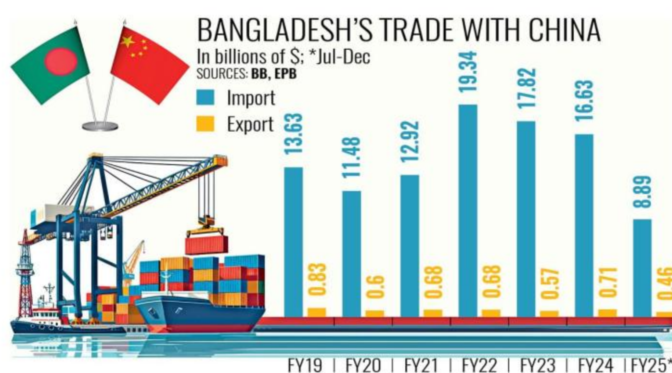
Bangladesh underperforms in zero-duty trade with China

Bangladesh has hardly been able to utilise the generous zero-duty trade benefits offered by China due to a lack of product diversity, whereas Chinese imports have steadily risen, given the country's increasing reliance on a single sourcing destination.

China has been the single largest trading partner for Bangladesh for many years, but imports from the country have far outweighed exports, with shipments from Bangladesh failing to cross even the one-billion-dollar mark.



In the July-December period of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh imported goods worth $8.89 billion and exported goods worth $461.05 million, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank (BB) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

In the previous fiscal, the total import value from China was $16.63 billion whereas exports amounted to just $715.37 million.

According to economists and business leaders, during Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus' upcoming visit to China, Bangladesh should hold negotiations to attract more Chinese investment in Bangladesh and minimise the trade gap.

A major factor behind the rise in imports is the fact that Bangladesh relies heavily on China for textile articles such as yarn and fabrics, especially man-made fibres and fabrics, which account for over 40 percent of total Chinese imports by Bangladesh.

Capital machinery makes up nearly a quarter of imports, accounting for 24 percent. Other imports include cotton, food items and other materials.

On the other hand, Bangladesh's main export items to China are garments although China itself is the largest apparel exporter in the world, boasting a global market share of over 31 percent.

The Chinese garment sector, which includes goods for export purposes and domestic consumption, is worth around $750 billion. Of that, China's domestic consumption is nearly $350 billion.

However, China annually imports merely $10 billion worth of garment items from all over the world. So, Bangladesh's opportunity to export more to China is very low, especially as the country lacks a range of diversified products.

"We need to bring more Chinese investment in export-oriented sectors here, especially in the man-made fibre sector. This way, goods produced here can be exported to China and help reduce the trade gap between the two countries," said Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID).

Efforts should also be made to try and allure Chinese entrepreneurs to relocate their factories to Bangladesh as there are ample opportunities for investment, not only in man-made fibres but also in sectors such as leather and leather goods, solar panels, semiconductors and microchips, Razzaque added.

Currently, Chinese investment in Bangladesh is mainly confined to infrastructure projects, he said, suggesting a regular joint trade and investment fair to promote business between the two countries.

He also suggested that ongoing negotiations to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) between Bangladesh and China be reframed as a free trade and investment agreement.

EPB Vice-Chairman Anwar Hossain said a lot of Chinese entrepreneurs have been inquiring about investing in Bangladesh after Donald Trump came to power in the US and hiked duties on Chinese shipments to 35 percent.

Moreover, Chinese importers are showing a lot of interest in importing more jackfruits, mangoes, guavas and hilsa fish from Bangladesh, which would help diversification, said Hossain, who is also the administrator of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), requested the relocation of Chinese factories to Bangladesh, especially in sectors such as textiles, garments, shoes and leather.

Moreover, Bangladesh should lobby to get large Chinese banks to open branches in Bangladesh, which would bolster financing and the supply of foreign currencies, he added.

An official of the Chinese Entrepreneurs Association in Bangladesh (CEAB) said the platform has more than 1,000 registered members, with most companies invested in garments and textiles enterprises in export processing zones.

Mohd Khorshed Alam, the immediate past president of the Bangladesh China Chambers of Commerce and Industry (BCCCI), blamed the lack of export diversity for lower shipments to China.

A lot of Chinese entrepreneurs come here but feel discouraged to invest when they hear about abnormal price hikes for energy and political unrest, he added.

However, a nearly $5 billion Chinese investment plan may be unveiled during the chief adviser's visit to China as many are sending inquiries for investment in Bangladesh, he added.

Source: thedailystar.net– Mar 25, 2025

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NATIONAL NEWS

US team in India this week to discuss tariff cuts ahead of April 2 reciprocal tariffs

Assistant US Trade Representative Brendan Lynch will be in India with his team on Tuesday to hold a week-long face-to-face discussion with Indian negotiators on tariff cuts ahead of the April 2 date set by US President Donald Trump for the imposition of reciprocal tariffs on "high tariffing nations" including India.

"The Commerce Department is holding meetings with all line Ministries including Finance and Agriculture to weigh the concessions that could be offered to the US in the areas of its interest. There is a lot of urgency as this is the final week when attempts can be made to put off the April 2 US reciprocal tariffs," a source tracking the matter told businessline.

Lynch is also expected to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and External Affairs Secretary Vikram Misri during the visit.

Virtual meetings have already been on between the USTR team and Indian officials over the last couple of weeks based on which India is trying to work on its improved offers for tariff cuts, which may also include some agricultural items.

"Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch, along with a team of US government officials, will be in India from March 25-29 for meetings with Indian interlocutors as part of ongoing bilateral trade discussions. This visit reflects the United States' continued commitment to advancing a productive and balanced trade relationship with India," according to Christopher Elms, Spokesperson, US Embassy.

Last week, Trump made it clear in an interview that he was not going to be soft on India because of his good relationship with the country and the reciprocal tariffs would be imposed if New Delhi did not lower its tariffs.

It has, however, been reported by some foreign news organisations, including the WSJ, that the reciprocal tariffs targetting specific sectors, including automobiles, pharmaceuticals and semi-conductors may get excluded from Trump's April 2 announcements.

"We look forward to productive and constructive discussions with the incoming US delegation to expand and deepen our bilateral trade and economic ties in a mutually beneficial manner," the Commerce Department said in a statement on the visit of Lynch.

Cars, motorcycles, alcohol and agricultural items are some of the products where the US government has explicitly called for tariff cuts from India. "The US was not happy with the initial proposals related to tariff cuts made by India during Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Washington DC earlier this month. The offers need to improve," the source pointed out.

In a quandary

While India and the US are working on the contours of a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), Trump's statement indicated that America is not going to wait till the first tranche of the pact is delivered by the agreed time of Fall of 2025.

"It is very clear that India has to make some commitments on tariff cuts to the US this week itself. Or it has to convince the USTR team that it is on the right track and the first tranche of the BTA will be satisfactory for the US. If neither of the two happens, then India will have to face tariffs on April 2," the source said.

US' simple average tariff on imports is 3.3 per cent while India's is over five times higher at 17 per cent, per WTO figures. US' trade weighted average tariff is 2.2 per cent while India's is 12 per cent. Average applied tariffs on agricultural goods by India is much higher at 39 per cent while the US duties are at 5 per cent.

Assuaging the US' concerns on tariffs is important for India as it does not want to go into a tariff war with its largest trading and export partner. In FY24, India exported goods worth $77.51 billion to the US and its imports were worth $42.19 billion. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had agreed on working out a BTA that would increase bilateral trade to $500 billion by 2030 and create a "more level playing field".

Source: thehindubusinessline.com– Mar 24, 2025

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India to drive 6% of world trade growth in 5 yrs, 3rd to US, China: Report

India is estimated to contribute 6 per cent to global trade growth over the next five years, according to the 'DHL Trade Atlas 2025' report, jointly published by New York University's Stern School of Business and German logistics brand DHL.

The report, which gives an analysis of trade patterns for nearly 200 countries and territories worldwide, states that India's share in global trade expansion will follow that of China, which is expected to contribute 12 per cent, and the United States, projected at 10 per cent.

"India also stands out as the country with the third-largest absolute amount of forecast trade growth (6 per cent of additional global trade), behind only China (12 per cent) and the United States (10 per cent)," said the report. It noted that globally, trade growth has continued to show resilience amid geopolitical tensions and trade policy uncertainty.

According to the report, India is expected to retain its third spot on the scale dimension, which it achieved due to "its trade growth was much faster than other large economies." India is also expected to rise to 17th place on the speed dimension metric, up from its current position at 32.

The report highlights that while India was ranked only as the 13th largest participant in international trade in 2024, its trade volume grew at a compound annual rate of 5.2 per cent between 2019 and 2024, significantly outpacing the global trade growth rate of 2.0 per cent during the same period.

"India's rapid trade growth reflected both its swift macroeconomic growth and its increasing participation in international trade. While China is often viewed as a more trade-oriented economy than India, India's goods trade-to-GDP ratio was almost as high as China's in 2023, and India's trade intensity exceeded China's when considering trade in both goods and services," the report states.

On future global trade growth leaders, the report states that during the next five years, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines are forecasted to rank among the top 30 for both speed and scale of trade growth.

Speaking to news agency ANI, RS Subramanian, SVP South Asia, DHL Express, said, "The Trade Atlas underlines India's rapid expansion in global trade, positioning the country as a critical hub connecting the East and West. While we anticipate trade volume growth and an increase in global trade share, we remain cautiously optimistic about the future given the global economy's general volatility."

Status of India's foreign trade

According to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for March 2025, the cumulative exports (merchandise and services) during April-February 2024-25 are estimated at $750.53 billion, as compared to $706.43 billion in the same period of the previous fiscal - an estimated growth of 6.24 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y). Key drivers of merchandise export growth in February 2025 included electronic goods, rice, mica, coal, and other ores, minerals including processed minerals, readymade garments of all textiles, and coffee.

Trade with key partners such as the US, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Brazil, and Australia remained significant. The trade deficit for the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) was recorded at $78.12 billion, reduced from $121.6 billion in FY23, according to the Ministry of Finance.

Source: business-standard.com– Mar 24, 2025

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Committed to 'productive, balanced' trade ties with India, says US

The US is committed to advancing a "productive and balanced" trade relationship with India, a spokesperson for its embassy in New Delhi said Monday, ahead of trade talks and the April 2 rollout of reciprocal tariffs, which American President Donald Trump suggested could have "flexibility" in implementation.

Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative (USTR) for South and Central Asia, will lead a team of US officials on a five-day visit to India starting March 25 for bilateral trade discussions, the spokesperson said.

The talks are expected to hammer out the details of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA), with Lynch serving as the chief negotiator. The aim is to finalise the first phase of the deal by "the fall" of 2025. During the visit, meetings with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and External Affairs Secretary Vikram Misri are expected.

"We value our ongoing engagement with the Government of India on trade and investment matters, and look forward to continuing these discussions in a constructive, equitable, and forward-looking manner," the embassy spokesperson said.

India's commerce department said in a statement that it looks forward to productive and constructive discussions with the incoming US delegation to expand bilateral trade and economic ties in a mutually beneficial manner.

"As directed by the leaders of the two countries, India remains committed to working with the US side in the trade and economic domains to enhance prosperity and innovation in both India and the US, and deepen supply chain integration between the two countries," it added.

The visit follows Goyal's meetings with senior US officials, including USTR Jamieson Greer and Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, in Washington on March 4-6.

India has shared a "non-paper" with the US, outlining New Delhi's perspectives and informal proposals ahead of the negotiations — with the larger idea to "test the waters" before negotiations commence officially.

In line with Trump's "America First" policy, Washington plans to implement reciprocal tariffs from April 2 on its trade partners and other nations to match the tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports from the US. The finer details of the policy are still being finalised by the USTR.

India remains concerned about the potential impact of these tariffs but has not yet devised a specific counter-strategy, largely due to uncertainty over how they will be applied. "We don't know whether they will be imposed on a country-specific or product-specific basis. That's why we are prioritising BTA negotiations, as the trade deal will address tariff and market access concerns," a senior Indian government official said.

Trump, late on Friday, said that there would be "flexibility" on the reciprocal tariff plan, without explaining what it would mean. "People are coming to me and talking about tariffs, and a lot of people are asking me if they could have exceptions. And once you do that for one, you have to do that for all... I don't change. But the word flexibility is an important word," he said.

Source: business-standard.com– Mar 25, 2025

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The coming tsunami of Chinese exports: India may have to follow suit

It is now common knowledge that China is the world's manufacturing and trade powerhouse, running a goods trade surplus of $1 trillion — an unprecedented magnitude. The surplus has almost tripled since the pandemic. China runs a trade surplus of over $300 billion with the US, more than $200 billion with the EU, and almost $500 billion with the Global South (the Emerging Market universe). The only countries with which China has a trade deficit are Taiwan and South Korea, due to chip and electronic component imports, and Australia, because of commodity imports.

As the world's factory, China accounts for 32 per cent of global manufacturing value added, followed by the US at 15 per cent. The next two countries, Japan and Germany, have shares of only 6.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent, respectively. Such is China's dominance that its manufacturing sector is twice the size of its closest competitor. This dominance has emerged in just 30 years. In 1995, China's share of global manufacturing value added was less than 5 per cent, trailing behind the US, Japan, and Germany.

China is unique in its dominance of both high-end and basic manufacturing, holding a market share of 65 per cent in EV batteries, electrical equipment, and solar panels, as well as a 50 per cent share in apparel and basic materials. China's manufacturing sector is 10 times the size of India's.

Exports have been a major driver of China's growth and prosperity. However, there is a clear disconnect between its share of global manufacturing and consumption. While China accounts for 32 per cent of global manufacturing, it represents only 12 per cent of global consumption (source: DB, World Bank). Structurally, it produces far more than it consumes and relies heavily on exporting this excess production.

However, with Donald Trump back in power, there is a clear rethink in the US towards global trade and globalisation more generally. The US, and the West more broadly, are thinking deeply about their loss of manufacturing competitiveness from a national security and resilience of supply chains angle. The loss of competitiveness has also increased inequality and

hollowed out the middle class, with the US now having less than 10 per cent of its workforce in manufacturing.

There are also fears around deindustrialisation and loss of high-paying jobs. While this sentiment has been growing over the last eight years, China has been able to counter it by routing its exports through other countries. If you see the data, China's trade surplus with the US and EU has hardly grown in absolute terms over the past four years, while it has surged with the Global South, increasing from $300 billion to $500 billion. This surge in trade surplus is not a sudden increase in demand for Chinese goods in the Global South, but rather a rerouting of Chinese exports to the West through the Global South. This is apparent, as the surging trade surplus of China with the Global South is matched by an equally large increase in trade surplus of the Global South with the US.

It is now apparent that the West is determined to prevent this routing of exports. It is evident in the attempts to force Mexico to raise tariffs on China, as well as other trade barriers. Even the EU has got in the game as we can see with the tariffs on Chinese EVs. This gaming of the tariffs is coming to an end.

This brings us to the question, if it becomes more difficult for Chinese products to enter Western markets, where will these goods go? China is not going to stop producing these goods. That would be catastrophic for its economy and risk deflation. Manufacturing employs over 22 per cent of the Chinese labour force and accounts for more than 26 per cent of gross domestic product. It is too big a part of the economy.

Neither is China going to be able to consume all these products domestically. Even if consumption in China were to revive, it would not be able to absorb this scale of trade surplus. While household savings at 32 per cent are slightly above long-term averages, even if savings normalise, domestic consumption will not absorb the excess production. Exports are, in most cases, more profitable than domestic sales, given the hyper-competitive domestic Chinese market for products. Thus, exports will remain a priority for most Chinese companies, all of whom continue to have surplus capacity.

The obvious answer to where the goods will go is the Global South, especially a country like India. The Global South accounts for more than 20 per cent of global consumption and is where the new middle class is being created. This is where China will attempt to sell, this time to serve

domestic consumption in these markets rather than as a routing base for onward sales to the West.

China is hyper-competitive and has moved up the value chain in terms of both quality and technology. Its scale is such that it is very difficult to compete. The West will not block basic Chinese goods like apparel or chemicals, as it is impossible to manufacture these products cost-effectively in these countries. The focus will be on blocking higher value-added, more sophisticated products that threaten the remaining industrial base of the West.

The risk for the countries of the Global South is that, as China directs its manufacturing machine towards them, they may struggle to ensure their industrial base remains intact and grows in both size and sophistication. There is a real risk of China overpowering the local industrial base in these countries, which will not be able to compete with the Chinese industrial juggernaut on scale, cost, or technology.

India already has a trade deficit with China of over $100 billion. We import many of the sophisticated industrial products that China is keen to export as it gets blocked out of Western markets. This accounts for 10 per cent of the total trade surplus of China, and half its surplus with the entire EU! We have to be on high alert that this number does not blow out further.

China will have no choice but to dump products into the Global South as barriers in the West keep going up. We run the risk of deindustrialisation and lack of job creation if we let our industries get run over by the Chinese import surge. One of the reasons that Indian private sector capex has been slow to respond is this fear of being swamped by China. While the Indian government has been cognisant of this risk, we still see the administrative machinery as being too slow to respond. Anti-dumping actions take too long, and we don't appear agile or fully coordinated on non-tariff barriers at the policymaking level.

India is the largest market in the Global South and is hugely attractive to China, given its need for the sophisticated, higher value-added goods that China now excels in. We are also in many products China's only potential future competitor. We need to give our industry the time and space to respond to the threat of Chinese dumping and to move up the value curve ourselves. We have limited time to get our house in order by fixing factor markets and cutting regulatory cholesterol. The only way to create enough

good jobs is by increasing our share of manufacturing. This will remain out of reach if we allow China unimpeded access to our markets and fail to fix our structural cost inefficiencies.

The Chinese manufacturing machine is formidable. With a trillion-dollar trade surplus, its scale and competitiveness are unmatched. As the world erects barriers to guard against deindustrialisation and protect supply chains, India will have no choice but to follow suit.

Source: business-standard.com– Mar 24, 2025

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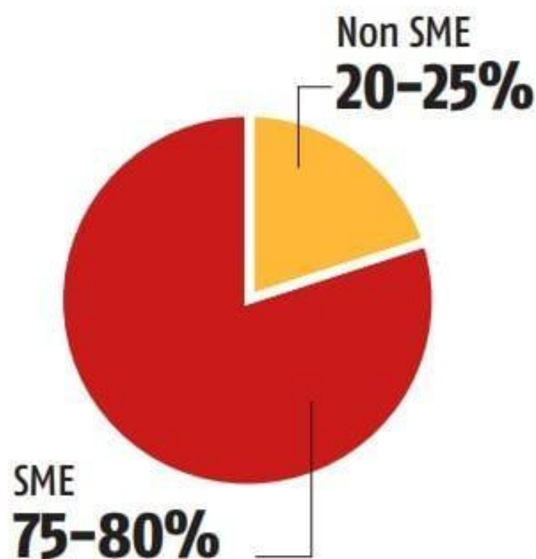
Textiles set for revival in FY25 on stable cotton, stronger RMG exports

The textile industry is expected to recover this financial year after two years of contraction, driven by stable cotton prices, improving exports of readymade garments (RMG) and steady domestic demand. Revival of RMG exports augurs well for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which account for 80 per cent of the textile value chain.

In FY24, the SMEs were hit hard as a 25 per cent drop in cotton prices and weak RMG exports pulled down the industry revenue despite steady domestic demand.

This financial year, while domestic demand for cotton yarn is expected to be a tad slower than last financial year, stable prices will support revenue growth. Export of cotton yarn, meanwhile, will decline as Chinese demand normalises.



The major traction for the industry will come from RMG exports, which is expected to grow 10-12 per cent this financial year, driven by restocking by western retailers and resilient discretionary demand in the US and EU. Domestic demand for RMG on the other hand is expected to hold steady and grow at 3-4 per cent, aided by recovery in the second half.

However, on the pricing front muted growth is expected as domestic garment prices are likely to remain flat or rise marginally by 1 per cent .

On the supply side, domestic cotton prices are witnessing marginal upward pressure owing to a decline in production, stable consumption and increase in minimum support price.

International prices, on the other hand are seeing downward pressure because of an increase in global production. Hence, domestic cotton prices are trading at a slight premium to international prices, even though compared to last financial year they are relatively rangebound.

Export-oriented RMG clusters such as Tirupur, Bengaluru and Gurugram are likely to see sharper revenue growth, given revival of RMG exports.

In contrast, clusters that cater to domestic markets, such as Kolkata, Kanchipuram and Ludhiana, are likely to experience slower growth.

Profitability of textile players is also expected to rebound this fiscal driven by stable cotton prices.

In the medium term, RMG sector is poised to grow, supported by free trade agreements with key markets such as Australia and the UAE, establishment of PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Parks and incentive schemes such as Production Linked Incentive and Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies, which will enhance domestic manufacturing and exports.

Source: business-standard.com– Mar 24, 2025

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Cotton production expected to be lower than last year

Cotton production in the current cotton season that will end in September 2025 is expected to be 295 lakh bales compared with 325 lakh bales last season.

The Committee on Cotton Production and Consumption that met on Monday said imports this season will be 25 lakh bales (16 lakh bales in 2023-2024) and exports will be 18 lakh bales.

Cotton consumption by the domestic textile industry is expected to be 302 lakh bales, which will be almost seven lakh bales lesser than last season. The cotton season is expected to close with 30 lakh bales stock, compared with 62 lakh bales in 2022-2023 and 47 lakh bales in 2023-2024.

Textile and clothing exports have picked up and so demand for yarn is higher now. The government should remove the import duty on cotton so that textile mills have adequate cotton between August and November this year, said SK Sundararaman, chairman of the Southern India Mills' Association.

Source: thehindu.com– Mar 24, 2025

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India's UP signs 2 MoUs worth $81.8 mn at PM MITRA park investors meet

India's Uttar Pradesh state signed two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth ₹700 crore ($81.8 million) at a recent investors' meet for the upcoming textile and apparel park at the border of Lucknow and Hardoi districts that is being developed under the Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA Scheme).

State Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met potential investors and said the park would turn the state into a textile hub, creating over 50,000 jobs.

He also distributed incentives worth ₹210 crore to 80 investors under the state's Textile and Apparel Policy 2017.

"On this occasion, incentive cheques were distributed to beneficiaries promoting investment and innovation in the textile industry and MoU was signed with investors," CM Yogi said in a post on X.

The textile and apparel park would offer integrated facilities for weaving, dyeing, printing, designing, and packaging, Yogi said. It would ensure a seamless production-to-export facility at a single location.

The state will establish 10 new textile parks named after Sant Kabir Das and two leather parks in honour of Sant Ravidas, he announced.

Investment proposals worth ₹3,800 crore had already been received under 83 MoUs, he was cited as saying by media reports from the state.

Source: fibre2fashion.com– Mar 23, 2025

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Parliament Question: Ministry Of Textiles

- PARLIAMENT QUESTION: REDUCING TRADE BARRIERS IN INDIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY TO ENHANCE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS
- PARLIAMENT QUESTION: ROLE OF INDIE HAAT IN PROMOTING INDIAN HANDICRAFTS AND HANDLOOM PRODUCTS
- PARLIAMENT QUESTION: SETTING UP OF PM MITRA PARKS
- PARLIAMENT QUESTION: SCHEMES FOR WELFARE OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS

Source: pib.gov.in.com– Mar 24, 2025

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Uniqlo Sets Up Sewing, Retail Training Skills Center In India

Uniqlo is taking on a bigger presence in India, this time with a job vocational training center to empower underprivileged youth.

The three-year program—Job-Oriented Vocational Training Centre—is designed to provide young job seekers with sewing machine and retail training skills, as well as life skills such as financial literacy. It targets young adults between ages 18 and 29 from economically disadvantaged households. The Saksham Centre in Dwarka, Delhi, will host the program, which is in collaboration with Plan International and a donation of 120 million Japanese Yen from Uniqlo parent Fast Retailing Co. Ltd.

"Inspired by our LifeWear philosophy of making everyone's life better, we hope this skill centre project will have a life-changing, positive impact for thousands of young Indian people.

It is fundamental for UNIQLO that, in every country and region that we operate, we always contribute to the society, and this new project reaffirms our long-term commitment to the Indian community," Uniqlo India's CFO and chief operating officer Kenji Inoue said. "Education is an integral part of individual and societal development and, working with Plan International, we look forward to providing opportunities to empower young people."

Plan International's India Chapter executive director Mohammed Asif said that the program will provide young women and men with market-oriented skills so they can become "active contributors to nation building."

Uniqlo India operates 15 retail stores and is looking to expand its store presence. Its first store in New Delhi opened in 2019. Most of the store locations are in New Delhi.

The retailer opened its first Mumbai store in 2023. The brand sources some of its product locally, although T-shirts and its Heattech apparel that are manufactured in India are exported to its global store network. The brand is also considering retail internships at its stores for those who train at the Saksham Centre.

Uniqlo in January agreed to stop using gig economy apps, such as Tempur and YoungOnes, to hire temporary store-based workers. The U.K. Trades Union Congress at the time asked some retailers—the retailers, including Uniqlo, are believed to have used the apps only briefly for the holiday selling season—to stop the practice due to concerns that freelancers hired through the apps weren't getting basic employment rights.

When Fast Retailing posted first-quarter profits in January, the company said Uniqlo's businesses saw "favorable" expansion in Southeast Asia, India & Australia, North America and Europe. The focus of store openings has been across North America and Europe. Fast Retailing in October 2023 detailed plans on how it would step up new store openings.

Source: sourcingjournal.com– Mar 24, 2025

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