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# POST EVENT REPORT

**6th Edition | 11 February, 2025**

Radisson Blu Water Garden, Dhaka

[www.sustainableapparelforum.com](http://www.sustainableapparelforum.com)

## Accelerating the Momentum of Apparel Sustainability

# Bangladesh's Journey in Sustainable RMG Production and the Need for Continued Dialogue

Bangladesh has emerged as a global leader in sustainable ready-made garment (RMG) production, setting benchmarks for ethical sourcing, responsible manufacturing, and environmental stewardship. With over 245 LEED- certified green factories, including many platinum-rated ones, Bangladesh leads the world in green garment manufacturing. The industry has embraced renewable energy, water recycling, and waste management, while ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions for millions of workers.



Despite this progress, the dialogue on sustainability remains critical. The global fashion industry is evolving rapidly, with increasing demands for transparency, circularity, and resource optimization. Stakeholders—brands, manufacturers, policymakers, and consumers—must unite to address emerging challenges, such as reducing water consumption, renewable energy transition, adopting circular economy models, and ensuring social compliance across supply chains.

Collaborative dialogues are essential to future-proof the industry. By sharing knowledge, innovating together, and aligning on global standards, Bangladesh can continue to lead as a sustainable sourcing hub while addressing new challenges. Sustainability is not a destination but a continuous journey, and only through collective action can we ensure a resilient & thriving future for the RMG industry.

## Emergence of the Sustainable Apparel Forum

# Empowering Bangladesh for Global Leadership in Sustainability

In pursuit of elevating Bangladesh as a global leader in responsible sourcing, the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) emerged with a definitive mission—to accelerate sustainability within the apparel industry. Established in 2017, SAF has evolved into a prestigious platform, facilitating crucial dialogues on innovation, technology, education, and awareness to bridge knowledge gaps.



Tailored specifically for apparel and textile stakeholders, the forum facilitates insightful discussions on sustainability issues. By bringing together industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, SAF strives to chart a course toward a more sustainable and responsible future for Bangladesh and the entire global apparel industry.

Today, Sustainable Apparel Forum boasts an international reputation, fostering an environment where fresh perspectives on sustainability and innovation are not just encouraged but celebrated.

# Founder's Message



Dear Friends,

As the curtains close on the 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride. This event has been a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and shared vision. To each and every one of you who contributed to making this forum a resounding success, I extend my deepest appreciation.

This edition, we were able to partner up with the incredible Dutch Trade Delegation—18 companies, 45 innovators, investors, and buyers. Their trust in us and active participation have elevated this forum to new heights. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Embassy of the Netherlands, Resilient Water Accelerator and KDS Group. Without their partnerships, organizing this year's Forum would not have been possible.

To our sponsors, industry leaders, and many others, your contributions have been pivotal. Your belief in our mission fuels our determination to drive transformative change. This year's forum brought together 40+ expert speakers, four panel sessions, and two breakout sessions, all centered on critical themes like pricing, circularity, and sustainability. The discussions were insightful, the connections meaningful, and the outcomes promising. But this is just the beginning.

As we reflect on the success of this edition, I want to assure you that we are already working to make the next Sustainable Apparel Forum even better. We are committed to raising the bar, fostering deeper collaboration, and showcasing even more impactful initiatives. Together, we will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in sustainable apparel and beyond.

Over the past 15 years, the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange has connected over 120,000 participants from 72 countries, creating opportunities for collaboration, investment, and growth. And with your continued support, we will keep building on this legacy.

Thank you all for being part of this incredible journey. Let's keep moving forward, together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mostafiz Uddin'.

**Mostafiz Uddin**

Founder & CEO,  
Bangladesh Apparel Exchange

## The 6th Edition

The 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum opened its gates on 11th February, 2025, at the Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden, Bangladesh.

This premier event not only showcased the country's remarkable progress but also laid the foundation for a future blueprint of sustainability within the robust apparel sector. Bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, the event fostered vital discussions on the industry's most pressing issues. With a grand opening ceremony, five engaging panel sessions, two dynamic breakout sessions, six insightful presentations, and an innovation zone featuring delegates, industry leaders, experts & key stakeholders, the event firmly upheld its reputation as one of the country's leading sustainability gatherings focused on the RMG industry.



This dynamic event facilitated a robust exchange of insights, enriching participants' understanding of evolving trends and sustainable practices. Beyond discourse, the 6th edition of SAF catalyzed collaborations, bringing together industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, laying the groundwork for collective initiatives that transcend borders.

The insights garnered at SAF played a pivotal role in shaping a more robust regulatory framework for sustainable manufacturing. Emphasizing innovation, the forum acted as a catalyst for advancements in sustainable technology, material development, and green solutions within the industry.

## SAF 2025 in Numbers

650+

national and  
international  
attendees

50+

world-class  
speakers

18+

countries were  
represented

06

panel & breakout  
sessions

06

presentations

30+

exhibitors &  
innovators

110+

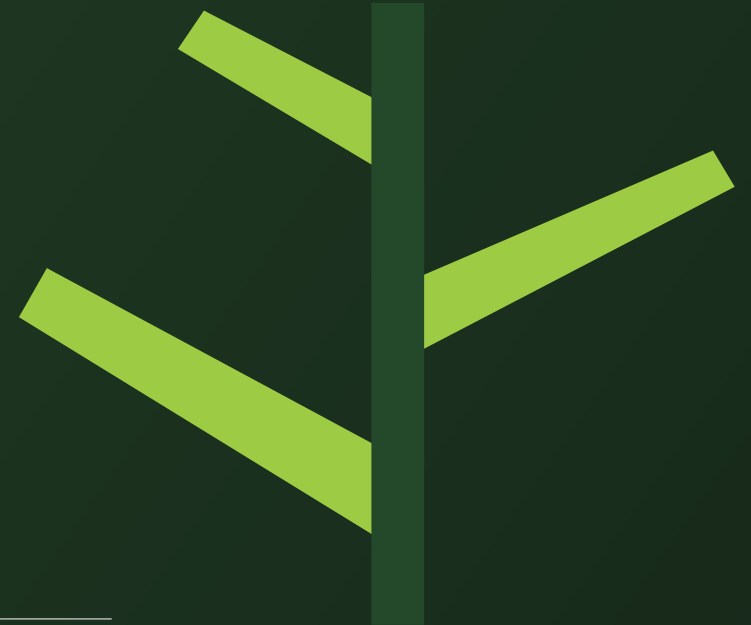
national & int.  
media engagements

1.1M+

impressions across  
social media channels

45+

journalists covered  
the event





## Speakers

Opening Plenary

# Welcome Speech & Opening Session



**Rizwana Hasan**

Chief Guest

Adviser at the Ministry of Environment, Forests, Climate Change, and Water Resources



**Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun**

Guest of Honor

Executive Chairman (State Minister), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) & the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA)



**H.E. Michael Miller**

Guest of Honor

Ambassador and Head of Delegation, The European Union Delegation to Bangladesh



**H. E. Andre Carstens**

Guest of Honor

Charge D'Affaires of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Bangladesh

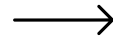


**Mostafiz Uddin**

Opening Remarks

Founder & CEO, Bangladesh Apparel Exchange

# Rizwana Hasan



Adviser at the Ministry of  
Environment, Forests, Climate  
Change, and Water Resources



Rizwana Hasan highlighted the importance of sustainability and fair labor practices in Bangladesh's garment sector. She stressed the need for responsible water and energy use, called for collaboration with international partners, and urged for fair wages for workers. Her speech emphasized that true sustainability requires shared responsibility between producers and buyers to create a just, balanced, and resilient textile industry.

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When we talk about sustainability, it has to be a shared responsibility. I sincerely hope that importers and exporters will both come together and work on sustainability.

I would urge the business community and our partners from the Netherlands to engage with their counterparts to transition to renewable and sustainable energy production.

## Key Takeways

### Sustainability Is More Than Green Factories:

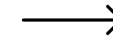
Sustainable practices go beyond having eco-friendly factories — they require responsible water, energy, and chemical management.

**Water and Energy Management:** The government plans to charge industries for groundwater extraction and incentivize recycling.

**Chemical Management:** The garment sector must finalize and adopt national chemical handling regulations.

**Economic Stability:** The garment sector is crucial for Bangladesh's economy, and collective efforts are needed to prevent further economic shocks.

# Ashik Chowdhury



Executive Chairman (State Minister),  
Bangladesh Investment  
Development Authority (BIDA) &  
the Bangladesh Economic Zones  
Authority (BEZA)



Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun emphasized Bangladesh's macroeconomic progress and stressed the need to convert discussions into actionable solutions.

He highlighted plans to repurpose unused economic zones into solar parks, improve government agency transparency through OSS data, and streamline capital repatriation processes. Urging for quick wins, he called for collaboration to push Bangladesh towards becoming a leader in sustainable apparel by 2040.

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We as a country would like to be the leader in sustainable apparel by 2040. Let's work together and try to find quick wins together.

## Key Takeways

**Action-Oriented Approach:** Focus on executable solutions within the next 6 to 12 months, rather than distant goals.

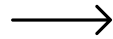
**Sustainable Innovation:** Transform unused economic zones into solar parks to support renewable energy.

**Government Accountability:** Introduce transparency by publishing One-Stop Service (OSS) performance data online.

**Investor Confidence:** Simplify capital repatriation processes to encourage foreign investment.

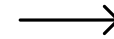


# H.E. Michael Miller



Ambassador and Head of Delegation,  
The European Union  
Delegation to Bangladesh

# H.E. Andre Carstens



Charge D'Affaires  
of the Kingdom of the  
Netherlands to  
Bangladesh



H.E. Michael Miller emphasized the EU's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's sustainable development, particularly in the RMG sector, through initiatives like the GSP+ trade regime, labor law reforms, and green energy transition. The partnership focuses on decarbonization, circularity, and value chain transparency, aiming to create decent jobs, boost renewables, and ensure environmental upgrades while preparing Bangladesh for LDC graduation and economic diversification.



H. E. Andre Carstens emphasized the importance of empowering workers, adapting to global dynamics like EU regulations, and meeting Gen Z's demand for ethical and sustainable fashion. He highlighted Bangladesh's LDC graduation and the Netherlands' decade-long support for circularity in the RMG sector. Key initiatives include recycling, traceability, and circular design, alongside fostering innovation and partnerships to drive a sustainable, competitive apparel industry.

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Partnerships between the EU & Bangladesh must evolve as we move forward and evolve. The EU is determined to work with Bangladesh to ensure it is equipped with the capacity to provide opportunities for sustainable developments.



## Key Takeways

**GSP+ Transition:** The EU is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for Bangladesh to the GSP+ trade regime post-LDC graduation.

**Decent Work:** Over €700 million invested in programs to improve livelihoods and create better jobs in Bangladesh.

**Green Energy:** Supporting Bangladesh's shift to affordable, secure, and clean energy through renewables and efficiency measures.

**Sustainability:** Focus on decarbonization, circularity, and environmental upgrades to align with global best practices.

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The Netherlands values its partnership with Bangladesh and recognises Bangladesh's leading role in the global RMG industry. We are committed to working together with Bangladesh to navigate its challenges. We strongly support the mission to raise awareness, standardise sustainability goals, and enhance circularity and traceability.



## Key Takeways

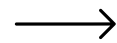
**Worker Empowerment:** Prioritizing fair wages, safe working conditions, and social dialogue is essential for a sustainable RMG industry.

**Consumer Awareness:** Gen Z's demand for ethical and sustainable fashion is reshaping the industry, requiring transparency and innovation.

**Circular Economy:** Initiatives like recycling and traceability are critical for sustainability and compliance with EU regulations.

**LDC Graduation:** Bangladesh's upcoming LDC graduation necessitates enhanced sustainable competitiveness and global partnerships.

# Mostafiz Uddin



Founder and CEO,  
Bangladesh Apparel Exchange



Mr. Mostafiz Uddin, Founder of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange, expressed gratitude to partners like the EU and Dutch Embassy for their support in organizing the 6th Sustainable Apparel Forum.

He highlighted Bangladesh's \$50 billion RMG industry, innovation, and sustainability efforts. Over 15 years, the Exchange has connected 990,000 participants globally, fostering collaboration and growth through initiatives like the Denim Expo and Circular Economy Summit.



If you look into the efforts, we are creating collaboration and connection, increasing opportunity and investment, and further integrating the business. I think our initiatives will continue, and we will be doing impactful initiatives towards a sustainable future.

## Key Takeways

**Strong Partnerships:** The EU and Dutch Embassy have been key supporters of Bangladesh's sustainable apparel initiatives.

**Bangladesh's Potential:** A \$50 billion RMG industry and thriving IT sector position Bangladesh as a global innovation hub.

**Sustainability Focus:** The forum emphasizes circularity, pricing, and sustainability in the apparel industry.

**Global Collaboration:** Over 990,000 participants from 55 countries have engaged in events fostering investment and business growth.



## Speakers

Panel Session 01

# Bangladesh 2040: The Roadmap for a Resilient and Sustainable Apparel Sector



**M. Riaz  
Hamidullah**

Moderator

High Commissioner of  
Bangladesh to India



**Late Abdullah  
Hil Rakib**

Former Managing Director,  
Team Group



**Anwar-ul Alam  
Chowdhury**

Chairman & Managing Director,  
Evince Group



**Salim  
Rahman**

Managing Director,  
KDS Group



**Mahmud  
Hasan Khan**

Managing Director,  
Rising Group



**Showkat Aziz  
Russell**

President, Bangladesh Textile Mills  
Association (BTMA),  
Chairman & Managing Director,  
Amber Group



## Panel Session 01

# Bangladesh 2040: The Roadmap for a Resilient and Sustainable Apparel Sector



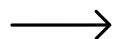
As Bangladesh aims to solidify its position as a global leader in apparel manufacturing, the roadmap to 2040 demands resilience, sustainability, and strategic innovation. The industry, which currently contributes over 11% to the GDP and employs over 4.4 million workers, faces both opportunities and challenges. Rising global demand for ethically sourced apparel, coupled with Bangladesh's commitment to circularity and renewable energy, offers immense growth potential. However, hurdles such as supply chain inefficiencies, workforce upskilling, and stricter environmental compliance must be addressed.

This panel explored actionable strategies to tackle these issues, including leveraging digital technologies for transparency, diversifying sourcing and production methods, and fostering collaboration across the value chain. The panel discussed Bangladesh's apparel industry future, emphasizing sustainability, circularity (recycling cotton, jute, plastic), and digital transformation (AI, IoT). Speakers urged innovation, green practices (solar, water recycling), and policy reforms to boost synthetic fibers and recycling. Collaboration, reskilling, and buyer support were highlighted as key for resilience and growth.

Attendees gained insights into Bangladesh's vision to achieve \$100 billion in apparel exports by 2030 while embracing EU and global green directives. The session also delved into innovative financing mechanisms, policy reforms, and renewable energy integration essential for a sustainable transformation.

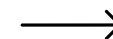
# M. Riaz Hamidullah

Moderator



High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India

# Late Abdullah Hil Rakib



Former Managing Director, Team Group



M. Riaz Hamidullah emphasized the need to focus on the future, addressing challenges like sustainability, shared responsibility, and innovation in the apparel industry.

He highlighted opportunities in circularity, such as recycling cotton and blending materials like jute and plastic.

He urged industry associations to lead in creating value-based narratives and preparing for a future where Bangladesh assumes new global responsibilities.



Abdullah Hil Rakib highlighted the transformative shift into the "Intelligence Age," emphasizing AI, IoT, and data-driven efficiency in the apparel industry. Challenges like job displacement, data sharing, and geopolitical instability were addressed.

The need for innovation, policy dialogue, and investment in research was stressed, alongside concerns about Bangladesh's LDC graduation and global market volatility. Collaboration and adaptability are key to future success.

“

The future is not just about challenges; it's about turning problems into opportunities. By embracing innovation, sustainability, and shared responsibility, we can redefine our industries and create a legacy of value-driven growth.



## Key Takeways

**Future Focus:** Prepare for 2040 with innovative solutions and adaptability to changing consumer behaviors.

**Circular Economy:** Recycling cotton and blending materials like jute and plastic can reduce dependency on fresh imports.

**Shared Responsibility:** Collaboration between industry, government, and global partners is essential for sustainable growth.

**Value-Based Negotiation:** Shift from price-based to value-based negotiations to enhance Bangladesh's global competitiveness.

“

The future belongs to those who embrace disruption with resilience, invest in innovation, and turn challenges into opportunities. In the Intelligence Age, adaptability and collaboration will define success.



## Key Takeways

**AI and Data-Driven Growth:** AI and IoT are reshaping the industry, requiring investment in innovation and data utilization.

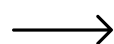
**Resilience and Adaptation:** Agility and upskilling are essential to navigate disruptive changes and redeploy talent effectively.

**Policy and Investment:** Government-industry collaboration is crucial for creating a stable investment environment and addressing challenges like LDC graduation.

**Global Market Volatility:** Geopolitical shifts and trade uncertainties demand strategic



# Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury



Chairman & Managing Director,  
Evince Group



Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury highlighted Bangladesh's recycling challenges, noting that large plastic recycling plants operate at only 50% capacity due to raw material shortages.

He emphasized Bangladesh's strengths in producing high-quality, sustainable goods and adopting green practices like ETPs.

He also stressed the need to promote natural fibers like jute and called for deferring LDC graduation to better prepare the economy.

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Sustainability and innovation are not just trends—they are the foundation of our future. By addressing raw material shortages, promoting natural fibers, and preparing for economic transitions, we can turn challenges into opportunities and build a resilient, competitive industry.



## Key Takeaways

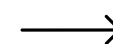
**Recycling Challenges:** Raw material shortages limit recycling plant capacity, hindering sustainability efforts.

**Sustainability Leadership:** Bangladesh excels in green practices and high-quality production, driven by skilled labor and technology.

**Natural Fibers:** Promoting jute and natural fibers aligns with sustainability goals and Gen Z/Millennial demands.

**LDC Graduation:** Deferring graduation by 3 years is crucial to strengthen the economy and ensure a smoother transition.

# Mahmud Hasan Khan



Managing Director,  
Rising Group



Mahmud Hasan Khan emphasized integrating sustainability into business operations, sharing his experience with solar energy and water recycling.

He highlighted the importance of leadership and mindset in adopting sustainable practices, even for smaller factories.

Challenges like recycling waste fabric and water tariffs were discussed, with a call for policy changes and buyer support to make sustainability feasible and beneficial for all.

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Sustainability is no longer an option—it's a necessity. By integrating innovation, leadership, and collaboration, we can turn challenges into opportunities and build a future where business and responsibility go hand in hand.



## Key Takeaways

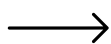
**Leadership Matters:** Sustainability success depends on strong leadership and mindset at all factory levels.

**Practical Recycling:** Achieving 5–8% waste fabric recycling is feasible, but buyer flexibility is needed.

**Policy Support:** Government policies, like water tariff exemptions for recyclers, are crucial for sustainability.

**Buyer Collaboration:** Buyers must adapt requirements to support sustainable practices and local production.

# Salim Rahman



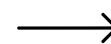
Managing Director,  
KDS Group



The discussion highlighted the need for community-driven sustainability initiatives, like centralized ETPs for mid-sized factories, and the transformative role of logistics, digitalization, and AI in the RMG sector.

Challenges include reskilling workers, adopting blockchain for transparency, and reducing lead times. The importance of implementing the government's logistics policy and addressing societal impacts of automation was also emphasized.

# Showkat Aziz Russell



President, Bangladesh Textile Mills  
Association (BTMA), Chairman &  
Managing Director, Amber Group



Showkat Aziz Russell highlighted Bangladesh's heavy reliance on cotton imports and the need to expand into synthetic fibers, hindered by restrictive policies.

Opportunities in recycling plastic waste and jhoot (waste cotton) were emphasized, but lack of supportive policies and low domestic plastic consumption limit progress.

The call was for policy reforms to boost synthetic fiber production, create jobs, and build a circular economy.

“

The future of industry lies in adaptation—embracing technology, reskilling the workforce, and rewriting the narrative. Sustainability and innovation are not just challenges; they are opportunities to redefine competitiveness and create a legacy of resilience.



## Key Takeways

**Community Sustainability:** Centralized solutions like shared ETPs can help mid-sized factories adopt sustainable practices.

**Digital Transformation:** AI, IoT, and blockchain are critical for competitiveness and supply chain transparency.

**Policy Implementation:** Effective execution of the logistics policy is vital for industry and macroeconomic stability.

**Workforce Reskilling:** Adapting to automation requires reskilling workers to mitigate societal impacts.

“

Sustainability and innovation are not just about compliance—they are opportunities to create value, jobs, and a cleaner environment. By embracing policies that support synthetic fibers and waste-to-wealth initiatives, we can transform challenges into competitive advantages.



## Key Takeways

**Synthetic Fiber Gap:** Bangladesh lags in synthetic fiber production due to restrictive import policies.

**Recycling Potential:** Plastic waste and jhoot offer untapped opportunities for value addition and job creation.

**Policy Reforms:** Supportive policies are needed to import raw materials and promote recycling.

**Circular Economy:** Building a circular economy can enhance sustainability and global competitiveness.





## Speakers

Panel Session 02

# From Waste to Wealth: Paving the Path to Circular Apparel



**Michael Klode**

Moderator

Head of Project of the Sustainability in the Textile Industries (STILE) II Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)



**Koen Warmerdam**

Co-Founder & Chief Commercial Officer, Aware



**Mustafain Munir**

President, CYCLO Recycled Fibers



**Tara Scally**

CSR Specialist, Zeeman



**Thijs Woudstra**

Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

## Panel Session 02

# From Waste to Wealth: Paving the Path to Circular Apparel



The apparel industry in Bangladesh generates approximately 400,000 tons of textile waste annually, of which less than 5% is recycled. With increasing global demand for sustainability, transitioning to a circular economy is crucial. Circularity in apparel focuses on extending product life through recycling, upcycling, and transparent waste management practices. This shift presents significant opportunities to reduce costs, enhance competitiveness, and lower carbon footprints.

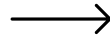
The panel explored the importance of recycling, resource efficiency, transparency and traceability in the circular apparel journey. By ensuring full visibility into supply chains, brands can track materials, waste streams, and recycling efforts, bolstering consumer trust and meeting sustainability standards. The apparel sector has vast untapped recycling potential, from fabric recovery to the repurposing of post-consumer waste. Innovations such as chemical recycling and closed-loop systems are key to reducing waste and reintroducing fibers into the production cycle.

Key strategies included policy reform to integrate circular transition in the apparel industry, scaling recycling infrastructure, collaborating across industries, and integrating circular practices from design to disposal. The panel highlighted recycling opportunities such as fabric-to-fabric recycling and product take-back schemes, and discussed the role of green financing to support circular transitions.



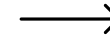
# Michael Klode

Moderator



Head of Project of the Sustainability in the Textile Industries (STILE) II Project, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)

# Thijs Woudstra



Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh



Michael Klode highlighted the challenges and opportunities in achieving circularity in Bangladesh's textile industry. He emphasized reducing raw material use, managing post-industrial waste (jhoot), and addressing post-consumer waste.

Despite global trends showing declining circularity, Bangladesh has vast potential in recycling textile scraps. He urged addressing systemic issues, including informal sector challenges, and fostering collaboration for a sustainable future.



Thijs Woudstra highlighted the Netherlands' support for Bangladesh's sustainability efforts, emphasizing gender balance, circularity, and formalizing the informal jhoot sector.

He praised Bangladesh's progress in green factories and stressed the need for policy frameworks, technology, and stakeholder collaboration to address waste management and improve working conditions. The Netherlands aims to help Bangladesh become a global leader in sustainable garment production.

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Both globally and domestically, we often use the term "circularity" very easily, but the reality is that true circularity does not yet exist. We are all working toward it, trying to find a path toward a more circular economy.



## Key Takeways

**Circularity Challenges:** True circularity doesn't yet exist; global trends show declining circularity in products.

**Jhoot Potential:** Post-industrial textile waste offers significant recycling opportunities in Bangladesh.

**Systemic Issues:** Informal sectors and conflicts, like jhoot-related violence, must be addressed for progress.

**Collaboration Needed:** Stakeholder inclusion and innovation are key to achieving a circular economy.

“

Addressing the jhoot sector requires strong government and industry intervention to formalize it, improve working conditions, and ensure decent work. We cannot ignore the challenges faced by those working in this informal sector.



## Key Takeways

**Gender Balance:** Increasing female representation can drive sustainability solutions.

**Circular Economy:** Formalizing the jhoot sector is key to improving waste management and working conditions.

**Policy Frameworks:** Strong policies and incentives are needed to support circularity and sustainability.

**Collaboration:** The Netherlands supports Bangladesh with technology, expertise, and initiatives like the Textile Hackathon.

# Koen Warmerdam

Co-Founder & Chief  
Commercial Officer,  
Aware



Koen Warmerdam introduced Aware, a traceability platform that tracks materials and compliance data across the supply chain, enabling producers to prove claims with one click.

He highlighted partnerships in Bangladesh, blockchain-based transparency, and the need for reliable data to combat greenwashing. Aware aligns with ESG reporting, emphasizing verified claims and digital product passports to build trust in the textile industry.

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There needs to be a standard, and policymakers must play a role in ensuring that claims are backed by reliable data. Otherwise, we risk presenting misleading information to consumers, perpetuating the greenwashing problem in the textile industry.

## Key Takeways

**Traceability:** Aware tracks materials and compliance data from raw materials to final products.

**Transparency:** Blockchain ensures data is visible to all stakeholders, reducing cheating risks.

**ESG Alignment:** Solutions integrate with ESG reporting, emphasizing verified impact claims.

**Greenwashing Prevention:** Reliable data and digital product passports are essential to combat misleading claims.

# Tara Scally

CSR Specialist,  
Zeeman



According to Tara, Zeeman, a Dutch retailer, aims to create sustainable, affordable textiles by addressing pre- and post-consumer waste. Challenges include sorting, quality, and pricing of recycled materials.

They involve consumers by communicating sustainability efforts but avoid direct price hikes. The call is for policies to make recycling profitable and for innovative technologies to be adopted in Bangladesh to advance circularity.

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We are trying to incorporate circularity in two ways: by closing the loop in our own production waste and by exploring external solutions. We must balance sustainability with affordability to remain competitive in the market.

## Key Takeways

**Circularity Challenges:** Sorting, quality, and pricing of recycled materials remain hurdles.

**Consumer Engagement:** Informing consumers about sustainability is key, but pricing must stay competitive.

**Innovation Needed:** Adoption of advanced recycling technologies is crucial for progress.

**Policy Support:** Governments must create policies to make recycling profitable and drive industry change.

# Mustafain Munir



President,  
CYCLO Recycled Fibers



Mustafain Munir highlighted the challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh's recycling sector. While progress has been made, competition for high-quality waste and declining yarn prices pose challenges.

He emphasized the need for government incentives, advanced technologies, and consumer support to expand recycling and downcycling. A circular economy requires collaboration, policy reforms, and investments in infrastructure and innovation.

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Consumers aren't yet willing to pay more for sustainable products, but I hope future generations will prioritize quality over quantity. For these technologies to succeed here, we need supportive energy policies, tax reforms, and investments in skills and scientific knowledge.



## Key Takeaways

**Recycling Challenges:** Competition for high-quality waste and falling yarn prices complicate the recycling business.

**Government Support:** VAT breaks, tax reforms, and incentives are needed to compete globally.

**Consumer Role:** Future generations must prioritize sustainable products to drive demand.

**Circular Economy:** Mechanical and chemical recycling, supported by traceability, can create a sustainable system.







## Speakers

Panel Session 03

# Rethinking Water Use in Fashion Supply Chains



**Mafruda Rahman**

Moderator

Country Strategy Manager,  
Resilient Water Accelerator



**Azizur Rahim Chowdhury**

Managing Director,  
J.M. Fabrics Ltd. &  
Director, New Asia Ltd.



**Hosna Ferdous Sumi**

Senior Private Sector Specialist,  
Finance, Competitiveness and  
Investment,  
World Bank



**Lewys Isaac**

Water Stewardship Manager,  
Primark



**Neeltje Kielen**

Delegated Representative Water,  
Embassy of the Kingdom of the  
Netherlands in Bangladesh



**Syeda Afzalun Nessa**

Head of Sustainability,  
HSBC Bangladesh



## Panel Session 03

## Rethinking Water Use in Fashion Supply Chains



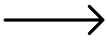
The textile industry in Bangladesh is a major global player, yet its reliance on water resources has become a significant sustainability challenge. The sector consumes 250–300 liters of water per kilogram of fabric, much of which comes from groundwater sources that are rapidly depleting. In Dhaka, groundwater levels are falling by more than 3 meters annually, forcing factories to dig deeper wells, increasing operational costs. Additionally, the discharge from dyeing processes pollutes local water sources, exacerbating the environmental footprint.

As international fashion brands push for sustainability, they've set ambitious targets to cut water usage by 30% by 2030. However, the financial burden of implementing water-saving technologies often falls on manufacturers in Bangladesh, without sufficient support or pricing adjustments from buyers. This gap creates a complex challenge for the industry.

This panel delved into the critical need for water conservation in the apparel sector, highlighting the environmental and financial implications of current practices and the need for policy advocacy. It explored innovative strategies, such as the adoption of closed-loop water systems, the importance of traceability in water usage, and the potential for recycling water within production processes. Collaborative efforts were also discussed to support the transition to sustainable water practices and help Bangladesh's textile industry remain competitive in a global market increasingly focused on sustainability.

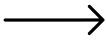
# Mafruda Rahman

Moderator



Country Strategy Manager,  
Resilient Water Accelerator

# Lewys Isaac



Water Stewardship Manager,  
Primark



Mafruda Rahman highlighted the urgent need for water stewardship in Bangladesh’s textile industry, citing groundwater depletion and a \$35 billion funding gap. She emphasized the business case for water investments, calling for awareness, financing, and collaboration.

The panel discussed financial models, regulatory pressures, and the need for accessible funding to ensure sustainable water management and industry competitiveness.



Lewys Isaac outlined Primark’s 2030 Water Stewardship Strategy, focusing on reducing freshwater dependency and mitigating pollution in Bangladesh’s textile industry. Key initiatives include resource efficiency programs, water reuse, and a collaborative project in Dhaka to recycle wastewater.

Primark aims to scale solutions, leverage green finance, and share data to drive industry-wide water stewardship and sustainability.

“

Investing in water pays off—simple technologies like water metering and efficient boilers can yield a 30% return on investment and reduce carbon emissions by 20%.

Key Takeways

**Water Crisis:** Groundwater depletion threatens the textile industry, requiring urgent action.

**Funding Gap:** A \$35 billion gap limits water-related investments in the sector.

**Business Case:** Water-efficient technologies offer high returns and reduce carbon emissions.

**Collaboration:** Brands, suppliers, and financiers must work together to bridge the funding gap.

“

Water reuse is a priority for us, as it reduces freshwater dependency and combats wastewater pollution.

Key Takeways

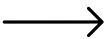
**Water Stewardship:** Primark aims to reduce freshwater use and pollution in its supply chain.

**Collaborative Projects:** Partners with H&M, NGOs, and suppliers to recycle wastewater in Dhaka.

**Resource Efficiency:** Focuses on reducing water, energy, and chemical usage in factories.

**Green Finance:** Advocates for financial solutions to scale sustainable water practices.

# Azizur Rahim Chowdhury



Managing Director, J.M. Fabrics Ltd. & Director, New Asia Ltd.



Azizur Rahim Chowdhury shared how J.M. Fabrics invested in water efficiency, achieving 30% water savings through mindset changes and modernized machinery.

Accessing low-cost funds like Bangladesh Bank's GTF was key, though bridge financing and fund limits posed challenges. He emphasized the importance of innovation and policy flexibility to scale sustainable practices in the textile industry.

“

Small changes, like reducing machine runtimes or optimizing water pressure, added up to significant savings.

## Key Takeways

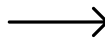
**Mindset Matters:** 80% of water savings came from operational changes and employee training.

**Modernization:** Upgrading machinery, like adopting continuous rinsing, significantly reduces water use.

**Funding Challenges:** Low-cost funds are available, but bridge financing and caps limit accessibility.

**Policy Flexibility:** Adjusting fund limits could encourage broader adoption of sustainable practices.

# Neeltje Kielen



Delegated Representative Water, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh



Neeltje Kielen highlighted the Netherlands' water management strategies, emphasizing multi-stakeholder collaboration and the Dutch Delta Plan. She discussed Bangladesh's Delta Plan 2100, noting the need for private investment in water quality improvements.

The embassy is exploring central effluent treatment plants (CETPs) for industrial zones, leveraging Dutch innovations to make water management cost-effective and sustainable.

“

Creating a business case for water is not easy, as many water-related problems fall within the public domain.

## Key Takeways

**Collaborative Approach:** Multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to solving water challenges.

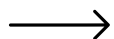
**Delta Plans:** The Dutch Delta Plan and Bangladesh's Delta Plan 2100 address water security and climate resilience.

**Private Investment:** Improving water quality offers opportunities for private sector involvement.

**Innovation:** Dutch technologies can reduce costs and enhance sustainability in water management.

# Hosna Ferdous Sumi

Senior Private Sector Specialist, Finance, Competitiveness and Investment, World Bank

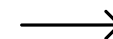


Hosna Ferdous Sumi highlighted the World Bank's efforts in sustainability, emphasizing the need for awareness and demand creation for water efficiency in Bangladesh's textile sector.

She discussed initiatives like PRIDE and CETPs, stressing the importance of technical support, policy reforms, and blended finance to drive private sector investment in sustainable water management.

# Syeda Afzalun Nessa

Delegated Representative Water, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh



Syeda Afzalun Nessa discussed HSBC's sustainability-linked finance products, including Sustainability-Linked Loans and Sustainable Supply Chain Finance, which incentivize water and energy efficiency.

She highlights the Future Supplier Initiative and partnerships with brands to support suppliers. Nessa emphasizes the need for evidence-based financing and suggests shared facilities for small factories to improve resource management and access to funding.

“

Financial products are very much demand-driven. If there is demand, suitable financial products will follow.

## Key Takeways

**Awareness is critical:** Demand for water-efficient solutions is low due to limited industry awareness.

**Technical support needed:** SMEs lack knowledge on implementing water-efficient practices.

**Policy reforms essential:** Incentives like shadow pricing can encourage private investment.

**Blended finance potential:** Concessional financing can support SMEs but requires demand creation.

“

Sustainable finance requires evidence – it must be evidence-based to access these kinds of financing.

## Key Takeways

**Sustainability-Linked Loans:** Offer discounted rates for meeting ESG targets like water efficiency.

**Evidence-based financing:** Requires measurable improvements to access sustainable finance.

**Future Supplier Initiative:** Focuses on collaboration with brands and suppliers for sustainability goals.

**Shared facilities for SMEs:** Centralized zones can enhance efficiency and reduce costs.







## Speakers

Panel Session 04

# Power Protocols: Exploring Renewable Energy Frontiers in Textile Manufacturing



**Faisal  
Rabbi**

Moderator

Energy Specialist,  
World Bank



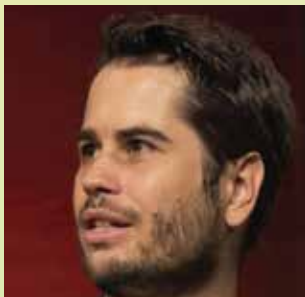
**Asif  
Zahir**

Deputy Managing Director,  
Ananta Group



**Edwin  
Koekkoek**

Team Leader, Green Inclusive  
Development  
& First Counsellor,  
Delegation of the European Union  
to Bangladesh



**Sebastian  
Groh**

Co-Founder & CEO,  
SQLshare



**Mohammed  
Soheli**

Managing Director,  
Bangla Poshak Limited

## Panel Session 04

# Power Protocols: Exploring Renewable Energy Frontiers in Textile Manufacturing



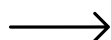
Bangladesh's textile industry, consuming 30% of the industrial energy supply, is at a critical juncture. Depleting natural gas reserves, rising dependency on imported LNG, and frequent power shortages are driving up costs and disrupting operations. The shift towards renewable energy is no longer optional—it's essential. Innovations like rooftop solar systems, floating solar technology, and wind power hold promise, but challenges such as space constraints, high import duties, and limited financing options hinder progress.

In this panel, attendees deep dived into cutting-edge renewable solutions tailored for the textile sector, uncovered strategies to tackle space and policy barriers, and learned how to leverage green financing mechanisms for sustainable energy transitions.

With insights from industry leaders, policymakers, and energy experts, this session equipped participants with actionable knowledge to implement renewables, ensure energy resilience, and align with global sustainability goals.

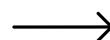
# Faisal Rabbi

Moderator



Energy Specialist,  
World Bank

# Asif Zahir



Deputy Managing Director,  
Ananta Group



The discussion highlights Bangladesh's slow progress in renewable energy adoption, especially in the textile and RMG sector. Challenges include limited roof space, low solar irradiance, and grid instability. Solutions like energy storage, grid enhancement, and electric vehicle integration are emerging.

Despite financing hurdles, opportunities exist, such as replacing diesel generators with solar, aligning with global regulations and sustainability goals.



Asif Zahir highlights the challenges of transitioning to renewable energy in Bangladesh's textile industry, citing limited rooftop space, low solar irradiance, and high energy demands. Solar contributes only 2–5% of energy needs, with storage costs being prohibitive.

He emphasizes the need for process innovation, government support, and a clear industry roadmap to achieve renewable energy targets.

“

There is no transition to renewable energy without improving the grid.



## Key Takeways

**Slow progress:** Renewable energy adoption in Bangladesh's textile sector remains limited.

**Grid enhancement:** Improving transmission and distribution is critical for renewable energy transition.

**Energy storage:** Solar storage and virtual power plants are key solutions.

**Business opportunities:** Replacing diesel with solar offers financial and environmental benefits.

“

Solar alone cannot meet the high energy demands of textile and laundry operations.



## Key Takeways

**Limited solar impact:** Rooftop solar meets only 2–5% of energy needs in textile factories.

**Storage costs:** Battery storage is currently too expensive for 24/7 renewable energy use.

**Process innovation:** Reducing water, energy, and chemical use is critical for sustainability.

**Industry roadmap:** A clear plan is needed to guide renewable energy transition and meet regulations.

# Sebastian Groh

→ Co-Founder & CEO,  
SOLshare



Sebastian Groh discusses Bangladesh's untapped rooftop solar potential (30 GW peak) and the need for energy storage to address grid stability. He highlights the dual-use potential of electric vehicles as mobile batteries, proposing innovative solutions like Rickshaw VPPs to manage peak loads.

Groh emphasizes acting now on renewable energy investments and leveraging existing infrastructure for smarter energy solutions.

“

Using EVs not just for transportation but also for moving power could buffer up to 30% of the national grid's peak load.

## Key Takeways

**Rooftop solar potential:** Bangladesh has 30 GW peak capacity, but utilization remains low.

**Energy storage:** Combining solar with storage is already cheaper than diesel and will soon rival gas.

**EVs as batteries:** Electric vehicles can serve as distributed energy storage, easing grid pressure.

**Act now:** Rising electricity prices make renewable energy investments urgent and inevitable.

# Edwin Koekkoek

→ Team Leader, Green Inclusive  
Development & First Counsellor,  
Delegation of the European Union  
to Bangladesh



Edwin explained Europe's climate-driven legislative direction and its impact on trade, especially with Bangladesh. He stressed the importance of decarbonization, renewables, and energy efficiency in the supply chain. While acknowledging Bangladesh's progress, he called for accelerated action on renewable energy adoption and industrial transition.

The EU remains committed to supporting Bangladesh's sustainable growth through funding and collaboration.

“

My advice to Bangladesh is to focus on the decarbonization trajectory of your industrial sector. Strengthen the grid and increase the share of renewable energy. This will not only meet buyer expectations but also future-proof your industry.

## Key Takeways

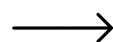
**EU Legislation Is Climate-Focused:** The European Green Deal and related directives are reshaping EU trade, demanding that buyers ensure environmental and labor compliance throughout their supply chains.

**Buyers Want Decarbonization:** European buyers expect Bangladeshi suppliers to present clear climate transition plans and demonstrate increased use of renewable energy.

**EU Support Is Available:** Through initiatives like the Bangladesh Renewable Energy Facility and factory retrofit projects, the EU is actively funding Bangladesh's transition to cleaner, greener industry practices.



# Mohammed Soheli



Managing Director,  
Bangla Poshak Limited



Mohammed Soheli, Managing Director of Bangla Poshak Limited, emphasized the sustainability efforts SMEs can make despite limited space and high investment barriers.

He highlighted step-by-step automation, material segregation, and collaborative rooftop solar sharing. He called for technical assessments by global institutions to evaluate renewable energy potential and urged support for storage solutions to reduce diesel dependency.

“

Conduct the assessment first to understand the real situation. If storage solutions are feasible, we can adopt them and eliminate the need for diesel generators.



## Key Takeaways

**Limited SME capacity:** Most small factories lack the space and capital for full-scale sustainability solutions.

**Step-by-step action:** Gradual upgrades like automation and waste segregation are helping SMEs move toward sustainability.

**Shared rooftop potential:** Collaborative solar installations across nearby buildings can offer stable, clean energy.

**Stable power is vital:** Consistent electricity supply is crucial for machinery and reducing diesel generator use.







# Presenters

## Presentations

Traceability &  
Cleaner Production



**Eleanor  
(Nellie) Gayle**

Community Engagement Director,  
Apparel & General Merchandise,  
GS1

How Brands & Factories Can Collaborate  
or Cleaner Production



**Annemiek  
Smits**

Corporate Partnerships Manager,  
Solidaridad

Closing the Loop: Pacific Recycled Fiber  
Limited's Mission to Make Fashion Truly Circular



**Luthmela  
Farid**

Director,  
Pacific Jeans

Accelerating Financing for Textile Water  
Stewardship



**Jonathan  
Farr**

Director of Policy & Partnerships,  
Resilient Water Accelerator

Decarbonising the Supply Chain and Investing in  
Companies in Bangladesh



**Willem  
Grimminck**

Founder & Managing Director,  
One to Watch

Rethinking Cotton  
Value Networks



**Sanne Van  
Den Dungen**

Co-Founder,  
Raddis Cotton



## Eleanor (Nellie) Gayle

Community Engagement Director,  
Apparel & General Merchandise,  
GS1

“

Data can universally convey critical information to supply chain partners and regulators, such as key materials, working conditions, countries of origin, and more.

”

## Traceability & Cleaner Production

Nellie Gayle emphasized the role of standardized data in driving sustainable textiles. Using the white T-shirt as a symbol, she highlighted how GS1's global standards (GTIN, GLN, RFID) enable product identity, traceability, and supply chain transparency. These tools help meet regulatory demands, improve efficiency, and connect manufacturers with brands and consumers for a more sustainable future.

### Key Takeaways

**Data Standardization:** GS1 standards (GTIN, GLN) enable interoperable data sharing for traceability and transparency.

**Sustainability Through Data:** Data-driven solutions help meet regulatory and consumer demands for sustainable practices.

**RFID and QR Codes:** These technologies enhance product identity and traceability across the supply chain.

**Global Collaboration:** GS1 connects manufacturers, brands, and consumers to advance sustainability in textiles.





**Annemiek  
Smits**

Corporate Partnerships Manager,  
Solidaridad

“

For a sustainable and fair textile supply chain, several elements need to work together—factories, governments, and brands must collaborate.

”

## How Brands and Factories Can Collaborate for Cleaner Production

Solidaridad promotes sustainability in textile supply chains by collaborating with governments, brands, and factories. Their Better Mill Initiative in Bangladesh focuses on improving environmental practices, worker safety, and chemical management. By addressing gaps in sustainability and fostering partnerships, they aim to drive systemic change and empower producers and small-scale farmers for a fairer, more sustainable industry.

### Key Takeaways

**Collaboration:** Brands, factories, and governments must work together for sustainable practices.

**Data Gaps:** Lack of baseline data and monitoring systems hinders progress.

**Quick Wins:** Short-term actions complement long-term sustainability strategies.

**Policy Support:** Government incentives, like water pricing, are essential for cleaner production.



**Luthmela  
Farid**

Director,  
Pacific Jeans

“

There is nothing inherently wasteful in nature—it is humans who waste resources. Whatever we extract from nature, we must give back without leaving a footprint in the biosphere.

”

## Closing the Loop: Pacific Recycled Fiber Limited's Mission to Make Fashion Truly Circular

Luthmela Farid, Director of Pacific Jeans, introduced Pacific Recycle Fiber Limited, a groundbreaking initiative to transform pre-consumer textile waste into high-quality, traceable fiber. Emphasizing the urgency of shifting from linear to circular apparel models, she highlighted the project's environmental benefits, including massive carbon, water, and energy savings, and its role in strengthening Bangladesh's recycling infrastructure and sustainability leadership.

### Key Takeaways

**Circular Economy:** Pacific Recycled Fiber converts textile waste into reusable fiber, reducing waste and emissions.

**Environmental Impact:** Saves 586,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>, 1.6 billion liters of water, and 10.2 million kWh of energy monthly.

**Local Capacity:** Enhances Bangladesh's recycling infrastructure and reduces import dependency.

**ESG Practices:** Improves conditions for informal jhoot recycling workers through sustainable practices.



**Jonathan  
Farr**

Director of Policy & Partnerships,  
Resilient Water Accelerator

“

Data can universally convey critical information to supply chain partners and regulators, such as key materials, working conditions, countries of origin, and more.

”

## Accelerating Financing for Textile Water Stewardship

Jonathan Farr emphasized the critical role of water stewardship in Bangladesh's textile industry, highlighting climate threats like droughts, floods, and water scarcity. The Resilient Water Accelerator aims to secure water resources through innovation, investment, and partnerships. With UK government support, the initiative focuses on data-driven decisions and collaboration to ensure long-term water security and sustainable growth in the apparel sector.

### Key Takeaways

**Climate Threats:** Water-related challenges like droughts and floods are worsening due to climate change.

**Water Security:** Effective water management is essential for a sustainable, water-secure economy.

**Partnerships:** Collaboration across sectors is key to driving innovation and investment.

**Data-Driven Decisions:** Accurate data is crucial for informed, sustainable water management strategies.





## Willem Grimminck

Founder & Managing Director  
One to Watch

“

Transitioning to a green economy will not only be a necessity but also a strategic advantage in the next 10–20 years.

”

## Decarbonising the Supply Chain and Investing in Companies in Bangladesh

Willem Grimminck emphasizes the urgency of decarbonizing Bangladesh's textile industry, driven by EU regulations and economic benefits. He highlights the Green Garment Initiative, which finances rooftop solar projects, reducing energy costs and emissions. Grimminck stresses the need for renewable energy adoption, accurate energy data, and shared responsibility to achieve sustainability goals while addressing challenges like high upfront costs and profit pressures.

### Key Takeaways

**EU regulations drive action:** CSRD and CSDDD mandate carbon reduction in supply chains.

**Renewable energy is key:** Solar adoption can cut emissions by 50%.

**Data is critical:** Accurate energy consumption tracking is essential for decarbonization.

**Shared responsibility:** Brands, manufacturers, and investors must collaborate to fund sustainability.



**Sanne Van  
Den Dungen**

Co-Founder,  
Raddis Cotton

“

Regeneration isn't just a farming practice—it's a commitment to restoring ecosystems and communities.

”

## Rethinking Cotton Value Networks

Sanne Van Den Dungen introduces Raddis Cotton's regenerative agriculture model, emphasizing transparency, soil health, and community upliftment. The approach avoids irrigation, synthetic inputs, and GMOs, focusing on rain-fed farming and diverse crops. Raddis ensures full supply chain transparency and builds long-term partnerships with brands. The "cotton cascade" model promotes recycling cotton, aiming to return it safely to the biosphere, fostering collaboration and innovation.

### Key Takeaways

**Regenerative agriculture:** Improves soil, uplifts communities, and avoids harmful inputs.

**Full transparency:** Tracks cotton from seed to garment, ensuring traceability.

**Brand partnerships:** Long-term commitments support farm programs and shared risks.

**Cotton cascade:** Recycles cotton, aiming for safe return to the biosphere.





## Speakers

Breakout Session 01

# Navigating Traceability: Challenges and Solutions



**Jeanet van der  
Stoel (Facilitator)**

Sector Lead Textile & Apparel,  
GS1



**Stephanus  
(Sven) Fischer**

Tech Lead,  
SEIRIOS



**Olaf  
Lohle**

Head of Sales,  
tex.tracer



**Koen  
Warmerdam**

Co-Founder &  
Chief Commercial Officer,  
Aware

## Breakout Session 01

# Navigating Traceability: Challenges and Solutions

In this insightful breakout session, experts and industry leaders explored the critical challenges and practical solutions in achieving full traceability in fashion.

Participants shared innovative approaches to ensure more transparent, ethical, and sustainable practices, empowering the fashion industry to build trust and accountability from production to consumption.



## Speakers

Breakout Session 02

# Future-Proofing RMG: The Role of Worker Upskilling



**Suhasini Singh**

Head of Supply Chain Engagement,  
Fair Wear Foundation



**Abil Bin Amin**

Country Manager,  
Ethical Trading Initiative  
Bangladesh



**Md. Bablur Rahman**

Country Manager,  
Fair Wear Foundation,  
Bangladesh



**Md. Shahinur Rahman**

Consultant for Mondiaal FNV  
(Bangladesh)



**Smita Nimilita**

Bangladesh Country Lead &  
Global Foundations Lead,  
Rise



## Breakout Session 02

## Future-Proofing RMG: The Role of Worker Upskilling

The breakout session delved into the crucial role of upskilling the workforce to secure the future of Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) sector.

Experts and industry leaders highlighted how investing in skills training not only empowers workers but also strengthens the overall industry's resilience and adaptability in the face of technological and market shifts. The conversation emphasized the need for continuous learning, innovative training programs, and better access to educational resources for workers, paving the way for a sustainable and competitive RMG industry.





## Circular Textile Trade Mission to Bangladesh



The circular textile trade mission, organised by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh and the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and implemented by Export Partner, Clean & Unique, Bangladesh Apparel Exchange, and BGMEA, was a key highlight of the forum.

The mission brought together 18 pioneering companies from the Netherlands, all leaders in textile circularity, to Bangladesh. At the Sustainable Apparel Forum, these companies found the opportunity to proudly showcase their innovation in front of a global crowd, fostering valuable exchanges, forging strategic partnerships, and opening doors to innovative solutions for creating a more sustainable and circular textile industry.





# Textile Hack Cohort 1 Grand Finale



Funded by the Dutch Enterprise Agency and executed by Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE), BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT), and the University of Groningen (RUG), Textile Hack Cohort 1 culminated in a high-energy Grand Finale at SAF 2025.

The Prototype Bazaar at the Sustainable Apparel Forum became a dynamic hub of groundbreaking ideas, as young innovators took centre stage to showcase their visionary solutions. These forward-thinking minds captivated a global audience of industry leaders, investors, and changemakers. The interactive space allowed attendees to engage directly with the innovators, explore their prototypes, and witness firsthand the transformative potential of Bangladesh's next generation.

The energy was unmatched as we finally crowned the winners— ACCENTI (DU), Covalent-4 (BUFT), and Graphenics (DU).

It was incredible to see these young innovators gain the spotlight they deserve on our platform, proving that the future of sustainable fashion is bright.





# Amplifying the Sustainability Conversation Across National & Int. Media Outlets



# Amplifying the Sustainability Conversation Across National & Int. Media Outlets



# Media Highlights

Fashion United | Netherlands

FASHIONUNITED

## Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) 2025 Promotes Sustainable Future for Apparel Industry in Bangladesh



Group picture. Credit: Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE)

Partnerships between the EU & Bangladesh must evolve as we move forward and evolve. We look to Bangladesh to increase its ambition when it comes to renewables. The EU is determined to work with Bangladesh to ensure it is equipped with the capacity to provide opportunities for sustainable developments." H. E. Andre Carstens, Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh, said "The Netherlands values its partnership with Bangladesh and recognises Bangladesh's leading role in the global RMG industry."

The Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025 is a transformative event, marked by its 6th edition with a focus on elevating Bangladesh as a leader in responsible sourcing. The forum has successfully facilitated transformative dialogues on critical issues such as climate action, environmental conservation, and decent work. By bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs, this platform fosters innovative solutions and paves the way for a sustainable future in the industry. Today marks the successful conclusion of the 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) in Dhaka, organized by Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This event continues to serve as a vital platform for fashion sourcing executives, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in the apparel industry.

The event featured an opening ceremony, four insightful panel discussions, five impactful presentations, and two engaging breakout sessions. With over 90 innovations and more than 40 world-class speakers, we welcomed over 550 national and international delegates today. High profile speakers at the opening ceremony include Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forests, Climate Change, and Water Resources, H.E. Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, The European Union Delegation to Bangladesh, H. E. Andre Carstens, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh, Chairperson Ashik Mahmud Bin Moros, Executive Chairman (Senior Secretary), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Monirul Uddin, Founder & CEO, Bangladesh Apparel Exchange shared their thoughts on sustainability in responsible business.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forests, Climate Change, and Water Resources, said "When we talk about sustainability, it has to be a shared responsibility. I sincerely hope that importers and exporters will both come together and work on sustainability. I would urge the business community and our partners from the Netherlands to engage with their counterparts to transition to renewable and sustainable energy production." H.E. Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, The European Union Delegation to Bangladesh, said "EU consumers have benefitted from good value and high-quality products imported from Bangladesh."

Just Style | UK

Just Style

## Responsible sourcing key topic at Bangladesh Sustainable Apparel Forum



Hall view of The Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025. Credit: Bangladesh Apparel Exchange.

The 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) 2025 has recently concluded in Dhaka, showcasing Bangladesh's commitment to becoming a hub for responsible apparel sourcing.

Jangoulun Singsit | February 19, 2025



# Media Highlights

The Spin off | Germany

The SPINOFF  
Media Matters

NEWS GALLERIES VIDEOS EVENTS

NEWSLETTER MEDIA INFO Q



## Discover how the Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025 was about

by Maria Cristina Pavarini — February 12, 2025

On 11 February 2025, the Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025 (SAF 2025) held its 6th edition in Dhaka, at Radisson Blu Water Garden, placing a strong attention on Bangladesh aiming to elevate itself as a leader in responsible sourcing.

The forum was conceived as an event hosting transformative dialogues on critical issues such as climate action, environmental conservation, and decent work. By bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs, this platform wants to foster innovative solutions and pave the way for a sustainable future in the industry.

The event was organized by Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and has the ambition to serve as a platform for fashion sourcing executives, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in the apparel industry.

Daily star | Bangladesh

The Daily Star

## Govt considers charging industries for water use



The government is considering charging industrial unit owners for water usage and will categorise industries based on water consumption while offering incentives for recycling initiatives, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.



# Media Highlights

Business standard | Bangladesh

**THE  
BUSINESS  
STANDARD**

## Govt mulling tax imposition on industries' water use



The adviser speaking at the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) 2025 on 11 Feb. (Photo: Collected)

The government is considering imposing a charge on groundwater usage, said Water Resources Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan today (11 February).

"The government is now considering a charge for industrial water usage and will categorise industries based on water consumption while offering incentives for recycling initiatives," she said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the "Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) 2025", organised by the Netherlands Embassy at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden.

Rizwana, also the adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said the water resources ministry is finalising an industrial water use policy to this end.

The Business Standard Google News Keep updated, follow The Business Standard's Google news channel  
"So far, groundwater has been freely available to most industries, but the government must stop that process. We will categorise the industries, and extremely water-intensive ones will be required to start paying for the water they extract."

This policy will undoubtedly incentivise recycling activities, she said, adding, "We want to engage with our business leaders to ensure they use less water and prioritise recycling and reusing water."

Financial Express | Bangladesh

**FE** The  
Financial Express

## Adviser Rizwana calls for transition of industrial sector to renewable energy



Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan called on the business community and international partners to work alongside Bangladeshi stakeholders in shifting from fossil fuel-based energy production to renewable and sustainable sources.

She made the call while speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) 2025, organised by the Netherlands Embassy at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden on Tuesday, as per a UNB report.

"Sustainability is not just about having green or environmentally certified factories. The garment industry remains energy-intensive, and its reliance on water and chemical management demands a more responsible approach," she said.

# Media Highlights

Observer BD | Bangladesh

dailyobserver

## Rizwana urges for transitioning to renewable energy from fossil fuel

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Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan urged the business community and international partners to collaborate with their Bangladeshi counterparts to transition from fossil fuel-dependent energy production to renewable and sustainable sources.

She said energy supply shortages in the past two years severely affected industries, making sustainable energy solutions a necessity for both the country and the industry.

Daily sun | Bangladesh

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## Sustainable practice is crucial to get fair prices for RMG products: Rizwana



Photo: Courtesy

Experts from different stakeholders on Tuesday stressed the need for collaborative efforts to implement sustainable solutions for the apparel industry in Bangladesh.

They made the remarks at the 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) in Dhaka, organised by Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) in partnership with the embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Environment and Forest Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said, 'When we talk about sustainability, it must be a shared responsibility. I sincerely hope that both importers and exporters will come together and work towards sustainability.'

# Media Highlights

The News Times | Bangladesh

THE NEWS TIMES

## Rizwana calls for transitioning to renewable energy from fossil fuel

The Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025 is a transformative event, marked its 6th edition with a focus on elevating Bangladesh as a leader in responsible sourcing.

The forum has successfully facilitated transformative dialogues on critical issues such as climate action, environmental conservation, and decent work. By bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs, this platform fosters innovative solutions and paves the way for a sustainable future in the industry.

Today marks the successful conclusion of the 6th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) in Dhaka, organized by Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This event continues to serve as a vital platform for fashion sourcing executives, emphasizing the importance of sustainability in the apparel industry.

The event featuring an opening ceremony, four insightful panel discussions, five impactful presentations, and two engaging breakout sessions. With over 20 innovators and more than 40 world-class speakers, we welcomed over 550 national and international delegates today.

High profile speakers at the opening ceremony include Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Adviser, Ministry of Environment, Forests, Climate Change, and Water Resources, H.E. Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, The European Union Delegation to Bangladesh, H. E. Andre Carstens, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh, Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, Executive Chairman (Senior Secretary), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Mostafiz Uddin, Founder & CEO, Bangladesh Apparel Exchange shared their thoughts on sustainability & responsible business.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Adviser, Ministry of Environment, Forests, Climate Change, and Water Resources, said “When we talk about sustainability, it has to be a shared responsibility. I sincerely hope that importers and exporters will both come together and work on sustainability.

Newage BD | Bangladesh

NEWAGE

## Govt mulls over tax imposition on industrial water use

The government is now mulling to impose tax on the use of groundwater for industrial purposes, environment, forest and climate change affairs adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said on Tuesday. She revealed this while addressing the opening plenary session of the Sustainable Apparel Forum 2025 as the chief guest.

The programme was organised by the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange in partnership with the Netherlands Embassy in Dhaka. The adviser said that the government would categorise industries based on water consumption and would offer incentives for recycling initiatives.

She said that groundwater was now free for the industries, but extremely water-intensive ones would have to start paying for extracting groundwater. She said that many industrial zones were now experiencing declining groundwater levels. ‘It has been affecting local communities who rely on groundwater for their everyday needs.’

She also said that they would provide incentives for recycling activities and wanted to engage with businesses to ensure that they would use less water, recycle it, and reuse the water.

‘The garment sector is water-intensive, and it is very crucial that they choose less water-intensive production processes and ensure reuse by removing extra pressure on the aquifer,’ she said.

She also said that the energy supply shortages in the past two years have severely impacted industries, making sustainable energy solutions necessary for both the country and the sector.

‘Having green factories or the highest number of environmentally certified factories does not automatically mean that the sector is operating sustainably,’ she added.

She revealed that the government, in collaboration with German partners, was working on a Chemical Waste Management Rule, which was expected to be finalised soon.

She said that labour should not be cheap and added that sustainability must be a shared responsibility between the producers and the consumers.



# Media Highlights

Somokal | Bangladesh

সমকাল

## শিল্পে ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি ব্যবহারে সেবা মাশুল আরোপের চিন্তা



শিল্প খাতে ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি ব্যবহারের ওপর সারচার্জ বা সেবা মাশুল আরোপ করার বিষয়টি বিবেচনা করছে সরকার। একই সঙ্গে পানির পুনর্ব্যবহারে প্রণোদনা দেওয়ার বিষয়টিও ভাবা হচ্ছে। এ উদ্দেশ্যে শিল্প খাতে পানির ব্যবহার অনুযায়ী শ্রেণিবিন্যাস করার কাজ চলছে।

গতকাল মঙ্গলবার রাজধানীতে সাসটেইনেবল অ্যাপারেল ফোরাম উদ্বোধন অনুষ্ঠানে এ কথা জানান পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয় এবং পানিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়ের উপদেষ্টা সৈয়দা রিজওয়ানা হাসান। রাজধানীর হোটেল র্যাডিসনে অনুষ্ঠানটির আয়োজন করে বাংলাদেশ অ্যাপারেল এক্সচেঞ্জ (বিএই) এবং নেদারল্যান্ডস দূতাবাস।

সৈয়দা রিজওয়ানা হাসান বলেন, এখন পর্যন্ত মাটির নিচের পানি ব্যবহার করতে সরকারকে কোনো টাকা-পয়সা দিতে হয় না। কারখানাগুলোয় ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি ব্যবহারে কর বসানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে যাচ্ছে সরকার। এ ব্যাপারে একটি নীতিমালা তৈরির কাজ করছে পানিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়।

তিনি বলেন, শিল্পাঞ্চলে ভূগর্ভস্থ পানির স্তর ক্রমশ নিচে নেমে যাচ্ছে; যা স্থানীয় বাসিন্দাদের জন্য সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করছে। পরিবেশ সচেতনতা থেকে আমদানিকারক ও রপ্তানিকারক দু'পক্ষকেই টেকসই উন্নয়নে কাজ করতে হবে। একই সঙ্গে নবায়নযোগ্য ও টেকসই জ্বালানি উৎপাদনেও ব্যবসায়ী সমাজ এবং উন্নয়ন সহযোগীদের প্রতি আহ্বান জানান তিনি।

BonikBarta | Bangladesh

বনিকবার্তা

## শিল্পখাতে পানির ব্যবহার নিয়ন্ত্রণে চার্জ আরোপের পরিকল্পনা করছে সরকার



হবি-পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়

বাংলাদেশ পানিসমৃদ্ধ দেশ হলেও শিল্পাঞ্চলগুলোতে ভূগর্ভস্থ পানির স্তর ক্রমশ হ্রাস পাচ্ছে, যা স্থানীয় জনগোষ্ঠীর ওপর নেতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলছে। এ কারণে সরকার শিল্পখাতে পানির ব্যবহার নিয়ন্ত্রণে চার্জ আরোপের পরিকল্পনা করছে।







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