



demanding their back wages, some of the workers haven't been paid for two months and many are on the brink of starvation.

A nationwide lockdown is in place until May 5, but protesters said they would continue to violate the ban on movement if their demands were not met. In recent weeks, Bangladesh has sent troops out into the streets to help enforce a shutdown on travel and restrictions on religious gatherings and protests.



CAMBODIA

Cambodia urges for opening apparel factories

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide, resulted in major disruptions in our lives as well as businesses and the global apparel supply chain. Against this mighty tide, some of the competing countries of Bangladesh (for example Cambodia) have decided to open their garments factories.

Cambodia government instructs RMG factories to resume operation through a circular from the Ministry of Labor. They also mentioned the necessary steps to follow under the health quarantine measure.

Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia, urged retailers and fashion brands, partners – garment, footwear, and travel goods buyers sourcing from Cambodia – to stay committed to Cambodia and especially to the workers. And abide by contracts and not to cancel orders that have been placed and goods have already been produced or are currently in production. This will ensure the contribution of the social development of millions of Cambodians who are depending on these sectors for their livelihood.

Cambodia was the first country in the world that links trade with labor standards. Since 2001, it partnered with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to launch Better Factories Cambodia which required all exporting garment factories in Cambodia to be subjected to monitoring by the ILO to ensure compliance to national laws and international labor standards.



BANGLADESH

Bangladesh garment workers return to work amid lockdown

Thousands of textile workers have returned to work in factories in Bangladesh amid a nationwide coronavirus lockdown, raising fears of an increase in the spread of the contagion.

Factories in the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chittagong reopened after being permitted to resume work. The country's garment factories had closed in late March but under pressure from retailers to fulfill outstanding export orders, many resumed their operations, despite a nationwide lockdown in place until May 5.

More than four million people work in thousands of garment factories across Bangladesh, which last year shipped apparel worth \$35bn to some of the

world's leading retailers, such as H&M, Inditex, and Walmart.

"We have to accept coronavirus as part of life. If we don't open factories, there will be an economic crisis," said Mohammad Hatem, the vice president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

Last month, the government announced a \$588m package for the crucial export-oriented sector to pay its workers, but garment manufacturers say funds were not enough to mitigate the crisis.

Recently, hundreds of textile workers took to the streets of Dhaka, demanding wage, flouting social distancing norms amid the nationwide lockdown. Garment workers have held smaller protests in recent weeks to demand wages lost during the crisis.

For about a week, there have been protests all across the country, workers



India becomes the world's second-largest manufacturer of PPE body coveralls

India has become the world's second-largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) body coveralls within a short period of two months. China is the world's leading producer of PPE body coveralls, crucial to safeguard against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In a statement, the Ministry of Textiles said it has been taking several steps to ensure that both quality and quantity of PPE coveralls going up to the desired levels within a very short period of two months, "thereby catapulting India into the world's second-largest manufacturer of body coveralls, next only to China".

The Ministry has taken steps to ensure that only certified players across the entire supply chain are allowed to supply body coveralls to governments. Besides, Textiles Committee, Mumbai, too will now test and certify PPE body coveralls required for healthcare workers and other COVID-19 warriors.

Ajit Chavan, Secretary, Textiles Committee, and Additional Textile Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, explained how the committee rose to the occasion to surmount the challenge of non-availability of reputed domestic manufacturers of PPE testing equipment.

He said, "We faced the numerous challenges due to non-availability of domestic manufacturers of reputed and incessant delays and long lead times to import machines from China. Therefore, we decided to do this indigenously."

The secretary informed how the testing equipment will help the nation during the crisis: "With the acquisition of this equipment and further concrete plans to add some more equipment as needed, we will be able to address not only the quantitative but also the qualitative requirements involved in the testing of coveralls worn by the frontline health workers and other COVID-19 warriors".



Japanese firms developing high-quality masks

Japanese medium-sized firms in a variety of sectors are exploring their technologies and know-how to produce high-quality, washable masks to meet the rising demand for such items amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Lifestyle Accent Inc., Mitsufuji Corp., Yamamoto Corp., Utax Co., and Atsumi Fashion Co. are some of the companies that have joined the fray.



Make the Difference



SSM XENO-AC

The advanced air covering machine for intermingling and precision winding of filament yarns and Elastane with or without lubrication. Infinitely adjustable process conditions as well as an up-to-date yarn path enable the optimization of the closeness and stability of the intermingling of yarns.

Optional available with *preciforce™* – the unique high precision backpressure system.



drop in its exports by 86% compared to April 2019.

Since April 7 it has been obligatory to wear face masks in public. Anyone who fails to comply with the measure faces a prison sentence ranging from one to three months. In addition to textile companies, prisoners who have experience in textile production are also contributing to the production of face masks.

The General Commission for Prison and Reintegration Administration (DGAPR) announced on May 19 the launch of a national project wherein prisoners contribute to the production of protective equipment. One hundred prisoners in 21 prison institutions across Morocco have been producing 20,000 face masks per day since May 5.



SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka hopes to attract \$1 billion worth PPE orders

Sri Lankan Board of Investment (BOI) has informed that the country attracted over \$500 million worth of orders for the production of personal protective equipment (PPE). Director-General of BOI Sanjaya Mohottala recently expressed confidence that the value will top USD one billion in the future adding that their apparel industry is suffering due to inadequate raw material supply.

Because of the pandemic, it will be tough for most people to buy expensive garments, and therefore, they will opt for more sustainable re-usable garments, he mentioned it urging the apparel exporters and manufacturers to reflect on alternative products, methods, and markets because of the crisis.

BOI has expedited work in setting up the proposed fabric park in Eravur to manufacture raw material needed for the apparel industry, they have already had discussions with potential investors from several countries and received favorable responses. The fabric park will produce both artificial and natural textile needed for the apparel industry. Sri Lanka's total export earnings for 2019 was \$11.9 billion, of the \$5.7 billion was generated from apparel exports.

Mitsufuji Corp. has designed masks using its unique silver-metalized materials, which has deodorizing and anti-bacterial effects.

Named 'hamon AG', it has strong durability and can withstand being washed more than 50 times.

Yamamoto Corp. in Osaka has come up with a mask cover called BIOLA, made of skin-fitting rubber-like materials used in wetsuits for surfing and diving. Small holes near the nose and mouth take in air, unlike the usual masks made of non-woven materials where air can enter anywhere. Inserting a gauze or tissue paper between the mouth and the mask cover can help prevent infection.

Apparel company Lifestyle Accent Inc. has launched masks using fiber materials from 'washi', or traditional Japanese paper. It says this kind of material helps masks feel less stuffy and that they can be washed just like apparel items. The triple-layered mask has a filter in the middle made wholly of washi, while the material that touches the skin is a mixture of washi and cotton, according to a Japanese newspaper report.

Ladies-underwear manufacturers have also joined in. Utax Co. from Nishiwaki in Hyogo prefecture near Osaka has produced what it calls 'the ultimate seamless mask' that adopts technology used in making inner clothing, enabling the product to dispense with

stitches or strings and to offer a soft touch to the skin using stretchy materials. The company is selling it through its own brand Smoon for 660 yen, offering three sizes and three colors.

Atsumi Fashion Co. has developed a mask with laces used for a brassiere.



MOROCCO

Morocco exports reusable face masks to Europe

Moroccan face masks have already made their way into Europe, with a total of 16 companies starting to export reusable protective equipment to Spain, France, Italy, and Germany. Morocco also boasts 73 units and cooperatives that manufacture washable, reusable masks.

The Moroccan Ministry of Industry announced that the export of masks has gradually grown since May 10. The source did not reveal the volume of export. Morocco has about 40 textile factories that produce 10 million masks. Morocco allowed textile companies to export half of the locally produced masks if national demand is met.

Morocco's Minister of Trade Moulay Hafid Elalamy emphasized that allowing textile companies to work helped to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 economic crisis. The sector suffered a



American Apparel to shift production to PPE, masks and gowns

American Apparel Inc. has decided to shift its operations to the production of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gildan Activewear, which owns American Apparel, which makes basic T-shirts, underwear, and other basic garments are now planning to make this as their permanent business.

Glenn Chamandy, Chief Executive Officer, Gildan Activewear, said "All of a sudden, it's turned out to be much bigger than we anticipated. This could become part of our business as we go forward." In this Coronavirus pandemic, the brand has been receiving huge orders.

Earlier American Apparel witnessed a 26% sales drop in Q1 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. American Apparel is now working to produce about 150 million masks and gowns in its production facility in Honduras and Nicaragua. Also, the US-

based yarn spinning factory is set to partly reopen for operations.



UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan aims for textile exports to Europe through the online media platform

Representatives of the Uzbek textile industry held online talks with the administration of the Dutch FashionUnited media platform. The main topic of the negotiations was establishing exports of Uzbek textile products to European markets.

FashionUnited is a media platform for promoting textile apparel brands in foreign markets through publications, articles, and newsletters. The head office is located in Amsterdam (Netherlands). FashionUnited also helps to improve marketing strategy, including promoting contacts between companies in the fashion field.

During the negotiations FashionUnited spoke about the advantages of cooperation, wide coverage of professionals in the fashion

industry, providing opportunities for cooperation in the B2B format, an extensive network of offices - about 30 - around the world, an audience of over 1.3 million subscribers per month, as well as cooperation with 50 trade shows, 50 fashion schools, organizers of fashion weeks and well-known brands from Louis Vuitton to H&M.

An active information campaign through the implementation of publications could help bring Uzbek textile products to reach the European market and attract the attention of a million subscribers in 30 countries, including leading representatives of the fashion industry.

According to representatives of FashionUnited, such a model of cooperation has already been established with several CIS countries, including Belarus and Moldova.

Following several discussions, representatives of the Dutch company expressed readiness for long-term cooperation with Uzbek partners. The sides agreed to maintain systemic contacts and organize another video conference in the coming days. ♦

