

Staff Reporter

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has appreciated Bangladesh for exporting PPE to the US market terming it a "significant milestone."

He said international partnerships like these are crucial as companies focus their production on supplying the PPE needed by frontline workers around the world.

"I join @USAmbBangladesh in congratulating Bangladesh for this significant milestone.

International partnerships like these are crucial as companies focus their production on supplying the PPE needed by frontline workers around the world. #COVID19," Pompeo said retweeting US Ambassador Earl Miller's tweet.

The US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at US Department of State said through their partnerships and innovation, together they will beat COVID-19.

In a separate tweet, the Bureau thanked the Beximco and Hanes partnership for the fast response to make PPE shipment to the US a reality.

US National Security Council also tweeted saying, "Great to see the partnership between the U.S. and Bangladesh growing stronger as we support each other in the #COVID19 fight and work together toward economic recovery."

Earlier, Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said Bangladesh has demonstrated its ability to meet global needs amid coronavirus pandemic by exporting PPE to the USA though some people unnecessarily mocked at when he disclosed such opportunities two months back.

"Our businesspeople are very smart. They did it so quickly (exporting first consignment of personal protective equipment)," he told .

On March 23, Dr Momen told the media that USA had sent a list of 22 items that they would like to import from Bangladesh.

Many were simply surprised and opined that it was impossible apparently criticized the Foreign Minister on social media platforms.

Some opined that a developed country like USA can never ask Bangladesh to supply medical equipment although they know that Bangladesh supplies to USA nearly \$6 billion worth of garments annually.

Though the USA sent a list of 22 items initially, they extended the list and made it a list 25 items.

There was discussion about Bangladeshi businesspeople and diplomats where it was conveyed that Bangladesh is capable of exporting 14 items out of the US list.

Foreign Minister Dr Momen said Bangladesh is giving these medical supplies not only to the USA but other countries too.

"We are sending these to some countries as donation apart from exporting to some countries," he said.

The Foreign Minister said Bangladeshi garment owners made 5-6 lakh PPE for domestic use within a week when coronavirus was identified in Bangladesh.

On May 25, Bangladesh joined the select group of countries that manufacture world-class, large-scale Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by shipping 6.5 million PPE gowns to US brand Hanes, for ultimate delivery to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller attended a function and saw off the first shipment at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Speaking on the occasion, Shahriar Alam said like the rest of the world, Bangladesh is also

facing the toughest of times in trying to cope with the Coronavirus pandemic.

“And in these trying times, it is remarkable to see that within this short span of two months Bangladesh was able to foray into this very regulated market with such a sensitive healthcare product, with just not ten or twenty thousand pieces but 6.5 million pieces. What an achievement,” he said, lauding Beximco for its contribution to the Bangladesh economy.

US Ambassador Miller said the event marked “the first major shipment of PPE into the US.”

As the global spread of COVID-19 has bloomed into a pandemic, it has become clear that there will be a desperate need of PPE to keep medical professionals and the general public safe.

Beximco has proudly joined the fight against the pandemic by moving swiftly to add manufacturing capabilities in PPE items such as gowns, masks and coveralls, said Beximco CEO and Group Director Syed Naved Husain.

He said the COVID-19 had changed how the world works, and that Beximco had to urgently respond. “In just two months, we’ve unleashed our world-class manufacturing, technical and design talent to switch over and start making personal protection equipment and help increase the supply of PPE which is urgently needed in Bangladesh and worldwide.”

The US Ambassador said all this happened in less than two months.

“US welcomes Bangladesh’s world-class large-scale PPE production to the global marketplace. The Beximco-Hanes partnership is another great example of how our two great nations are combating the Covid-19 pandemic,” he said.