

# China slaps new tariffs on US

REUTERS, Beijing

China said yesterday it will impose retaliatory tariffs against about \$75 billion worth of US goods, putting as much as an extra 10% on top of existing rates in the dispute between the world's top two economies.

The latest salvo from China comes after the United States unveiled tariffs on an additional \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods, including consumer electronics, scheduled to go into effect in two stages on September 1 and December 15.

China will impose additional tariffs of 5% or 10% on a total of 5,078 products originating from the United States including agricultural products such as soybeans, crude oil and small aircraft. China is also reinstating tariffs on cars and auto parts originating from the United States.

"China's decision to implement additional tariffs was forced by the US's unilateralism and protectionism," China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement, adding that its retaliatory tariffs would also take effect in two stages on September 1 and December 15.

The White House and US Trade Representative's office did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment on China's latest tariffs.

Though Chinese and US trade negotiators held another discussion earlier in August, neither side appears ready to make a significant compromise and there have been no sign of a near-term truce.

The protracted dispute has stoked fears about a global recession, shaking investor confidence and prompting central banks around the world to ease policy in recent months. US stocks fell yesterday on the news of China's tariffs, underscoring growth concerns.

In an interview on CNBC, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland President Loretta Mester said she viewed the Chinese retaliatory tariffs as "just a continuation" of the aggravated trade policy uncertainty that has begun weighing on American business investment and sentiment.

## AGRICULTURE SECTOR HIT

The knock-on effects of the US-China trade dispute was a key reason behind the Fed's move to cut interest rates last month for the first time in more than a decade.

"It is unclear as things stand whether the US-China trade negotiations will continue as planned in early September," said Agathe Demarais,

global forecasting director at The Economist Intelligence Unit, in an e-mail statement.

"All eyes will now turn to the US Fed to see whether Jerome Powell, the Fed Chairman, will react to these developments by accelerating rate cuts."

Among US goods targeted by Beijing's latest tariffs were soybeans, which will be hit with an extra 5% tariff starting September 1. China will also tag beef and pork from the United States with an extra 10% tariff.

China is also reinstating an additional 25% tariff on US-made vehicles and 5% tariffs on auto parts that had been suspended at the beginning of the year. Carmakers such as Daimler and Tesla had adjusted their prices in China when the auto and auto parts tariffs had been suspended.

Ford, a net exporter to China, said in a statement it encouraged the United States and China to find a near term solution.

"It is essential for these two important economies to work together to advance balanced and fair trade," the company said.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told Fox Business News that trade negotiations with China would still go on behind closed doors.

## Australia urges 'sovereignty' as S China Sea tensions rise

AFP, Hanoi

Australia's prime minister yesterday urged nations in Asia to stand up for their "independence and sovereignty", with tensions high in the disputed South China Sea where Beijing is under fire for increasingly bullish behaviour.

Scott Morrison's comments came after the United States slammed China for its "escalation" in the waterway, a key global shipping route where Beijing is accused of deploying warships, arming outposts and ramming fishing vessels.

Morrison was speaking during a trip to Vietnam, one of China's most vocal critics over competing claims in the resource-rich sea.

A Chinese survey ship has antagonised Hanoi since early July, sailing through waters near the Spratly Islands where Vietnam has several oil and gas projects.

# Global leaders

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million Rohingyas and most of them entered the country since August 25, 2017.

Despite all the preparations, no Rohingya turned up on Thursday to avail of the "voluntary" repatriation offer given to them to go back to Rakhine, prompting the authorities to suspend the repatriation process for the day.

"The world should be more concerned about it [Rohingya crisis]," Momen said, urging global leaders to find out a solution to the crisis that began on August 25, 2017.

The minister added that Asean countries have a responsibility to convince Myanmar to act and take back their nationals as quickly as possible.

He urged the UN agencies to focus more on Myanmar, instead of Bangladesh, to create conducive conditions there for the safe return of Rohingyas and remove the trust-deficit among them. "With our limited resources, we kept them well."

Momen said China, Russia, India, Japan and other countries are on Bangladesh's side on the Rohingya repatriation issue.

He said the UN could not avoid the responsibility.

The minister said Bangladesh is always ready to facilitate the return of Rohingyas and mentioned that they are still hopeful.

Momen said the process is still on, but maintained that Myanmar could not create confidence among the Rohingyas.

On Thursday, he said Bangladesh does not want to do anything by force and laid emphasis on removing the trust-deficit among the Rohingyas who refused to return to their homeland.

Momen reiterated Bangladesh's call to take 100 "majhis" or Rohingya leaders to Rakhine, and show them what measures and arrangements have been taken to welcome Rohingyas to their own homes as they fear about their safety and security.

The minister earlier said he was thinking about forming a commission with people from various countries to go and see the development in Rakhine and inspect whether peace and stability are prevailing there.

"Myanmar should prove that development is there and peace is prevailing," he said, adding that Myanmar could also take journalists there to observe the situation on the ground.

Momen said Myanmar should come forward if they are honest and should give access to Rakhine to see the situation there.

He indicated about slower fund flow -- both from local and

international sources -- which might create problems for the Rohingyas though they are living a comfortable life now. "For their own better future, they should go back."

The minister said their efforts would continue for voluntary and the safe return of Rohingyas.

The two countries signed a repatriation deal on November 23, 2017, but there has been little progress.

On July 29, Bangladesh handed a fresh list of 25,000 Rohingyas from around 6,000 families to Myanmar for verification before their repatriation to Rakhine.

With the latest list, Bangladesh has so far handed the names of around 55,000 Rohingyas to the Myanmar authorities and around 8,000 of them have been verified. Myanmar only cleared 3,450 Rohingyas for beginning the repatriation.

On January 16, 2018, Bangladesh and Myanmar inked a document on "Physical Arrangement", which was supposed to facilitate the return of Rohingyas to their homeland.

The "Physical Arrangement" stipulates that the repatriation will be completed preferably within two years from the start.

The first batch of Rohingyas was scheduled to return on November 15 last year, but it was halted amid the unwillingness of Bangladesh to go back for lack of a congenial environment in Rakhine.

AFP adds: Myanmar yesterday pushed blame for its second failed attempt to repatriate the Rohingyas on Bangladesh.

The Myanmar military waged a brutal crackdown on the stateless Muslim minority in western Rakhine State, leading to an exodus of more than 740,000 Rohingyas to neighbouring Bangladesh.

The region remains riven by religious and ethnic conflict.

"Smooth repatriation for the displaced persons would require the adherence to the bilateral agreement," the state-run New Light of Myanmar said.

The Myanmar's foreign ministry put the onus on Bangladesh for failing to distribute the correct paperwork, so-called "verification forms" to potential returnees -- a controversial form of ID that falls short of granting Rohingya citizenship.

"This procedure was not adhered to," it said, adding Bangladesh had also "ignored" a request to expedite the return of more than 400 Hindu refugees.

The ministry confirmed China and Japan had facilitated repatriation, and it had been the Chinese government that informed them earlier this month of Bangladesh's intent to re-start the process.



Hundreds of locals demonstrating on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road in Jadimura area yesterday morning after a group of Rohingyas allegedly shot dead Jubo League leader Omar Faruk on Thursday night. Inset, angry locals vandalise Rohingya settlements in the area.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# No entomologist in city corporations

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out of the 31 posts of entomologists are now vacant. There are 29 entomological technicians against 59 posts across the country while one out of three posts for assistant entomologists are vacant.

Moreover, the DGHS have no such post in 40 districts.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) of the DGHS, which is researching vector-borne diseases, is also running with all four posts for entomologists vacant, officials said.

From 1996 to 1999, the DGHS appointed eight entomologists. Not a single entomologist has been hired since then. Between 2004 and 2008, the department appointed around 20 entomological technicians.

Around three months ago, the department promoted of 11 entomological technicians to the posts of entomologists although they are not qualified for the job, officials said.

Prof Kabirul said the technicians do not have a master's degree on entomology and they lack the

education and training required for the posts.

"A field technician may recognise the mosquito and larvae, but they will not be able to do the work of an entomologist," he said.

A DGHS official, requesting anonymity, said the authorities concerned had never given much attention to the matter.

Prof Saniya Tahmina, line director of Com-municable Diseases Control, said as dengue has spread everywhere, entomologists are needed at her department, the city corporations, and district civil surgeon offices.

"We are identifying the density of Aedes, Anopheles and Culex mosquitoes with our handful of scientists. We have been taking the help of zoology students from Jahangirnagar University," she said.

Chief Entomologist Kholilur Rahman of the DGHS said it was not possible to contain the spread of dengue through treatment alone. It has been proven across the world that

ento-mological research is needed to control vector-borne diseases.

About the city corporations' lack of such scientists, Mahbub Hossain, additional secretary (urban development wing) of Local Government Division, said, "Since the first outbreak of dengue in 2000, the disease has been un-der control. But now we have realised that the current approach to control mosquito will not work anymore."

The officials will hold a meeting on August 29 when all city corporations will place their long-term plans and the ministry will provide them with the resources to implement those plans, he said.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon said he has been planning to set up a separate wing for mosquito control.

"We will submit a proposal to the LGD by this month. Entomologists and other necessary experts will be incorporated in the wing," he told The Daily Star.

# Gaining strength, yet losing market

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airlines operating from Dhaka.

The national airline ferried 11.9 lakh out of 33.1 lakh international passengers to and from Bangladesh in 2006-07. It had three types of aircraft -- four DC10-30s, four F-28s, and three A310-300s -- in 2007.

In 2018-19, it carried around 18.53 lakh out of around 70.13 lakh international passengers. The rest went to 26 foreign and local airlines operating in Bangladesh, according to data provided by Biman officials.

As per the trend in the aviation industry, a national airline should enjoy about 55 to 65 percent share of all traffic to/from the country.

In the case of Bangladesh, its national flag carrier has been losing market share -- from 44.85 percent in 2002 to 32.49 percent in 2007.

And with the condition of existing fleet, this downward trend will continue, said an internal report of Biman prepared to devise a market plan before signing an agreement in 2008 to purchase 10 aircraft from Boeing.

"Biman failed to grab the market due to unbridled corruption and irregularities, inefficient management, improper route planning and absence of a proper business plan," said leading aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam.

## THE 2007 PLAN

To tighten its grip on the market, which has been marking a constant growth of 14 percent annually in Bangladesh, Biman devised the plan with the help of the Boeing in 2007 when Biman decided to buy 10 aircraft from the US plane maker.

Nine of the 10 aircraft have already been delivered and the last Boeing 787 Dreamliner is scheduled to arrive next month. It has already purchased four 419-seater Boeing 777-300ERs, two 162-seater Boeing 737-800s and three 271-seater Boeing 787s.

With four more leased 737s and two 74-seater Dash 8s, Biman's current fleet comprises 15 aircraft. Some old planes were phased out in the meantime.

The plan suggested Biman have a fleet of 24 aircraft by this year and recruit pilots on a regular basis.

It also recommended operating long-haul flights (6.5 hours or more) to Frankfurt, New York, Brussels, Manchester and Tokyo to ensure optimum use of the new aircraft. But Biman flies only on the Dhaka-London route.

Besides, Biman suspended Dhaka-Rome-Frankfurt and Dhaka to Manchester, Rome and Milan routes that take minimum nine hours each.

Captain Kamal Sayeed, who was a member of a sub-committee formed to prepare the 2007 plan, recently said, "Many routes were planned including many destinations in Europe. But later no initiative was taken."

The route plan should have been implemented, he added.

"Biman has been operating its ultra long-haul aircraft [12 hours or longer] on short-haul routes," said Wahidul Alam, who was a member of the Biman board of directors when the deal for the purchase of 10 aircraft was signed.

A top Biman official, wishing anonymity, said, "Without massive network expansion the best utilisation of the new aircraft is not possible. Market is there but what we need is a dynamic leadership."

The plan, authenticated by KPMG, a global network of professional firms providing audit, tax and advisory services, and the Institute of Business Administration of Dhaka University, suggested launching flights to new

BIMAN'S FLEET	
Boeing 777-300ER	4
Boeing 737-800	6
Boeing 787 Dreamliner	3
Dash-8	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>

SOURCE: BIMAN BANGLADESH AIRLINES

destinations such as Sydney, Manila, Kunming, Toronto and Jakarta.

It also recommended steps to improve image, ensure on-time performance, and competitive customer services both on the ground and in flights and code-sharing with other airlines and joining carrier alliances like One World, Sky Team, and Star Alliance in which several carriers share code.

Code-sharing is an arrangement through which two or more airlines share the same flight. A seat can be purchased from an airline on a flight that is actually operated by another airline under a different flight number or code. All major airlines have one or multiple code-share agreements.

"Biman would not have faced such a situation had it followed the commercial plan devised with the help of the Boeing," said an ex-Biman official, who was a member of the committee that devised the plan.

Asked why the plan was not implemented, aviation expert Wahidul Alam said, "In my view, Biman didn't have the expert manpower required for this. May be the plan was shelved after the planes were purchased."

**LAPSES IN STRATEGY**  
Another Biman official pointed out that the national carrier's 70 percent passengers are expatriate labourers who travel in economy class.

Business class usually takes one fifth of the space but generates two thirds of the whole revenue, he added.

"You have to operate on routes where you will get many business class passengers."

He expressed dismay saying Biman is now operating its ultra long-haul aircraft Boeing 787s dreamliners on Dhaka-Muscat, Dhaka-Doha and Dhaka-Kuwait routes where hardly any business class passengers are available.

The official suggested Biman use the hub-and-spoke model, which allows a carrier to take passengers to their destinations after flying them to its hub and connect them to their flights. This gives the carrier more flexibility.

For example, Biman will carry passengers from Dubai to its hub in Dhaka and give him a connecting flight to other destination after a two to three hours transit.

For this Biman flights must have to operate on time as Biman would have to count huge amounts for passengers' accommodation and food in case of flight delays.

According to the official, Biman's on-time performance is 60 to 65 percent whereas world standard of on-time performance is around 85-90 percent.

The lack of capacity of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport is one of the major reasons for the delays as the airport has only eight boarding bridges. Sometimes, 14 planes land at a time.

So, six aircraft have to wait until those on the boarding bridge are offloaded. It hugely affects Biman since this airport is the hub of the airline.

Officials say the lack of proper infrastructure, insufficient passenger lounges, lack of logistics to carry passengers to an aircraft parked far away, technical issues, sometimes crew shortage, sometimes bad weather and overstay of planes in other stations are some other reasons behind the delays.

Biman incurred losses for most of the years since its inception in 1972 and hogged the headlines for irregularities and corruption on numerous occasions. The loss stood at Tk 201 crore in 2017-18 while Biman made a profit of Tk 272 crore in the last fiscal year, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahbub Ali told the media last month.

Amid widespread allegations of anomalies, the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry in 2010 had formed a five-member parliamentary sub-committee which found corruption involving Tk 700 crore in purchase and maintenance of aircraft and equipment of Biman in 18 years since 1992.

The committee also found corruption in Biman's other sectors that include ticketing, money recovery, signing contracts and hajj operations.

Recently, the Anti-Corruption Commission after conducting a probe made some recommendations to address corruption in Biman. These include forming purchase committee with local and foreign experts, fixing condition of lease, analysing records of procurement to find out the magnitude of corruption.

## Jubo League leader

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Victim's father Abdul Monaf, 61, told this newspaper that his son was going to contest the upcoming union parishad election which is supposed to take place next year.

Faruk's political opponents hired Rohingya miscreants to kill him, Monaf claimed.

Informed about the protest, Teknaf Upazila Chairman Nurul Alam, UNO Rabiul Hasan, Executive Magistrate Abul Munsur and Teknaf Police Station Officer-in-charge Prodip Kumar Das went to the spot to pacify the agitated mob.

Later, the mob withdrew their protest around 1:00pm.

## Pollution

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The four rivers -- the Balu, Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, and Turag -- surrounding the capital are unsuitable for such a project because of poor and deteriorating water quality, mentioned the official, seeking anonymity.

The proposed intake locations in the Meghna are at Bishnandi in Araihaaz Upazila and Haria in Sonargaon Upazila of Narayanganj. Pollution is the main threat to water quality at these two intake points, added the official.

The report said the Bishnandi canal receives discharge from numerous small and medium-sized textile industries, as well as untreated domestic wastewater from nearby residential areas.

It mentioned that the water treatment cost may increase threefold if water quality continues to deteriorate.

The ADB is providing financial support to DWASA for developing the intake point at Bishnandi along with a raw water transmission pipeline and a water treatment plant under Dhaka Environmentally Sustainable Water Supply Project, approved in 2013.

"At present, the quality of Meghna river water is good. To avoid deterioration in water quality and ensure sustainable supply to Dhaka, it is critical to strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for the river," the ADB report pointed out.

Currently, DWASA provides 87 percent of drinking water for the city dwellers from groundwater sources, and the rest comes from surface water sources. Groundwater abstraction, however, has reached beyond sustainable yields, it added.

Talking to The Daily Star, DWASA Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said, "We will not let Meghna become [as polluted as] Buriganga and Shitalakkhya."

He also said the sources of pollution in Meghna will be checked at any cost and a master plan will be taken soon to ensure supply of drinking water for the city dwellers for the next 50 years.

## BGB seizes

## 48kgs of dried turtle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday seized at least 48 kilograms of dried turtles in Dinajpur's Phulbari upazila.

The seized items are worth Tk 8.70 lakh, said Lt Col Sharif Ullah Abed, commanding officer of 29th BGB Battalion.

According to Sharif, a team of BGB conducted a raid in Sonaharpara village of the upazila on information that smugglers brought dried turtles from India through Dynur border.

BGB recovered the dried turtles but its carriers managed to flee, he said. The seized item was deposited to Dinajpur Customs, he added.