

## EU launches new WTO case against China high-tech patent rules

AFP, Brussels

The European Union launched a new challenge at the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Monday against China's rules on royalty rates for high-tech patents, amid escalating trade tensions between Beijing and Brussels.

The European Commission accused China of pressuring innovative European high-tech companies into lowering their fees by allowing its courts to set binding worldwide royalty rates.

"The EU's vibrant high-tech industries must be allowed to compete fairly and on a level playing field," said Maros Sefcovic, the EU's trade commissioner.

"Where this is not the case, the Commission takes decisive action to protect their rights".

The action comes as trade tensions are soaring worldwide, with tariff-loving Donald Trump set to be inaugurated as US President.

It adds to a longer-running spat between Beijing and Brussels, which has seen the pair accuse each other of unfair practices and take a series of tit-for-tat measures.

The EU slapped hefty tariffs on electric cars made in China last year. In turn, Beijing targeted European brandies and launched probes into EU subsidies of some dairy and pork products.

The latest challenge revolves around "standard essential patents" protecting technologies enabling the manufacturing of goods to meet a certain standard.

European companies hold many such patents, notably in the telecom sector, according to the EU.

By letting its courts set worldwide royalty rates, China was forcing EU companies to give its firms cheaper access to those technologies, the 27-nation bloc alleged.

The practice also unduly interfered with the competence of EU courts for European patent issues, according to the commission.

Brussels said it requested consultations at the WTO -- the first step of the international body's dispute settlement procedure -- because "no satisfactory negotiated solution has been forthcoming from China". Under WTO rules, the two parties have 60 days to settle the matter before the claimant can request that a panel be set up to rule on it.

Beijing said on Monday it "regrets" the EU's decision to launch this new challenge at the WTO.

"China strictly adheres to WTO rules and its accession commitments, continuously improving intellectual property rights protection legislation and enforcement," Beijing's Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

"China will...firmly safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," it said.

The case is related to another challenge launched in 2022 where Brussels accused Beijing of barring EU owners of high-tech patents from turning to European courts to protect their intellectual property.

## Trump may impose 25% tariffs on Canada, Mexico on Feb 1

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump said Monday he may impose 25 percent tariffs on Canada and Mexico as early as February 1, while promising punitive measures on other countries as part of new US trade policy.

Trump rekindled his threat against the two major US trading partners hours after taking the oath of office -- accusing them of failing to stop illegal immigration and drug trafficking into the United States.

"We're thinking in terms of 25 percent on Mexico and Canada, because they're allowing vast numbers of people -- Canada's a very bad abuser also -- vast numbers of people to come in, and fentanyl to come in," he said in the Oval Office as he signed an array of executive orders.

He added that he was thinking of enacting the tariffs on February 1.

Trump also signed an order Monday directing agencies to study a host of trade issues including deficits, unfair practices and currency manipulation.

These could pave the way for further duties.

In ordering the probe on large US deficits, Trump asked agencies to "recommend appropriate measures, such as a global supplemental tariff or other policies" as remedies.

He also called for a review of Washington's trade deal with Mexico and Canada, alongside its pact with China that marked a truce in their earlier tariff war.

Earlier Monday, Trump vowed to "immediately begin the overhaul" of the US trade system "to protect American workers and families."

"Instead of taxing our citizens to enrich other countries, we will tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens," Trump said in his inaugural address.

Trump had threatened the tariff hikes on Canadian and Mexican imports as president-elect, as well as an additional 10 percent on Chinese goods, if they did not do more about illegal immigration and the flow of fentanyl into the country.

On the campaign trail, Trump also floated the idea of added duties on all imports and even steeper rates on Chinese goods.

Mexico, Canada and China are leading sources for goods imported by the United States, according to official trade data.

Asked about across-the-board tariffs, Trump on Monday night

urging more oil and gas purchases from the bloc.

The EU's economy commissioner said earlier Monday that it stood ready to defend its interests, while Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said Ottawa would work to ensure it is ready to respond to any US actions.

Canada's finance minister Dominic LeBlanc added that it would be a mistake for Washington to proceed with tariffs.

In his inaugural address, Trump reiterated his plan also to set up an "External Revenue Service" to collect tariffs, duties and revenues.

Some analysts have warned that



told reporters in the Oval Office he might enact them, but added: "We're not ready for that yet."

Tariffs are paid by US importers to the government on purchases from abroad, and the economic weight falls on importers, foreign suppliers or consumers.

Speaking in the Oval Office, Trump took aim at trade imbalances with the European Union too, saying it did not import enough American products.

He added he would "straighten that out" by using tariffs or by

tariff hikes would bring higher consumer prices and weigh on GDP.

But Trump's supporters have pointed to other proposals like tax cuts and deregulation as ways to offset any potential negative impacts.

Trump also signed a directive to establish a new "Department of Government Efficiency," after naming billionaire ally Elon Musk to lead such an initiative.

The office dubbed DOGE is expected to propose major cuts to federal spending and regulations.

## World economy to improve in next 12 months Global CEOs say in PwC survey

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Global economic growth is on course to improve over the next 12 months, according to nearly 60 percent of CEOs surveyed under the PricewaterhouseCoopers' (PwC) 28th Annual Global CEO Survey.

The survey was launched at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, which gathered responses from 4,701 CEOs across 109 countries.

It revealed that 42 percent plan to increase headcounts by 5 percent or more this year, with only 17 percent expecting reductions.

Optimism about emerging technologies like generative AI (GenAI) is driving this outlook as more than half of the CEOs reported employee efficiency gains from AI adoption, and 32 percent saw revenue growth in 2024.

However, trust remains an issue, with only a third of CEOs expressing high confidence in embedding AI into key processes, according to a press release.

Despite challenges, 49 percent anticipate profitability gains from AI within the next year.

The survey also highlighted a growing urgency for business reinvention.

Four in 10 CEOs believe their companies will not be viable in a decade without significant change.

While 63 percent have taken steps to transform value creation, slow resource reallocation hampers agility, with two-thirds moving less than 20 percent of financial and human resources annually.

## Dollar pares losses


REUTERS, Sydney

The dollar pared some overnight losses on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump suggested the United States could impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico in the near future, challenging suggestions his policies would be more gradual.

Trump told reporters his team was thinking of tariffs around 25 percent that could be announced on Feb. 1, but offered no other specifics. He also floated the idea of universal tariffs, but said the United States was not ready for that yet.

The dollar had fallen sharply on Monday after Trump's first day included no specific plans on tariffs and officials signalled any new taxes would be imposed in a "measured" way, a major relief for trade-exposed currencies.

A following trade memo merely directed agencies to investigate and remedy persistent trade deficits.



**ARMY HEADQUARTERS**  
**E IN C'S BRANCH, WORKS DIRECTORATE**  
**DHAKA CANTONMENT**

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**

Notice no. 600/15/19/2024-2025/E-6Dated : 16 January 2025.

**MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES**

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence				
2. Agency	Military Engineer Services				
3. Procuring Entity Name	E in C				
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka				
5. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)				
6. Budget and source of Funds	GOB, Development Budget				
7. Development Partners (if applicable)	None				
8. Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Establishment of BNS SHER-E-BANGLA Patuakhali-2 <sup>nd</sup> Revised.				
9. Selling of Tender will commence from	<b>23 January 2025</b> (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).				
10. Selling of Tender will close on	<b>13 February 2025</b> (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).				
11. Last date and time of submission of Tender	<b>16 February 2025</b> upto 1200 hours.				
12. Date and time of opening of Tender	<b>16 February 2025</b> at 1230 hours.				
13. Name & Address of the Office(s) - Selling Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre of Works Directorate at GE (Army) Central Dhaka and AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantt.				
- Receiving Tender Document	Tender Selling & Information Centre of Works Directorate at GE (Army) Central Dhaka.				
- Opening Tender Document	-Do-				
14. Eligibility of Tenderer	<b>a.</b> MES enlisted contractors Class - 'C' <b>b.</b> Contractors enlisted in other Govt, Semi Government & Autonomous Organization of similar capacity may also participate in tenders having security clearance from DGFI.				
15. Brief Description of Works					
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Price of Tender Document (Taka)	Tender Security Amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee in favour of AHQ, E in C's Br, Wks Dte, Dhaka Cantt (Taka)	Completion Time in weeks/ months
a.	Remaining works for Construction of 1 x Petty Officers' Family Quarter (keeping ground floor open 10 storey building, 36 nos Flat with 10 storied foundation, 4 nos unit in each floor) including ancillary works at BNS SHER-E-BANGLA Patuakhali (Petty Officers' Family Quarter No. 01) (Group-II).	Kalapara, Patuakhali	5,000.00	7,96,000.00	04 (Four) Months
16. Name of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works				
17. Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director of Works				
18. Address of Official Inviting Tender	AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Web address : <a href="http://www.army.mil.bd">www.army.mil.bd</a>				
19. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Army Headquarters, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Tel No. : <b>9832870</b> Fax No : <b>9832906</b>				
20.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.				

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২০/০১/২৫

GD-220

SE  
For Director of Works  
Army Headquarters  
Engineer in Chief's Branch  
Works Directorate  
Dhaka Cantonment  
Tele : 8711111 Ext 2874  
Civil: 9832874

## BTRC initiates

FROM PAGE B1 business entities. The initiative seeks to foster healthy competition and collaboration among stakeholders, including consumers, businesses, and the government.

Addressing challenges such as transitioning from existing licences, establishing sustainable investment policies, and creating effective regulations, the BTRC plans to submit its reform proposals to the government by March.

The chairman

acknowledged the need for consumer-centric policies to ensure sustainability and facilitate, rather than regulate, telecom companies.

He said the committee would streamline complex network structures, reduce pressure on spectrum usage, and enhance fixed broadband services.

The commission also aims to adopt green technologies and promote active sharing to support digital service expansion.

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## VAT hike

FROM PAGE B1 economists, Ahmed said, "Let critics say what they want. There's no reason to stop them. The rationale behind this VAT hike will be explained in due time."

Tax and VAT adjustments are typically made during the formulation of the national budget, and various measures will be adopted in the budget this year to ensure conformity with the hikes, he said.

While the VAT rates have been raised, certain customs duties have been reduced to achieve a

balance, he said.

The Advisers' Council Committee on Government Purchase yesterday gave retrospective approval to an Open Market Sale (OMS) initiative run by the Department of Agricultural Marketing last December.

Under the initiative, 10 agricultural products such as potatoes, eggs, onions, raw papaya, and various green vegetables were sold at subsidised prices through trucks around the capital.

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## SMEs lose

FROM PAGE B1 business climate and credit outlook have improved, according to Mohammad Salekeen Ibrahim, Head of Asset at Eastern Bank.

"Banking activities were almost shut in July and August of last year. During that period, curfews and general holidays were frequent," recalled the banker.

"Banks were unable to reach customers, and customers were likewise unable to access bank services," he added. "While the overall situation in the country has shown signs of recovery since August, it has not fully stabilised."

Ibrahim said they are looking for potential clients. However, the current business climate

and high interest rates remain major obstacles.

"The loan disbursement rate may remain sluggish until the client confidence stabilises," he commented.

The high-interest rate environment is a direct consequence of the central bank's prolonged battle against stubbornly high inflation, which has been dragging on for more than two years.

In the first half of FY25, inflation averaged 10.87 percent, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

To curb spiralling prices, the BB has been steadily increasing the policy rate, the rate at which it lends to banks, since May 2022.

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**Army Headquarters**  
**E in C's Branch, Works Directorate**  
**Dhaka Cantonment**

**Invitation for Tender**

Notice No. 600/15/28/2024-2025/E-6Dated: 16 January 2025

**Military Engineer Services**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence				
2	Agency	Military Engineer Services				
3	Procuring entity name	E in C				
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka				
5	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)				
6	Budget and source of funds	GOB, Development Budget				
7	Development partners (if applicable)	None				
8	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Establishment of BNS Sher-e-Bangla Patuakhali-2 <sup>nd</sup> Revised.				
9	Selling of tender will commence from	23 January 2025 (from 1200 hours to 1400 hours in Office Time).				
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	a.	Construction of Remaining Boundary wall including ancillary works at BNS Sher-e-Bangla Patuakhali.	Kalapara, Patuakhali	7,000.00	10,90,000.00	04 (four) months
16	Name of official inviting tender	Director of Works				
17	Designation of official inviting tender	Director of Works				
18	Address of official inviting tender	AHQ, E in C's Branch, Works Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment Web address: <a href="http://www.army.mil.bd">www.army.mil.bd</a>				
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