

Tariff issue

FROM PAGE 1

"The National Board of Revenue is identifying options to rationalise tariffs expeditiously, which is necessary to address the matter," he wrote on a Facebook post this morning.

Shafiqul said the United States is a close friend of Bangladesh and its largest single-country export destination.

The interim government has been working with the US since the Trump Administration took over to enhance trade and investment cooperation between the two countries, he said.

"Our ongoing work with the US government is expected to help address the tariff issue," the press secretary said.

The United States has recently announced a 37 percent tariff on goods imported from Bangladesh as part of US President Donald Trump's new "reciprocal tariff" policy.

Competitors

FROM PAGE 1

of top garment exporter Ha-Meem Group, which mainly ships to the US. India's tariff would be 26 percent and Pakistan's 29 percent. Indonesia, another competitor for Bangladesh, will be subjected to a 32 percent tariff, while Turkey will face the base rate of 10 percent.

"It is too early to say what the real impact would be," Azad said, adding that both India and Pakistan are enjoying cash incentive facilities from their governments, which will make them more competitive in the American market.

Bangladesh, however, will enjoy some advantages in its trade with the US, although the effective tariff rate is more than 52 percent if the current 15.62 percent tariff is factored in, said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"But this move from the Trump administration will make clothes pricier and may reduce the overall demand for clothes," he said.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development, echoed the same.

"Obviously, there will be some negative impacts on Bangladesh. But China's market share will definitely erode, and this is a silver lining for us," he added.

Bangladesh may get more benefit here because of the lower production cost and prices.

Bangladeshi garment items' price in the international market is so low that the retailers and brands can even offset the higher tariffs.

The production cost in India is higher than that of Bangladesh because of shortage of skilled workforce and a national minimum wage.

Pakistan is strong in the home textile and denim segment but not as strong as Bangladesh in woven and knitwear exports. Also, Pakistan's cost of production is higher than that of Bangladesh.

Small exporter Sri Lanka faces higher tariffs than Bangladesh, at 44 percent, and Cambodia, 49 percent.

Most all economists and exporters urged urgent negotiations with the Trump administration for a reduction of duty on garment items, at least for those made from cotton imported from the US.

Anwar Hossain, the administrator at the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and vice-chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau, said he has already collected data as he is scheduled to sit in a meeting on Sunday to discuss the possible way out of the huge tariff burden.

There are three pillars based on which the trade negotiations can proceed with the Trump administration: duty, currency devaluation and non-tariff barriers.

The duty issue is negotiable, as Trump has already said that any country can discuss it. Bangladesh is not involved in currency devaluation as the US dollar is almost market-oriented and the non-tariff barriers are too low in US Bangladesh trade.

One non-tariff barrier was double fumigation of US cotton and it was removed by Bangladesh two years ago.

Bangladesh is one of the major importers of cotton from the US and this could be a major point of negotiation to convince the US to reduce the tariff rate.

In 2024, the US's total goods trade with Bangladesh amounted to \$10.6 billion, with Bangladesh importing goods worth \$2.2 billion, according to data from the United States Trade Representative, the chief trade negotiation body of the US government.

Bhutan building

FROM PAGE 12

In keeping with its emphasis on prosperity, Bhutan is developing a sustainable wellness hub in the country's south, near the border with India's Sikkim region.

Gelephu Mindfulness City is a visionary pathway to creating new opportunities in connectivity, education, and green investments for its citizens, all while boosting Bhutan's GNH.

Death toll hits 3,000

FROM PAGE 12

Naypyitaw, she added. People were camping outdoors in temperatures of 38°C (100°F) because they were too scared to go home, and many hospitals were also setting up temporary facilities there. Vuolo told Reuters from Naypyitaw.

Skin disease, malaria and dengue were among the diseases that could result from prolonged crises, such as in Myanmar, she said.

But conditions could get even tougher for the huge relief effort, after weather officials warned that unseasonal rain from Sunday to April 11 could threaten the areas hardest-hit by the quake.

"I've heard that in the next day or two there are rains (expected)," Titon Mitra, the Myanmar representative of the United Nations Development Programme told Reuters by telephone, during a visit to Sagaing.

"If that hits, we've got people, lots of people now, in temporary shelters, makeshift camps out on the streets, and that's going to be a real problem," he said, also flagging the UN's concerns about an outbreak of waterborne disease.

Despite the devastation, junta chief Min Aung Hlaing will leave his disaster-stricken country on Thursday for a rare trip to a regional summit in Bangkok, state television said.

It is an uncommon foreign visit for a general regarded as a



People line up for food aid being distributed in Sagaing yesterday, following the March 28 earthquake. PHOTO: AFP

pariah by many countries and the subject of Western sanctions and an International Criminal Court investigation.

The weather extremes will add to the challenges faced by aid and rescue groups, which have called for access to all affected areas despite the strife of civil war.

The military has struggled to run Myanmar since its return to power in a 2021 coup that unseated the elected civilian government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

The generals have been

internationally isolated since the takeover and Myanmar's economy and basic services, including healthcare, have been reduced to tatters amid the strife.

On Wednesday state-run MRTV said a unilateral government ceasefire would take immediate effect for 20 days, to support relief efforts after the quake, but warned authorities would "respond accordingly" if rebels launched attacks.

The move came after a major rebel alliance declared a ceasefire on

Tuesday to assist the humanitarian effort.

Nearly a week after the quake, searchers in neighbouring Thailand hunting for survivors combed a mountain of debris left after a skyscraper in the capital, Bangkok, collapsed while under construction.

Rescuers are using mechanical diggers and bulldozers to break up 100 tons of concrete to locate any still alive after the disaster that killed 15 people, with 72 still missing.

Thailand's nationwide toll stands at 22.

Palestinians flee Rafah again

FROM PAGE 12

troops were taking an area he called the "Morag Axis", a reference to an abandoned former Israeli settlement once located between Rafah on Gaza's southern edge and the adjacent main southern city Khan Younis.

Gazans who had returned to homes in the ruins during the ceasefire have now been ordered to flee communities on the northern and southern edges of the strip.

They fear that Israel's intention is to depopulate those areas indefinitely, leaving many hundreds of thousands of people permanently homeless in one of the poorest and most crowded territories on earth.

The security zone includes some of Gaza's last agricultural land and critical water infrastructure.

Since the first phase of the ceasefire expired at the start of March with no agreement to prolong it, Israel has imposed a total blockade on all goods reaching Gaza's 2.3 million residents, recreating what international organisations describe as a humanitarian catastrophe after weeks of relative calm.

Israel's stated goal since the start of the war has been the destruction of the Hamas group which ran Gaza for nearly two decades.

But with no effort made to establish an alternative administration,

Hamas-led police returned to the streets during the ceasefire. Fighters still hold 59 dead and living hostages which Israel says must be handed over to extend the truce; Hamas says it will free them only under a deal that ends the war.

Israeli leaders say they have been encouraged by signs of protest in Gaza against Hamas, with hundreds of people demonstrating in north Gaza's Beit Lahiya on Wednesday opposing the war and demanding Hamas quit power. Hamas calls the protesters collaborators and says Israel is behind them.

Israel's military campaign has so far killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, Gaza health authorities say.

Rafah residents said most of the local population had followed Israel's order to leave, as Israeli strikes toppled buildings there. But a strike on the main road between Khan Younis and Rafah stopped most movement between the two cities.

Movement of people and traffic along the western coastal road near Morag was also limited by bombardment, said residents.

"Others stayed because they don't know where to go, or got fed up of being displaced several times. We are afraid they might be killed or at best detained," said Basem, a resident of Rafah who declined to give a second name.

Greed will destroy us

FROM PAGE 12

businesses should not be greed-driven and that is the first condition of the new, future civilisation.

"Greed will destroy us ... Our country is moving forward. Our GDP is growing and all that ... growth rate is so high. So what? This gets concentrated in a few hands. They become richer and richer, and we call it development. We call it growth; we call it a fantastic economy," said the chief adviser, adding that this is how the seeds of self-destruction are planted.

He said this is one reason why civilisation cannot be sustained, and this is also destroying the planet.

Prof Yunus, who established the Grameen Bank in 1983, told youth to challenge the system to change the world.

"You cannot create the [new]

world with the same system. If you want to change the world, you have to change the system. There's no other option for you. If you go by the same road, you'll always get to the same destination. If you want to go to a new destination, you have to build a new road," he said.

The chief adviser said human beings are not born to work under anybody else, but they were born to be entrepreneurs.

Terming today's youth "the most powerful generation in human history," Yunus urged them to do something for themselves other than "taking orders from somebody else".

Highlighting the importance of access to credit, Yunus said, "You cannot achieve all the rights unless you establish the right to credit."

How are Trump tariffs calculated?

FROM PAGE 1

country's new tariff rate appeared to have been derived by taking America's trade deficit with that nation and dividing it by the US imports from that country. Then, the percentage number was cut in half.

For Bangladesh, this meant dividing the US trade deficit of \$6.2 billion by the total purchases from Bangladesh (\$8.4 billion). That comes to about 74 percent. The

calculated figure was then halved to 37 percent, the "discounted reciprocal tariff".

Trump previously said each nation's tariff rate would be "the combined rate of all their tariffs, non-monetary barriers and other forms of cheating".

Those non-monetary barriers include a host of hard-to-quantify laws and other policies that Trump sees as the primary reason that

"The moment you have the right to credit, other rights will be established by themselves by people themselves. You don't have to bring it from outside," he added.

Prof Yunus urged the young generation to build themselves as "three zero persons" to protect the planet from destruction.

"If we want to provide service, we will have to go to a new civilisation of three zeros - zero carbon emission, zero waste and zero wealth concentration," he said.

He said the world is approaching a self-destructive civilisation as carbon emission, waste generation, and wealth concentration are plaguing the old economic models.

Stressing that life is about preservation and protection, he emphasised preserving nature to sustain society.

Prof Yunus said once five persons get together, they can create a three-zero club and commit that they will not personally contribute to carbon emission, waste generation and wealth concentration.

"You cannot change the world in a day...if you want to change, start from your village," the chief adviser said.

The BIMSTEC Young Gen Forum was attended by young business leaders who exchanged ideas and explored possibilities in business areas.

The forum was organised as part of the sixth BIMSTEC Summit and related meetings between April 2 and 4.

BIMSTEC consists of seven member countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

that the trade deficit that the US has with any given country is the sum of all the unfair trade practices and "cheating" that country has done.

"The legitimacy of this tariff - whether reciprocal or punitive - depends on the accuracy of the US Trade Representative's calculations. This method's arbitrariness is difficult to comprehend," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and the Thai Prime Minister.

The theme of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit, which is being held three years after the 5th Summit in Sri Lanka is "Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC".

According to foreign policy analysts and economists, BIMSTEC has not achieved much in its journey of 27 years.

The combined economic size of BIMSTEC members stands at around \$4.7 trillion, highlighting the bloc's vast potential for boosting intra-regional trade, but its intra-regional trade accounts for just 7 percent of its total trade, which is 25 percent for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Prof Mustafizur Rahman said the framework agreement of BIMSTEC was signed in 2004, but the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) could not be signed yet. The member countries failed to reach consensus on crucial trade issues, specifically regarding rules of origin and trade in goods and services.

Md Sufiur Rahman, senior research fellow, South Asian

Brace for severe

FROM PAGE 12

HEATWAVES, CYCLONE LIKELY In its monthly weather outlook for April, BMD said two to four mild to moderate heatwaves and one to two severe ones are likely to occur over the country this month.

Besides, one to two low pressure systems are likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and one of them may intensify into a depression or cyclone, according to the outlook released last week.

On the other hand, there are possibilities of light to moderate thunderstorms with hail over a 5- to 7-day period, and severe thunderstorms with hail at places over the country over a 1- to 3-day period.

Rainfall during the month is likely to be below normal over the country, while day and night temperatures are likely to be above normal.

The water flow of the main rivers may be normal this month.

However, the water levels of the rivers in the northeast may increase rapidly due to moderate to heavy rainfall in the region and adjacent catchment areas in the second half of this month.

Besides, the average daily evaporation may be 3.5-5.5mm, and the average daily sunshine may be between 6.5 and 8.5 hours this month.

Tulip slams ACC

FROM PAGE 2

also invited the authorities to submit any legitimate questions.

"The deadline to respond has expired, and the Bangladesh authorities have not replied," her post reads. "Instead, they continue to smear me with false and vexatious claims in the media."

She said she has "provided detailed rebuttals to all the allegations made through the media, acting in good faith despite the lack of return courtesy. Their silence speaks volumes."

Tulip criticised the "so-called Anti-Corruption Commission in Dhaka" for knowing how to contact her but choosing not to.

"Here in the UK, we have due process, the rule of law, and a tradition of fair play. I would happily respond to any legitimate questions, but I will not be drawn into dirty politics, nor will I allow their witch hunt to undermine my work as a British citizen and proud member of the UK Parliament," she said.

Later on Wednesday, in her first public comments since leaving government, Tulip told Sky News that she is still waiting to hear from Bangladeshi authorities.

Asked whether she regretted her apparent links to the Awami League, Tulip responded, "Why don't you look at my legal letter and see if I have any questions to answer?"

Last month, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, told Sky News that Tulip had "wealth left behind" in the country and "should be made responsible."

The allegations against Tulip focus on her connections to Hasina, who served as Bangladesh's prime minister for 20 years before fleeing in August 2023 amid deadly protests.

Tulip lived in several London properties linked to the Awami League, which her aunt still leads.

She referred herself to UK Prime Minister's standards adviser Sir Laurie Magnus, who found "no evidence of improprieties" but said she should have been more mindful of reputational risks.

Tulip later resigned, calling her role "a distraction" but maintaining that she had done nothing wrong.

55-yr-old man

FROM PAGE 12

On Wednesday, police arrested the accused after the victim's mother filed a case with the Khoksha Police Station.

Hossain Imam, the resident medical officer of the hospital, said the girl was out of danger but is traumatised by the incident.

In Kishoreganj, two teenagers have been sued for raping a six-year-old boy on the night of Eid in Bhairab.

The victim's family filed a case with Bhairab Police Station on Wednesday afternoon, alleging that the child was raped with his hands, feet, eyes and mouth tied up there.

Police arrested one of the teenagers yesterday morning.

The child's father said that he went to the house of the two accused, aged around 15 each, and sought justice from the family members, but they threatened him instead.

Some are proposing a settlement through arbitration, he said.

Bhairab Police Station OC Khandaker Fuad Ruhani said a primary investigation found the truth of the complaint.

In Noakhali, a 16-year-old teenager was arrested in a case filed over the rape of a six-year-old girl in Dhanshalik union of Kabirhat upazila.

The girl's mother filed the case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on Wednesday, said Kabirhat Police Station OC Shaheen Miya yesterday.

According to the case statement, on March 23, the accused took the girl to an abandoned tin-shed room and raped her while her parents were busy at home.

Afterwards, the child fell sick, and the mother filed the case.