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## Step up diplomacy as US tariff clock ticks away

At a roundtable organised by Star, exporters and an economist urge a swift rethink of trade strategy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must intensify trade diplomacy to protect garment exports from steep US tariffs as the clock runs down on a three-month reprieve, business leaders warned yesterday.

The call came at a roundtable discussion titled "Impact of US Tariffs on Bangladesh's Garment Industry: Challenges and Opportunities", organised by The Daily Star in Dhaka.

Currently, Bangladesh is the third-largest garment exporter to the US after China and Vietnam, commanding 9.3 percent of the \$90 billion American apparel market annually. In 2024, Bangladesh shipped \$7.34 billion worth of garment products to the US, marking a 35.95 percent year-on-year growth.

However, the country's foothold in its largest export market is now under severe threat, as President Donald Trump's administration imposes a 37 percent reciprocal tariff on top of the existing 16 percent duties. The broader implication is starker still: Bangladesh's global standing as the second-largest garment exporter after China is at risk.

"From the Korean side, there is growing concern regarding the future stability of Bangladesh's garment exports to the US," said Kihak Sung, chairman of Youngone Corporation. Sung warned that Vietnam was "very close" to overtaking Bangladesh and stressed the need for immediate, proactive measures.

Around 15 percent of Bangladesh's total exports, roughly \$8 billion, go to the US. Reducing overreliance on a single market through diversification must be part of the strategy, he said.

Sung further pointed out that labour rights had become a prime agenda item under the Trump administration, calling for Bangladesh to define and address US demands methodically. He urged the mobilisation

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ② Form a committee with govt and private sector representatives
- ② Appoint experienced US-based lobbyists
- ② Avoid premature commitments in trade negotiations
- ② Increase imports of cotton, LNG from US
- ② Expand exports to Asian markets



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Battery-run auto rickshaws, which are banned on flyovers for safety reasons, ply on a section of the Moghbazar-Mouchak Flyover, showing complete disregard for traffic rules. The photo was taken yesterday.

## AID PASSAGE TO RAKHINE 'Govt can't decide unilaterally' Political parties worried

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP and several other parties have voiced concern over reported developments regarding a UN-backed humanitarian corridor into Myanmar's war-torn Rakhine State, calling it a potential threat to national sovereignty and regional security.

The BNP has expressed strong resentment over no visible steps from the government to engage the political parties in discussions over the issue.

Leftist and Islamist parties and platforms also opposed the move to establish a corridor, questioning the West's interests in the Rohingya refugee issue. Such a corridor may become a threat to national security, they warned.

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Govt willing  
if support to  
Rakhine is  
UN backed  
Says Khalilur

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh would be willing to provide logistic support should there be a UN-led humanitarian support to the state of Rakhine, Khalilur Rahman, the government's adviser on Rohingya issues, told AFP.

"We believe that the UN-supported humanitarian aid would help stabilise Rakhine and create conditions for the return of the refugees."

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## RESPONSE TO J&K TERROR ATTACK India gives forces 'operational freedom'

Modi meets top security brass; Pak FM fears 'imminent incursion'; UN calls for calm

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the country's military "operational freedom" to respond to a deadly attack in Kashmir last week, a senior government source told AFP yesterday, after New Delhi blamed it on arch-rival Pakistan.

A week after the deadliest attack on civilians in the contested region in years, Modi yesterday held a closed-door meeting with army and security chiefs, during which he told the armed forces that they had the "complete operational freedom to decide on the mode, targets and timing of our response to the terror attack", said the government source, who was not authorised to speak to the media.

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## Don't get used by anyone during polls

Yunus tells police

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the police to ensure that they are not used by anyone during the next national polls as the interim government is committed to holding a free, fair, and peaceful election.

"Remember, if a person is elected through irregularities, it is not possible to establish justice by that person. Therefore, don't be used by anyone. Dedicate yourselves to the elections as a vow to establish truth and justice," he said at a function marking Police Week 2025.

Referring to his several speeches to the nation, the chief adviser said he already said

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# আন্তর্জাতিক শব্দসচেতনতা দিবস ২০২৫

## আর লয় শব্দসূৰ্য, তাই সুস্থ জীবন



শব্দসূৰ্য নিয়ন্ত্রণে সমন্বিত ও অংশীদারিত্বমূলক প্রকল্প  
পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর  
পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়

শব্দসূৰ্য (নিয়ন্ত্রণ) বিধিমালা-২০০৬ অনুসারে শব্দসূৰ্য একটি দড়নীয় অপরাধ