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Dhaka gets some relief in US trade tariff

Expects 20% or less as new rates to take effect on Aug 1

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The Trump administration has extended its tariff deadline to August 1 from July 9, opening a critical three-week window for Bangladesh to finalise a trade agreement while it expects a rate of 20 percent or less.

Dhaka has argued it deserves better terms than the 20 percent rate Washington recently fixed for Vietnam, a close competitor in the global garment trade, officials familiar with the negotiations said. A Bangladeshi delegation is in Washington, DC, for a critical phase of talks with the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

The negotiations are part of a broader overhaul of US trade policy by President Donald Trump, who was expected to notify 14 countries of new tariff rates yesterday.

For Bangladesh, failure to reach an agreement would mean a proposed 37 percent reciprocal tariff would replace a temporary 10 percent baseline rate. This would



Homes in Sattar Madbar Majhirghat of Shariatpur's Zajira upazila were destroyed by sudden erosion yesterday, putting the Padma Bridge's main protection embankment at risk. Locals said around 200 metres of land were swallowed by the Padma, while the authorities concerned have remained indifferent to the recurring erosion.

PHOTO: JAHID HASSAN



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 8, 2024

Blockade intensifies as students form committee

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

For the second consecutive day, the Bangla Blockade grips the capital, with thousands of students and jobseekers bringing traffic to a standstill at key intersections across Dhaka. Defying police obstruction, protesters block major city roads, rail lines, and highways as their call for the reinstatement of the 2018 circular abolishing the quota system grows louder.

In Dhaka alone, blockades unfold at 11 key points, including Shahbagh, Science Lab, Nilkhet, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Technical, Zero Point, Chankharpul, Banglamotor, Sonargaon, and Paltan. Hundreds of students from Dhaka University, Jagannath University, Dhaka College, Eden College, and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University gather in processions, blocking intersections for hours. Students also block the Karwan Bazar rail crossing for nearly an hour. "We have no choice but to take to the streets. We will not back down until our demands are met," says Rashed Al Hasan, a student of Dhaka College, echoing the sentiment of protesters who have

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We are expecting a better deal as we are engaged with the USTR full-time for the tariff negotiation and we will continue the negotiation.

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN, commerce secretary



be levied on top of the country's existing average tariff of about 16 percent, pushing the total rate to a punitive 53 percent.

"We are expecting a better deal as we are engaged with the USTR full-time," Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told the Financial Times. "We will continue the negotiation."

The talks are complex. The US is pushing for a bilateral agreement, a departure from the World Trade Organisation's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) system that Bangladesh has traditionally followed. According to one official, Washington also wants the deal to compel Dhaka to mirror any US trade restrictions, such as an embargo on China.

To narrow a trade gap heavily in its favour, Bangladesh has offered zero-duty access for many US products and

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BUSINESS

Inflation drops to 3-yr low

Consumer prices dropped to a three-year low in June, while the economy posted its fastest growth in nearly two years in the January-March quarter. Economists say the twin improvements point to early signs of economic stabilisation following a prolonged period of strain.

STORIES ON BI

SANEM SURVEY

83pc youth show no interest in politics

Of 2,000 respondents, 81pc hopeful of a free, fair election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A striking 82.7 percent of the youth population, especially first-time voters, said they were not interested in joining politics or participating in political activities.

Most of them cited fear of political violence or backlash (58.7 percent) as the main reason, along with concerns about graft and a lack of ethics in politics (56.4 percent).

Only 1.6 percent of the youth population is currently involved in some form of political activities, revealed a nationwide survey conducted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh.

The survey report, based on 2,000 respondents aged between 15 and 35, representing a significant portion of first-time voters, was released at a programme at the Brac Centre Inn yesterday.

The finding comes in the wake of a youth-led uprising that toppled an autocratic regime just last year.

However, 76.78 percent of the youth expressed a desire to vote in the upcoming election, while around 80.73 percent were optimistic that this time it would be free and fair.

The 2014, 2018, and 2024 national elections were marred by controversy, including opposition boycotts, allegations of

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Players and coaching staff of Bangladesh women's football team pose for a group photograph during a reception at the Hatirjheel Amphitheatre in the early hours of Monday. The team went to the reception venue straight from the airport following arrival from Myanmar, where they sealed a historic Women's Asian Cup berth with three wins out of three in Group C.

PHOTO: STAR

Rights situation 'disappointing'

Says HRSS in its half yearly report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the country's human rights situation in the first half of 2025 "disappointing", rights group Human Rights Support Society said the interim government has largely failed to meet the public's hopes for "genuine freedom" following last year's uprising.

HRSS's half yearly rights review, released yesterday, reveals a disturbing trend in violence and rape against women, child abuse, political killings, mob lynchings, attacks on journalists, deaths in jail and custody, and attacks on minorities and shrines.

During this period, various crimes such as extortion, theft, snatching, robbery, and murder have also occurred, creating widespread fear and anxiety

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Life expectancy better here than global average

Finds UNFPA report on world population

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The average life expectancy of both men and women in Bangladesh is now higher than the global average, according to a report of the UNFPA.

While the global average life expectancy for men is 71 years, in Bangladesh it is 74 years. For women, the global average is 76 years whereas in Bangladesh it is 77 years.

Bangladesh's population is estimated at 175.7 million of which half are women, two-thirds (115 million) in the working-age group (aged 15-64), which presents a window of opportunity to harness the demographic dividend, said the State of World Population (SWOP) 2025, of the United Nations Population Fund.

UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh Catherine Breen Kamkong officially launched the annual report at a press event held at the UN Building in the city's Gulshan yesterday.

She said 7 percent (12 million) of the population is aged 65 and above, signalling the onset of population ageing.

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CONSENSUS TALKS

Parties agree on lower courts at upazilas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties agreed to have lower courts at the upazila level and changes to conditions for declaring a state of emergency.

They, however, were divided over the duration of an emergency and whether the fundamental rights during emergencies will remain suspended.

The issues were discussed on the 10th day of the second round of talks with the National Consensus Commission at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

After the talks, the commission's Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz said parties supported decentralising the judiciary by gradually expanding courts.

They also agreed to amend article 141 of the constitution to prevent misuse of emergency powers

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