

US TARIFF TURMOIL

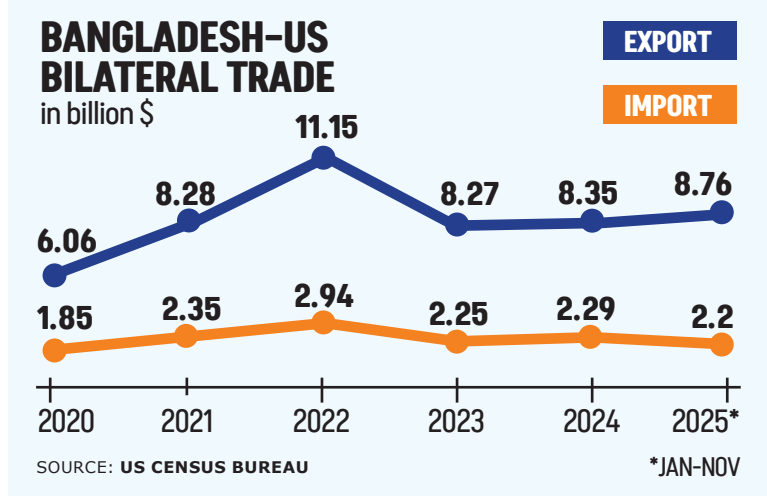
Uncertainties loom over Dhaka's trade prospects

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The US Supreme Court's decision to scrap the reciprocal tariff arrangement could lift consumer demand in the American market and potentially increase orders for Bangladeshi exports, according to local entrepreneurs and trade analysts. However, they caution that the outlook remains uncertain, particularly as Dhaka has already signed a bilateral trade deal with Washington.

The uncertainty deepened almost immediately. Shortly after the ruling on Friday, President Donald Trump slapped a 10 percent tariff on all countries. Yesterday, he went further, raising the rate to 15 percent.

Commenting on the developments, Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), told The Daily Star that



Bangladesh must respond with strategic caution and careful calculation in the face of shifting US trade policy.

He said the interim government, in the first place, should not have signed the trade deal in haste, especially just three days before the February 12 national election, and future negotiations should be approached more carefully.

The US president, he noted, retains constitutional authority to revisit the tariff, which Trump did.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



A young student places flowers at a Shaheed Minar made of banana trees on Language Martyrs' Day yesterday. The Line Beel Pabla Government Primary School in Dumuria upazila of Khulna, established in 1945, has yet to get a permanent Shaheed Minar. Each year on February 21, students collect banana trees, build a makeshift monument, and pay tribute to the language martyrs.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

NEWS ANALYSIS

Dhaka needs a measured, patient engagement with the Trump administration over the trade deal, as the legal ground beneath Washington's tariff policy cracks

A costly trade gamble

STAR REPORT

Time is the most valuable currency in global trade. Wise governments spend it carefully. On February 9, however, Bangladesh's interim administration spent it recklessly. In a rush to secure what it believed was protection from an unpredictable Trumpian world, Dhaka signed a trade agreement just three days before a national election. Eleven days later, the legal foundation of that agreement cracked. The US Supreme Court ruled that the Trump administration had acted unlawfully in using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose reciprocal tariffs. Overnight, the logic behind Bangladesh's hurried decision weakened, and the deal began to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Jamaat finds footing in the cities

Secures 10 of 45 seats in city corporation areas for first time in national polls

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MAMUNUR RASHID

Jamaat-e-Islami appears to have begun rewriting its political story through the 13th national polls. Once rooted largely in rural heartlands, the party has now made visible inroads into urban constituencies, drawing support from affluent and educated voters.

Analysis of final result sheets shows that in the February 12 polls, Jamaat secured 10 of the 45 seats located in city corporation

areas across the country. In another seat, a candidate from Jamaat's 11-party alliance won, while results from one constituency remain withheld.

The change is striking against historical patterns. Since 1991, all of Jamaat's victories had come from rural constituencies.

"Jamaat's results mark a significant political shift, as Islamic-based parties are now performing better in urban areas. Their popularity is gradually increasing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The US aircraft carrier USS Gerald Ford heads through the Strait of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean as seen from Gibraltar. The photo was taken on Friday. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: AFP

Some groups patronising mob activities

Alleges info minister; Anee calls for end to 'mob culture'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Zahir Uddin Swapan yesterday alleged that certain quarters are secretly patronising mob activities.

"A section has been seen trying to indulge mobs. A section, even while holding important positions in the administration, secretly patronises mobs," Swapan said at a discussion marking International Mother Language Day at the Barishal Shilpakala Academy.

"We have taken responsibility for running the government, we have all kinds of information and will continue to have it. Our ultimate commitment is accountability to the people," he said.

"Some people try to show activity outside the conventional law enforcement agencies. We identify such organised, unlawful activities as mob."

Addressing democracy and media freedom, Swapan said a free press was

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Khatibs, imams to get allowances before Eid

Says Tarique at first PMO meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to introduce monthly honorariums and festival allowances for khatibs, imams, muezzins and religious leaders of other faiths in some areas before the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr in line with the ruling party's election pledges.

At a meeting yesterday on his first day at the Prime Minister's Office in Tejgaon on a public holiday, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has directed that the work for honorarium be completed step by step for disbursing before Eid, said his adviser Mahdi Amin.

The amount of honorarium is yet to be fixed and will be finalised at an inter-ministerial meeting, he said.

A committee has been formed to determine how the programme will be implemented, how many people will be covered and which districts will be prioritised in the first phase.

"Our election commitments were discussed today," he said. Tarique issued directives to immediately begin work on implementing the BNP's election pledges.

He instructed ministers, state ministers and government officials to maintain transparency and carry out their duties with

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4




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Mr. Tarique Rahman

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