

বাণিক বার্তা

1 0 DEC 2025

সুইস পণ্যে রফতানি শুল্ক কমাল যুক্তরাষ্ট্র

বাণিক বার্তা ডেস্ক ■

সুইস পণ্যের ওপর আরোপিত মার্কিন শুল্ক কমে এল। গত আগস্টে কার্যকর হওয়া ৩৯ শতাংশ এখন ১৫ শতাংশে নেমে এল। গতকাল সুইজারল্যান্ড সরকার জানিয়েছে, শুল্ক হ্রাসের এ প্রভাব ১৪ নভেম্বর থেকে সব রফতানির ওপর প্রযোজ্য হবে। খবর রয়টার্স।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্র ও সুইজারল্যান্ড ১৪ নভেম্বর একটি প্রাথমিক বাণিজ্য চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করে। সেখানে সুইস পণ্যের ওপর শুল্ক কমানোর প্রতিশ্রুতি দেয় ওয়াশিংটন। অন্যদিকে ২০২৮ সালের মধ্যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে ২০ হাজার কোটি ডলারের বিনিয়োগ করার প্রতিশ্রুতি দেয় সুইস কোম্পানিগুলো।

আগস্টে সুইজারল্যান্ডের ওপর শুল্ক আরোপ করেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট ডোনাল্ড ট্রাম্প। ওই সময় তিনি জানিয়েছিলেন, সুইজারল্যান্ডের সঙ্গে ন্যায্যভাবে বাণিজ্য ঘাটতি মোকাবেলা করতে হবে।

সুইজারল্যান্ডের ওপর আরোপিত এ শুল্ক ইউরোপীয় দেশ হিসেবে সর্বোচ্চ ছিল, যা দেশটির বিস্তৃত ব্যবসা ও শিল্প খাতকে প্রভাবিত করবে বলে আশঙ্কা প্রকাশ করেন অনেকে।

সুইস সরকার এক বিবৃতিতে জানিয়েছে, যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে আমদানি পণ্যের শুল্ক সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলি ১৪ নভেম্বর থেকে পশ্চাৎপ্রভাবসহ কার্যকর হবে। অর্থাৎ ওই সময় থেকে নেয়া শুল্ক ফেরত বা সমন্বয় করা হবে।

গত মাসের ওই বৈঠকে যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে রফতানি হওয়া কিছু মাৎসজাত পণ্যের নির্দিষ্ট কোটার ওপর আরোপিত শুল্ক তুলে নিতে সম্মত হয়েছিল সুইজারল্যান্ড।

সর্বশেষ পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে সুইস প্রযুক্তিপণ্য রফতানি গত বছরের তৃতীয় প্রান্তিকের (জুলাই-সেপ্টেম্বর) তুলনায় নাটকীয়ভাবে ১৪ দশমিক ২ শতাংশ কমেছে।



Chinese firm to invest \$10.32m in Bepza EZ

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Wing Tai Garments (Bangladesh) Co Ltd, a Chinese company, will invest \$10.32 million to set up a readymade garment factory in the Bepza Economic Zone (Bepza EZ) at Mirsharai, Chattogram.

The company will produce a diverse range of apparel, including knitwear garments such as ladies', kids', and men's tops, T-shirts, trousers, and shorts, with an annual production target of 1.56 million pieces.

It will also manufacture woven garments such as ladies', kids', and men's jackets, pants, and shorts, with an annual production target of 4.01 million pieces.

The investment will create employment opportunities for 3,158 people, according to a press release.

Md Ashrafur Kabir, member for investment promotion of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), and Li Qingqi, general manager of Wing Tai Garments (Bangladesh) Co Ltd, signed the agreement at the Bepza Complex in Dhaka yesterday.

Major General Mohammad Moazzem Hossain, executive chairman of Bepza, attended the signing ceremony. At the event, Hossain emphasised Bepza's unwavering commitment to providing seamless support and a conducive environment for businesses to thrive.



Reviving Bangladesh's shrimp sector

Bangladesh's once-thriving shrimp sector has been languishing for quite some time and the situation appears to be worsening. Export orders for the country's prime shrimp varieties have continued to fall, driven primarily by waning demand in Europe and the United States—markets that together account for nearly 80 per cent of Bangladesh's shrimp exports. What was once a half-billion-dollar industry has now shrunk to nearly half its former mark, casting uncertainty over a sector that supports livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people.

Bangladesh earned \$529 million from shrimp exports in the 2015–16 fiscal year, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). Since then, exports have fallen sharply and have struggled to recover. Demand shocks in major Western markets, coupled with intensified competition from lower-priced varieties are commonly attributed for the eroding market share. On the other hand, higher prices of Bangladesh's premium shrimp variety—bagda (black tiger)—has made exports vulnerable in recession-hit markets. In the last fiscal year alone, exports declined by 4.26 per cent compared to the previous year.

The impact has been most severe on cultivators in the country's southwestern coastal belt—Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira. This belt is the heartland of Bangladesh's shrimp production, supplying the bulk of the high-value bagda shrimp. Bagerhat alone contributes an estimated 30 per cent of the country's export-quality shrimp. Nationwide, shrimp cultivation spans over 250,000 hectares and sustains the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of farmers, workers, and traders. Yet, in the face of declining export demand and falling international prices, cultivators now find themselves compelled to sell their produce domestically at almost half the usual rate. Current export prices for a pound of black tiger shrimp range from \$3.80 to \$4.10—nearly half of the \$7.0 to \$7.20 commanded just a year ago.

Industry insiders fear that recovery will not be quick. Europe's persistent financial strains and recessionary pressures in the United States may continue to impede demand, delaying any meaningful revival of Bangladesh's shrimp markets. If these trends persist, the long-term viability of the entire industry could be in jeopardy.

This troubling scenario was a central theme in a recent policy dialogue organised by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA). Speakers argued that Bangladesh's shrimp industry is at a crossroads and requires urgent, strategic reforms to regain global competitiveness after years of stagnation. Presenting the keynote paper, Dr. Bazlul Haque Khondker, research director at PRI, highlighted how Bangladesh now lags far behind regional competitors such as India, Vietnam and Indonesia—countries that have rapidly transformed their shrimp sectors through innovation, targeted incentives and flexible

Reviving the shrimp industry demands a coherent, forward-looking strategy that aligns production practices with evolving global market dynamics

writes

Wasi Ahmed



address these gaps, he suggested a set of short-term reforms: extending Export Facilitation Pre-Finance Fund (EFPF) access to shrimp exporters, categorising shrimp under the agro-sector for easier loan rescheduling, removing the 25 per cent duty on Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) broodstock, and improving raw material import systems. He also recommended a two-year transition period for hatcheries to fully adopt SPF fry. For the long term, Dr. Khondker proposed establishing a Tk 25 billion Shrimp Aquaculture Fund offering concessional loans, alongside a Tk 5.0 billion Frozen Foods Exporters Facilitation Fund aimed at supporting export diversification and energy-efficient processing.

Bangladesh Bank governor Dr. Ahsan H Mansur, speaking as special guest, offered an unflinching assessment of the sector's performance. He underscored the huge productivity gap: "If India produces seven tonnes per hectare and Bangladesh produces half a tonne, that reflects a fourteen-fold difference," he said. He warned that financing alone will not solve the sector's systemic weaknesses. While the

stronger disease control systems, varietal improvement and strengthened regulation to ensure long-term sustainability.

Echoing similar concerns, BFFEA Vice President SK Kamrul Alam pointed to the vast discrepancy between India and Bangladesh. While India farms shrimp on 102,000 hectares—less than half of Bangladesh's 250,000 hectares—it produces over one million metric tons of shrimp annually. Bangladesh, by contrast, produces only about 100,000 metric tons of bagda shrimp. India's advantage stems largely from its large-scale production of Vannamei shrimp. Although Bangladesh received approval to cultivate Vannamei several years ago, commercial-scale production and export have yet to begin. Alam argued that adopting Vannamei across suitable areas could help Bangladesh break its current export deadlock.

The message from industry stakeholders is clear: Bangladesh's shrimp sector holds immense potential, but this potential remains greatly underutilised. Reviving the industry will require more than temporary relief measures—it demands

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This troubling scenario was a central theme in a recent policy dialogue organised by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA). Speakers argued that Bangladesh's shrimp industry is at a crossroads and requires urgent, strategic reforms to regain global competitiveness after years of stagnation. Presenting the keynote paper, Dr. Bazlul Haque Khondker, research director at PRI, highlighted how Bangladesh now lags far behind regional competitors such as India, Vietnam and Indonesia—countries that have rapidly transformed their shrimp sectors through innovation, targeted incentives and flexible regulatory frameworks. Unlike these countries, Bangladesh has yet to fully embrace the farming of newer and more commercially viable species like vannamei (white leg shrimp). Its competitors, meanwhile, have benefitted from low-interest financing, bonded warehouse facilities, affordable broodstock imports and other targeted subsidies—support systems largely absent in Bangladesh. To

forward-looking strategy that aligns production practices with evolving global market dynamics

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stronger disease control systems, varietal improvement and strengthened regulation to ensure long-term sustainability.

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The message from industry stakeholders is clear: Bangladesh's shrimp sector holds immense potential, but this potential remains greatly underutilised. Reviving the industry will require more than temporary relief measures—it demands a coherent, forward-looking strategy that aligns production practices with evolving global market dynamics. With the right combination of policy support, technological adoption and regulatory reform, the sector can once again reclaim its position as a dynamic contributor to the national economy.

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Chinese firm to set up garment industry at BEPZA EZ

Wing Tai Garments (Bangladesh) Company Limited, a Chinese company, has signed a land lease agreement with Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) to set up a garment industry at BEPZA Economic Zone (BEPZA EZ) at Mirsarai in Chattogram, reports UNB.

The agreement was signed at the BEPZA Complex in Dhaka on Tuesday with a proposed investment of US\$ 10.32 million, creating employment opportunities for 3,158 Bangladeshi nationals.

Wing Tai Garments (Bangladesh) will produce a diverse range of apparel, including knitwear garments like ladies, kids & men's tops,



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on Tuesday. BEPZA Executive Chairman Major General Mohammad Moazzem Hossain witnessed the signing ceremony. The signing ceremony was attended by ANM Foyzul Haque, Member (Finance); Md Khorshid Alam, Executive Director (Enterprise Services); Samir Biswas, Executive Director (Admin); ASM Anwar Parvez, Executive Director (Public Relations), Md Fazlul Haque Mazumder, Executive Director (Investment Promotion-Addl. Charge); Company Adviser of Wing Tai Garments (Bangladesh) AZM Azizur Rahman along with senior officials of BEPZA and representatives from investing company.



Bangladesh's betel nut exports snarl as 150 trucks sit idle at Benapole

Benapole, Dec 9 (UNB): A deepening bottleneck at the Benapole-Petrapole trade gateway has stranded about 150 export-bound trucks loaded with betel nuts worth an estimated Tk 100 crore, exposing Bangladesh's second-largest betel-nut industry to mounting financial risk as delays stretch into a second month.

Exporters say the logjam is burning through roughly Tk 3 lakh a day in penalties and truck rental charges, with each vehicle costing around Tk 2,000 daily as it sits immobilised near the border. The slowdown, they said, originates on the Indian side at Petrapole, where officials are allegedly dragging out quality assessments and introducing what traders describe as artificial barriers.

The friction threatens a trade segment that has expanded sharply: Bangladesh's share of India's betel nut imports surged to 37% in FY2024-25 - nearly four times the levels of previous years - underscoring India's growing reliance on higher-quality nuts from across the border. That dependence has not shielded exporters from escalating delays.

More than 150 trucks have remained stuck for

weeks, creating a backlog and leaving drivers stranded in difficult conditions.

Shah Alam, who has been waiting with his shipment for one month and 27 days, says traders suspect Indian counterparts are intentionally slowing intake to manage domestic market prices.

"We suspect Indian traders are deliberately delaying the intake of these trucks to control the betel nut market," he said.

Ashrafal, representing exporter Aulia Enterprise, said Petrapole officials continue to cite testing-related issues to justify the holdup.

"We are trying our best to have the goods released quickly," he said.

Export volumes have slumped to 30% since August 5 last year, following the fall of the Awami League-led government, after India introduced a series of new restrictions and conditions on cross-border trade.

Jute and jute goods, garments, wooden furniture and fruit juices are among the products that have effectively stopped moving through Benapole as a result, according to Benapole C&F Agents Association Vice President Aminul Haque.0



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