

Speed up labour law reforms for further tariff cuts

US urges Bangladesh also to reduce trade deficit

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dhaka-visiting US trade delegation has called on the government to accelerate labour law reforms and narrow the trade deficit to help further reduce retaliatory tariffs on Bangladeshi exports to the American market.

The delegation made the call during a meeting with leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) at the US ambassador's residence in Dhaka yesterday.

Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative for South and Central Asia, led the three-member team.

BGMEA leaders urged the US side to consider deeper tariff cuts to sustain the steady flow of garment exports to the American market, which is the largest source of private-sector employment in Bangladesh.



Bangladesh is the third largest garment exporter to the US, after China and Vietnam, with a 9.3 percent share of the \$81 billion American apparel import.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan said cotton imports from the US have already begun and that the process of importing more wheat, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other goods is underway.

He said these imports would help narrow the trade deficit.

"We have learned that if at least 20 percent of the total value of a product exported to the United States is used in the production of that product, then the countervailing duty will not be applicable on that 20 percent," said the BGMEA president.

"Therefore, we have requested the US delegation to clarify that. They said they are working on the issue. They will inform you soon."

On labour law reforms, Khan said that consensus had been reached on 122 out of 124 proposed amendments through

\$6 billion trade gap.

The US is the country's largest single export destination, with garments accounting for more than 90 percent of shipments to the American market.

Bangladesh is also the third-largest garment exporter to the US after China and Vietnam, holding a 9.3 percent share of the \$81 billion American apparel import.

tripartite talks and that the remaining issues were expected to be resolved through further dialogue.

He added there were no objections to supporting International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. Bangladesh exports goods worth more than \$8 billion to the US each year and imports about \$2 billion, leaving a



After ICDs, Ctg port hikes service charges by 41%

Businesses cry over higher trade costs, eroding competitiveness

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

In the first major tariff review in almost four decades, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has raised service charges at Chattogram port by 41 percent.

The increase took effect yesterday following a gazette notification issued on Sunday night.

Business leaders fear the hike will push up the cost of foreign trade and erode competitiveness just as Bangladesh prepares to graduate from least developed country status in November next year, when it will lose preferential market access.

The move follows increases at private inland container depots (ICDs), which from this month have begun charging up to 60 percent more for handling export cargoes and empty containers.

CPA collects fixed tariffs for services provided from the moment a ship enters Bangladeshi waters.

Officials say no other port in the world offers shipping services as cheaply as Chattogram and that

the previous tariff structure no longer matched current costs or demand.

After discussions with stakeholders, they say, the authority introduced a more realistic schedule.

Business leaders, however, have criticised the rise for being imposed all at once rather than gradually.

They argue that a phased

BY THE NUMBERS: Ctg port tariff hike

Service charges up **41%**, biggest rise in four decades

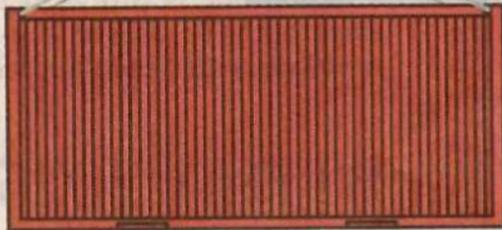
Export containers cost **Tk 3,045** more each

Average transport fee per TEU climbs by **Tk 4,395** to **Tk 16,243**

Container handling charge jumps by **Tk 3,000** to **Tk 8,296** (\$68)

Imported containers cost **Tk 5,720** more each

Average cost per kg of cargo rises from **Tk 1.28** to **Tk 1.75**



imposition would have eased the pressure, and question the hike without improvements in handling times, clearance procedures or congestion at the port.

At Chattogram port, a series of activities takes place from piloting a ship from the outer anchorage to the jetty, to tugboat services, water



supply, crane charges, berthing, loading and unloading containers and delivering goods.

CPA charges a fee for each of these services, which together make up the port's tariff.

This is the first large-scale revision of CPA charges since 1986. In 2007-08, the port authority increased fees for five major services, including tugboats, water supply, wharf rent, container storage and container stuffing and unstuffing.

THE NEW RATES

According to the gazette, container transport fees have risen the most.

The average charge per twenty-foot equivalent unit has jumped from Tk 11,849 to Tk 16,243, an increase of Tk 4,395 per container.

Fees on imported containers have gone up by Tk 5,720, while export containers cost an extra Tk 3,045.

The largest single increase is for loading and unloading containers from ships, which has risen from \$43.40 (about Tk 5,282) to \$68, an increase of \$24.60 (nearly Tk 3,000).

As the tariffs are calculated in US dollars, charges could climb further if the dollar strengthens.

Spread across the weight of goods, the average fee per kilogramme for containerised cargo has increased from Tk 1.28 to Tk 1.75, an increase of nearly 37 percent.

Around 60 percent of imports at Chattogram port are handled at the outer anchorage. These cargoes will face smaller rises as they are not loaded or unloaded at the port jetties.

BUSINESSES WORRY OVER COSTS, COMPETITIVENESS

Anwar-ul-Alam Parvez, president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI), said the rise in charges has imposed an extra burden on businesses.

"The new port tariff structure will increase the cost of doing business and raise production expenses for domestic manufacturers," he said.

"At the same time, exporters will lose competitiveness against their peers in the global market," Parvez told The Daily Star.

He said the hike comes at a particularly difficult moment as the country prepares to graduate from LDC status and lose trade benefits.

"Entrepreneurs are now forced to bear unexpected expenses because of inefficiency in port operations, which already cause significant delays in releasing goods," he said, urging the authorities to review the decision.

Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, former first vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said they had requested the government to defer the tariff hike for a year, but this was rejected.

He accused the government of being "intent on transferring most port jetties to foreign operators."

"The tariff hike may have been designed to make port operations look more profitable for them [foreign operators], as they stand to gain the bulk of the additional revenue," he added.

CPA Secretary Omar

Faruk said that although traders had requested a suspension of the increased tariff, it was ultimately not possible to accommodate that request.

Reiterating the port's position, he argued that charges at Chattogram Port are still much lower compared to ports in neighbouring countries. "The government has likely taken this into consideration."

He added that while the new rates came into effect yesterday, it could take a few more days for full implementation.

On July 24, the finance ministry approved the tariff hike, prompting objections from port users and a meeting at the Ministry of Shipping on August 25.

At the meeting chaired by Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, businesses again pressed for gradual increases to protect the country's competitiveness.

There, CPA Deputy Chief Finance and Accounts Officer Qazi Meraz Uddin Arif defended the adjustment, saying duties were still lower than those at other major global ports even after the hike.

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan called the increase unacceptable.

Syed M Arif, chairman of the Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association, also opposed it, saying that higher tariffs at berth operators and private off-dock operators combined with port charges would drive up overall trade costs.

He warned that foreign shipping lines may have no option but to raise freight charges as well, which would hit the country's foreign trade.



Tariff may drop if Bangladeshi exports contain over 20% US raw materials: USTR

TRADE - BANGLADESH

TBS REPORT

Bangladesh prepared to scale up its imports from the US, CA tells USTR delegation



“Our interests are closer to those of the US. That makes this process easier and more promising.”

.....
MUHAMMAD YUNUS
 CHIEF ADVISER

the process or formula for evaluating the use of US materials and ensuring traceability. The US delegation responded that US Customs is currently working on this and it is expected to be completed within the designated timeframe.

The USTR team also emphasised the importance of amending Bangladesh's labour law in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) guidelines.

Brendan Lynch | 55

The visiting delegation from the United States Trade Representatives (USTR) has assured that Bangladeshi exports to the US containing more than 20% inputs or raw materials sourced from the US would be eligible for proportionately reduced tariffs.

The delegation noted that the matter is also addressed in a US executive order, while work is ongoing to ensure the traceability of such inputs.

The assurance came during discussions on Monday between US Assistant Trade Representative Brendan Lynch and a Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) delegation representing the country's ready-made garment sector.

The meeting was hosted by the US Embassy at the Chief of Mission residence in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Following the meeting, BGMEA issued a statement saying: "Under the US executive order, if 20% or more of the materials used in garments exported from Bangladesh are sourced from the United States, the applicable 20% additional tariff on those products will be proportionally waived."

BGMEA leaders inquired about

highlighted that reforms should align with international standards and recommended amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 following ILO guidance.

In August, the United States reduced Bangladesh's reciprocal tariff rate from 35% to 20%. However, BGMEA noted that the effective total tariff on Bangladeshi garments remains around 36.5% due to previous levies, and urged further reductions.

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan Babu requested that the US view the ongoing positive reforms in Bangladesh's trade and industry constructively. Senior BGMEA leaders also attended the meeting.

Babu said, "Securing the 20% tariff benefit is a positive step. Yet, the total tariff on Bangladeshi exports to the US still stands at about 36.5%, posing a fresh challenge for the industry."

He suggested that using the "stacking method" to adjust tariffs across products could reduce the overall burden while enhancing the competitiveness of Bangladeshi exports in the US market.

BGMEA representatives also shared their position on labour law reforms during the discussions. The US trade delegation expressed satisfaction with the dialogue and optimism that increasing imports of Bangladeshi goods could further reduce the trade deficit and allow lower reciprocal tariffs.

Ready to scale up imports from US: CA Yunus

The USTR delegation also met with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

At the meeting Yunus told the delegation that Bangladesh is prepared to scale up its imports from the US and hoped that this would pave the way for further tariff reductions, said a press re-

lease by the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

He reaffirmed Bangladesh's strong commitment to deepening bilateral relations with the US, particularly in trade, investment, energy and development cooperation.

Discussions also covered enhanced energy cooperation, including LPG imports from the US, civil aircraft purchases, drug control measures and the ongoing Rohingya humanitarian crisis, said the release.

Emphasising continued progress in bilateral engagement, he voiced optimism regarding the early signing of the draft bilateral trade agreement currently under negotiation, Yunus told the delegation. "Our interests are closer to those of the US. That makes this process easier and more promising."

The chief adviser also highlighted Bangladesh's actions in regard to the 11-point Labour Action Plan proposed by the US, underscoring the government's dedication to upholding international labour standards and fair practices.

Looking ahead, Yunus said the interim government of Bangladesh expects increased flows of investment and concessional credit in key sectors such as health and education.

Lynch commended the constructive approach taken by Bangladeshi counterparts throughout the trade dialogue and welcomed the strengthening partnership between the two nations. He appreciated that Bangladesh began the process back in February when the national security adviser met with him and offered to unilaterally reduce the trade gap with the US.

He noted that this early start had a positive impact on smooth negotiations and the outcome of the process. "You dispatched a tough negotiating team who worked very hard and effectively", he told the chief adviser.

The Daily Star

16 SEP 2025



Walton makes history with first-ever motherboard export to US

FE REPORT

In a landmark achievement for Bangladesh's tech industry, local manufacturer Walton Digi-Tech Industries has become the first company from the country to export Printed Circuit Board Assembly (PCBA), commonly known as motherboards, to the United States. In a significant move that reverses the long-standing trend of importing technology components, Walton is now emerging as an exporter of high-tech electronics to one of the world's most demanding markets. Confirming the development, company source said the initial consignment to the United States consists of over 2,500 units of PCB/PCBA, valued at nearly Tk 2.5 million. This milestone builds on Walton's previous success in the European market, where it has already exported over 10,000 PCB/PCBA units to Greece. These achievements set a new benchmark for the nation's high-tech manufacturing sector and reinforce Walton's vision of becoming a global leader in electronics and IT solutions. This inaugural shipment to the US is part of a strategic partnership with Safepro Technologies Inc., a US-based company. Walton is supplying advanced PCB and PCBA units for Safepro's innovative Soteria System, a life-saving emergency evacuation technology. Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser (Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & IT), felicitated Walton Digi-Tech Industries on his Facebook page on Monday evening. "We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Walton Digi-Tech Industries Limited on becoming the first Bangladeshi company to export Printed Circuit Boards Assembly to the United States market," he said.

Taiyeb said this collaboration underscores how Bangladeshi engineering and innovation

Initial consignment to US comprises over 2,500 units of PCB/PCBA, valued at nearly Tk 2.5 million

Over 10,000 PCB/PCBA units already exported to Greece

These achievements reinforce Walton's vision of becoming a global leader in electronics and IT solutions

The total market value of the global PCBA market is estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars annually

The market is currently dominated by established players from countries like China, Taiwan, and South Korea

chain," he said.

The global PCBA market is a colossal industry, with a total market value estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars annually. The market is currently dominated by established players from countries like China, Taiwan, and South Korea. These nations have long been the epicenters of electronics manufacturing, benefiting from extensive infrastructure, skilled labour, and established supply chains. The competitive landscape is fierce, with companies competing on quality, cost, and technological innovation. Major market leaders include multinational

vision of becoming a global leader in electronics and IT solutions.

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Taiyeb said this collaboration underscores how Bangladeshi engineering and innovation are directly contributing to global safety and technological advancement. "This breakthrough accomplishment not only showcases Walton's world-class manufacturing capabilities but also heralds a new era for Bangladesh's burgeoning presence in the global electronics supply

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The global PCBA market is a colossal industry, with a total market value estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars annually. The market is currently dominated by established players from countries like China, Taiwan, and South Korea. These nations have long been the epicenters of electronics manufacturing, benefiting from extensive infrastructure, skilled labour, and established supply chains. The competitive landscape is fierce, with companies competing on quality, cost, and technological innovation. Major market leaders include multinational corporations that provide end-to-end solutions for a wide range of industries, from consumer electronics and automotive to aerospace and healthcare.

Bangladesh is rapidly emerging as a new

frontier in electronics manufacturing. The country offers several competitive advantages, including a large and youthful workforce, competitive labour costs, and supportive government policies aimed at boosting local manufacturing and exports. The "Made in Bangladesh" tag, once primarily associated with the ready-made garment industry, is now gaining recognition in the high-tech sector. However, the path to becoming a major player in the global PCBA market is not without its challenges.

Bangladeshi companies face stiff competition from established manufacturers who have the advantage of scale and experience. To carve out a significant market share, the nation's

electronics industry will need to continue to focus on enhancing technological capabilities, ensuring stringent quality control, and fostering innovation. Walton's successful entry into the U.S. market is a promising sign that Bangladesh is on the right track.

This achievement is not just a commercial success for one company; it is a moment of national pride and a clear indicator of Bangladesh's potential to become a significant force in the global electronics industry.

"We applaud Walton's commitment to innovation, quality, and sustainability, and wish them continued success in their journey of expanding Bangladesh's industrial footprint across the globe," added Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb.

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Chittagong port tariffs rise by about 40pc

Gazette notification published, new rates come into force

FE REPORT

The government on Monday published the gazette notification on new tariffs schedule for goods and vessels at Chittagong port raising charges on an average 40 per cent.

The port charge has been hiked at the moment when the private inland container depots are also raising their charges in the wake of tariff increase by the Trump administration.

The government made the new port charge effective from Monday, September 15, the gazette notification says.

The Chittagong Port Authority officials said the tariff of the port has not been increased since 1986. However, it was found that tariffs for five services saw upward revision last time in May 2008.

On July 24 last, the Ministry of Finance gave its approval to a new tariff schedule, which was submitted by the Ministry of Shipping.

However, the port users and shipping agents raised objections over the move for raising charges at such higher rates.

Charge hike to raise export-import costs, consumers have to suffer, says BSAA



The port users and shipping agents sat with the adviser to the ministry of shipping and high officials of the ministry on August 25, where they pleaded not to raise tariff by 20 per cent for the

sake of trade and industry.

At the meeting they said a 40 per cent hike in tariffs on goods and vessels would raise the cost of doing business and prices of goods, thus raising inflation further.

However, the gazette notification did not carry any changes on the port tariff on the rates approved by the finance ministry.

Under the new rate schedule, the charges for loading or discharging containers saw a considerable rise. Boxes below 21-foot will be charged \$68 from the previous rate of \$43, while \$102 will be charged for boxes over 21-foot against \$65 previously. The charge will be \$115 for over 40-foot containers.

Loading or discharging charges for Less-than-Container Load (LCL) containers-not over 21-foot-will be \$204 from \$130, for over 21-foot it will be \$306 from \$195, while over 40-foot containers will be charged \$344.

The empty containers-not over 21-foot-will be

charged \$34 from the previous rate of \$22.10, over 21-foot boxes will be charged \$51 from current \$33.20, and the over 40-foot containers will be charged \$57 for loading or discharging.

The rate of port dues, per gross register tonnage (GRT) has been increased from \$0.241 to \$0.306 while pilotage charge (for 10,000 GRT vessel) raised from \$357.75 to \$800. The berth shifting charge (at night) has been fixed from \$59.60 to \$80.

The tug boat charge, inside Karnaphuli channel, up to 5,000 GRT, increased to \$615 from the previous rate of \$316 while the rate for vessels over 5000 GRT to 10000 GRT increased to \$1230 from \$632 earlier.

For the vessels over 10000 GRT to 20,000 GRT tug charge has been fixed at \$2050 and for vessels over 20,000 GRT the charge is \$3415.

Ship berthing or un-berthing charge also increased to \$94.32 from \$88.50 while mooring use charge for seagoing vessels went up to \$224.85 from \$167 earlier.

Vessels that would not leave berth after notice---have to pay 100 per cent additional charges for staying up to 12 extra hours and for overstaying up to 24 hours they will have to pay 300 per cent additional charges.

The vessels, which would make overstay at berths up to 36 hours, will have to count 400 per cent extra while for staying over 36 hours they will have to pay additional charges to the tune of 900 per cent.

Also the charges for using quay gantry crane / mobile harbour crane / other

equipment for similar use has been increased for up to 21 feet loaded containers to \$20.80 from \$15 in the past, for over 21 feet containers to \$31.20 from previous charge of \$22.50.

The charge for 40 foot containers has been fixed at \$35.10.

Also the jetty crane charges with below 10-tonne capacity has been increased from \$42 to \$58.24, while charges for cranes between 10 and 40 tonnes of capacity has been fixed at \$174.72 and for cranes over 40 tonnes the charge is \$291.20.

Also the diving board charge increased from \$178.60 to \$286.21, hire charge of salvage diving unit from \$71.50 to \$344.59, and dredger hire charge increased to \$10,281 from the previous rates of \$2,235 to \$4470.

The jetty entry charge for people and vehicles also saw a significant rise. A gate pass (temporary) for one user will now be charged Tk 100 from previous Tk 25 while covered van, truck, and trailer entry charge will be Tk 200 from Tk 12.5 earlier. Besides, the authorities are raising the charge for hiring dump barges from \$41.70 to \$68.37 while the same for explosive barges will be \$97.64 from \$59 in the past.

When contacted, Syed Mohammad Arif, Chairman of the Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA), however, denounced the increase of the port charges at such a high rate.

"The charge hike will raise export and import costs and ultimately the consumers will suffer," he said.

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16 SEP 2025

Further US tariff cut likely on two conditions

USTR team for labour law amendment, righting trade imbalance

FE REPORT

A visiting US trade delegation stressed expediting Bangladesh's labour-law amendment and narrowing the bilateral trade gap to pave the way for further reduction in the tariffs on Bangladeshi exports to the American market.

At a discussion Monday in Dhaka, the local apparel leaders mentioned that they would play their part in reducing the trade gap through increased use of US cotton. There is opportunity to increase US cotton-import value by US\$1.0 billion within a short time. The visitors made their observations during their meeting with Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) at the US Ambassador's residence in Dhaka. The meeting was led by US Assistant Trade Representative Brendan Lynch, who

oversees trade-policy implementation for South and Central Asia.

The BGMEA President, Mahmud Hasan Khan, headed the apparel-industry delegation, accompanied by Vice-President Md Rezwan Selim and Directors Faisal Samad and Mohammad Abdus Salam. The US side also included Tracy Ann Jacobson, the Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy.

According to meeting sources, the US delegation made it clear that while the retaliatory tariff on Bangladeshi products had already been reduced from 35 per cent to 20 per cent, a formal bilateral agreement has yet to be signed. They indicated a scope for further tariff reduction, but progress depends on two key dos by Bangladesh: narrowing the trade gap and completing the ongoing labour-law-amendment process.

Speaking to The Financial Express, BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan said steps had already been taken to reduce the trade deficit.

"We've informed the delegation that Bangladesh has started importing cotton from the US. In addition, imports of wheat, LNG, and other products are underway. These measures will help significantly narrow the trade gap," he said.

According to Bangladesh Bank (BB) data, the country imports nearly \$4.0 billion

worth of cotton annually. Last year, 7.0 per cent of this was imported from the United States.

The value of US cotton imports stood at \$270 million last year, while imports had already reached about \$217 million by August this year and the share stood at 9.0 per cent.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) officials say US cotton is expected to account for 12 per cent of total imports this year. They also mention that within the next three years, Bangladesh's annual US cotton-import value could reach nearly \$1.0 billion.

On labour-law reforms, the BGMEA president notes that progress has been made through tripartite discussions involving the government, industry, and workers. "We have reached consensus on 122 out of 124 proposed amendments. The remaining two issues will also be resolved through dialogue," he adds.

The US delegation also urged Bangladesh to become a signatory to three key International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions--198, 155, and 187 - designed to prevent physical and sexual harassment at workplace and strengthen occupational safety and health (OSH) standards.

In response, the BGMEA president said there is no objection from the industry to ratifying these conventions.

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Bangladesh for deeper trade ties with US, seeks further tariff cut

Also expected higher US investment flows, concessional credit in key sectors

US stresses timely execution of tariff agreements, purchase commitments

FE REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus reaffirms Bangladesh's strong commitment to deepening relations with the United States, particularly in trade, investment, energy and development cooperation, as a bilateral trade deal is set to be signed.

"Thank you very much for the support. We are very happy about what has happened. This is the key to our economy," he said during a meeting with Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) Brendan Lynch at the Chief Adviser's Office in Dhaka on Monday. He was referring to the USTR's recent decision, announced on July 31, to lower the reciprocal tariff rate on Bangladeshi exports to the US from 35 per cent to 20 per cent -- a move he described as a significant milestone



Assistant United States Trade Representative Brendan Lynch meets Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at his office in Tejgaon, Dhaka, on Monday. — PID

in bilateral trade relations. Bangladesh seeks further lowering of the duty while the two sides are engrossed in finalizing swaps in the trade deal stipulating provisos coming out of a series of negotiations. During the meeting, officials said, discussions took place on strategies to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries as well as Bangladesh's intention

to expand imports of US agricultural products such as cotton and soybeans. Also covered by the discussions are enhanced energy cooperation, including LPG imports

from the US, civil-aircraft purchases, drug-control measures and the ongoing Rohingya humanitarian crisis. Professor Yunus noted that Bangladesh was prepared to scale up imports from the United States and expressed the hope this would pave the way for further tariff reductions -- contributing to a more sustainable and mutually beneficial trade partnership. Emphasizing continued progress in bilateral engagement, he voiced optimism about early signing of the bilateral trade agreement currently under negotiation.

"Our interests are closer to those of the United States. That makes this process easier and more promising," he said. The head of post-uprising government also highlighted Bangladesh's actions regarding the 11-point Labour Action Plan proposed by the US, underscoring the government's dedication to upholding international labour standards and fair practices. Looking ahead, Professor Yunus said the Interim Government of Bangladesh expects increased flows of investment and concessional credit in key sectors such as health and education. "We must make sure the door to US investment in Bangladesh becomes wider," he said, reassuring the visiting US trade team that the interim government would improve the climate for foreign direct investment in the country.

The AUSTR, Brendan Lynch, commended the constructive approach taken by Bangladeshi counterparts throughout the trade dialogue and welcomed the strengthening partnership between the two nations.

He appreciates that Bangladesh began the process back in February when the National Security Adviser met with him and offered to unilaterally reduce the trade gap with the US. This early start had a positive impact on smooth negotiations and the outcome of the process.

"You dispatched a tough negotiating team who worked very hard and effectively," he said to the Chief Adviser, while emphasized the importance of timely implementation of the tariff agreements and the purchase commitments.

Also present at the meeting were Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin, National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, USTR Director for South Asia Emily Ashby, Senior Secretary for SDG Affairs Lamiya Murshed, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, and US Chargé d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson.

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Ctg port tariff hike takes effect after gazette

PORT - CHATTOGRAM

TBS REPORT

The tariff has been hiked on average 40% after four decades

Chattogram port has increased tariffs on a wide range of services by an average of 40%, the first such rise in nearly four decades. The new rates took effect yesterday, following a government gazette notification issued late Sunday night.

Md Omar Faruk, secretary of the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA), confirmed the enforcement of the revised tariff schedule. He, however, claimed that the hike would not significantly impact commodity prices.

"Importers currently spend Tk0.32 per kg of goods as tariff. With the new rate, they will have to pay up to Tk0.44 — a rise of Tk0.12. So, we believe it will not affect commodity prices or inflation much," he explained.

The tariff rise marks a historic shift in the country's key trade gateway, one that risks slowing exports and driving up import costs at a time when businesses

are already struggling with tight margins.

Business pushback ignored

The last time tariffs were raised at the country's premier seaport was in 1986. After almost 40 years, the interim government approved the increase despite strong opposition from port users.

The CPA had proposed the hike back in June, triggering protests from trade bodies and shipping agents. At a meeting convened by the shipping ministry on 25 August, port users argued that any tariff adjustment should remain within 10 to 15%.

But the final decision followed the CPA's proposal almost entirely, with no major concessions made.

"This will be a challenge for both importers and exporters," said Khairul Alam Sujon, vice president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association and director of the Shipping Agents Association.

"We urged for a moderate rise, but the authorities went ahead with 40%. The additional burden will inevitably fall on businesses and eventually on consumers."

What has changed

The port currently collects tariffs under 52

service categories. Of these, 23 categories are directly affected by the new rates.

Container handling saw the sharpest jump. The handling fee for a 20-foot container rose from Tk11,849 to Tk16,243 — an increase of Tk4,395, or about 37%.

For container vessels, tariffs have increased by Tk5,720 for each import container and Tk3,045 for each export container. Handling charges for loading and unloading operations rose by around Tk3,000 per container.

Additionally, the tariff on containerised cargo went up from Tk1.28 per kg to Tk1.75 per kg.

শ্রম আন্দোলন

16 SEP 2025

যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে পণ্য আমদানি বাড়াতে প্রস্তুত বাংলাদেশ

প্রথম পৃষ্ঠার পর

সয়াবিনসহ কৃষিপণ্য আমদানি বাড়ানোর আশ্রয়ও প্রকাশ করেছে বাংলাদেশ।

জ্বালানি খাতে সহযোগিতা জোরদার, যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে তরলীকৃত পেট্রোলিয়াম গ্যাস (এলপিগি) আমদানি, বেসামরিক উড়োজাহাজ কেনা, মাদক নিয়ন্ত্রণব্যবস্থা এবং চলমান রোহিঙ্গা মানবিক সংকট নিয়েও আলোচনা হয়েছে বলে জানান আবুল কালাম আজাদ মজুমদার।

ইউএনবি জানায়, দ্বিপক্ষীয় সম্পূর্ণতায় ধারাবাহিক অগ্রগতির ওপর গুরুত্বারোপ করে প্রধান উপদেষ্টা আশাবাদ ব্যক্ত করেন যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের স্বার্থের ঘনিষ্ঠ মিল রয়েছে এবং চলমান আলোচনার ভিত্তিতে দ্বিপক্ষীয় বাণিজ্যচুক্তি দ্রুত স্বাক্ষরিত হবে।

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের প্রস্তাবিত ১১ দফা 'বাংলাদেশ লেবার অ্যাকশন প্ল্যান' বাস্তবায়নে বাংলাদেশের পদক্ষেপের কথা উল্লেখ করেন প্রধান উপদেষ্টা। তিনি আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রমমান ও ন্যায্য অনুশীলন রক্ষায় সরকারের প্রতিশ্রুতি পুনর্ব্যক্ত করেন।

ভবিষ্যতের পরিকল্পনা তুলে ধরে অধ্যাপক মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস বলেন, অন্তর্বর্তী সরকার যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কাছ থেকে স্বাস্থ্য, শিক্ষাসহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ খাতে বিনিয়োগ এবং স্বল্প সুদে ঋণপ্রবাহ বৃদ্ধি প্রত্যাশা করছে। যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের প্রতিনিধিদলকে আশ্বস্ত করে প্রধান উপদেষ্টা বলেন, সরাসরি বিদেশি বিনিয়োগের পরিবেশ উন্নত করতে অন্তর্বর্তী সরকার কাজ করবে।

বৈঠকে ব্রেন্ডেন লিঞ্চ বাংলাদেশের গঠনমূলক মনোভাবের প্রশংসা করেন এবং দুই দেশের অংশীদারত্ব আরও সুদৃঢ় হওয়ায় সন্তোষ প্রকাশ

করেন। তিনি বলেন, গত ফেব্রুয়ারিতে বাংলাদেশের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা যুক্তরাষ্ট্র সফরে গিয়ে দ্বিপক্ষীয় বাণিজ্যঘাটতি একতরফাভাবে কমানোর প্রস্তাব দিয়েছিলেন। ফলে আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়া মসৃণ হয় এবং ইতিবাচক ফল আসে। শুষ্ক চুক্তি ও আমদানি প্রতিশ্রুতিগুলো সময়মতো বাস্তবায়নের গুরুত্বও তুলে ধরেন ব্রেন্ডেন লিঞ্চ।

এলএনজি আমদানি বৃদ্ধির পথ খোঁজা হচ্ছে

এদিকে বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি উপদেষ্টা মুহাম্মদ ফাওজুল কবির খানের সঙ্গে সচিবালয়ে গতকাল বিকেলে আলাদা বৈঠক করে ইউএসটিআরের প্রতিনিধিদল। বৈঠক শেষে উপদেষ্টা ফাওজুল কবির খান প্রথম আলোকে বলেন, প্রতিনিধিদলটি বলেছে, তাদের অন্যতম চাওয়া হচ্ছে যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে এলএনজি আমদানি বৃদ্ধি।

২০১৭ সালের মাঝামাঝি সময়ে তৎকালীন সরকার আন্তর্জাতিক স্পট মার্কেট থেকে এলএনজি আমদানির জন্য আশ্রয়ী বিক্রেতা বা সরবরাহকারীদের তালিকা চেয়ে বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করে। এতে সাড়া দিয়ে ২৯টি প্রতিষ্ঠান অংশ নেয়। তাদের মধ্য থেকে ১৭টির সঙ্গে প্রথম দফায় মাস্টার সেল অ্যান্ড পারচেজ অ্যাগ্রিমেন্ট (এমএসপিএ) অনুস্বাক্ষর করা হয়। তবে আইনি পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার (ভেটিং) পর অর্থনৈতিক বিষয়সংক্রান্ত মন্ত্রিসভা কমিটি পেট্রোবাংলার সঙ্গে এমএসপিএ স্বাক্ষরের অনুমোদন দেওয়া হয় ১৪টি প্রতিষ্ঠানকে। পরে প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংখ্যা অবশ্য ২৩-এ উন্নীত হয়। এগুলোর মধ্যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের প্রতিষ্ঠানও রয়েছে।

এ কথাগুলো উল্লেখ করে জ্বালানি উপদেষ্টা জানান, এলএনজি আমদানির জন্য ২৩টি প্রতিষ্ঠানের বাইরে যাওয়ার সুযোগ নেই আপাতত।

একটা উপায় ছিল প্রতিযোগিতামূলক মূল্যে দীর্ঘমেয়াদি চুক্তি। সেটা হতে হবে আবার সরকারি (জিটুজি) পর্যায়ে। কিন্তু যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কোম্পানিগুলো বেসরকারি। তারপরও উপায় খোঁজা হচ্ছে।

দেশের মোট এলএনজি আমদানি বাড়ছে জানিয়ে ফাওজুল কবির খান বলেন, যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকেও এলএনজি আমদানি বেড়েছে। গত বছর মোট ৮৪ কার্গো এলএনজি আমদানি হলেও এবার হয়েছে ১০৮ কার্গো। অথচ বাংলাদেশের সক্ষমতাই হচ্ছে ১১৫ কার্গো। অবকাঠামোগত এ সক্ষমতা আরও বাড়ানো দরকার।

শ্রম আইনের দ্রুত সংশোধন চায় যুক্তরাষ্ট্র

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাজারে পণ্য রপ্তানিতে পাল্টা শুষ্ক কমাতে হলে বাণিজ্যঘাটতি কমানোর পাশাপাশি শ্রম আইন সংশোধনের প্রক্রিয়া দ্রুত শেষ করতে বলেছে মার্কিন বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধিদল। তৈরি পোশাকশিল্পের মালিকদের সংগঠন বিজিএমইএর নেতাদের সঙ্গে গতকাল সকালে ঢাকায় নিযুক্ত মার্কিন রাষ্ট্রদূতের বাসভবনে অনুষ্ঠিত এক বৈঠকে এসব বিষয়ে কথা বলেছে তারা।

বিজিএমইএর সভাপতি মাহমুদ হাসান খানের নেতৃত্বে সংগঠনটির সহসভাপতি মো. রেজওয়ান সেলিম, পরিচালক ফয়সাল সামাদ, মোহাম্মদ আবদুস সালাম প্রমুখ বৈঠকে উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

মার্কিন প্রতিনিধিদল বিজিএমইএর নেতাদের ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছে যে পাল্টা শুষ্ক নিয়ে উভয় দেশের মধ্যে এখনো আনুষ্ঠানিক চুক্তি হয়নি। তাই শুষ্কের

হার আরও কমানোর সুযোগ রয়েছে। এ জন্য যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাণিজ্যঘাটতি কমিয়ে আনতে হবে এবং শ্রম আইন সংশোধনের প্রক্রিয়া শেষ করতে হবে।

বৈঠকের পর বিজিএমইএর সভাপতি মাহমুদ হাসান খান প্রথম আলোকে বলেন, 'বাণিজ্যঘাটতি কমাতে যুক্তরাষ্ট্র থেকে তুলা আমদানি শুরু হয়েছে। গম, এলএনজিসহ আরও পণ্য আমদানির প্রক্রিয়া চলছে। এসব পণ্য আমদানি হলে বাণিজ্যঘাটতি অনেকটাই কমে আসবে। শ্রম আইন সংশোধন নিয়ে ১২৪টি বিষয়ের মধ্যে ১২২টিতে তিন পক্ষ (শ্রমিক, মালিক ও সরকার) একমত হয়েছে। বাকিগুলোর বিষয়েও আলাপ-আলোচনার মাধ্যমে সমাধানে পৌঁছানো যাবে। তা ছাড়া আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রম সংস্থার (আইএলও) কনভেনশন অনুসমর্থন নিয়েও আমাদের কোনো আপত্তি নেই।'

বৈঠক শেষে এক বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বিজিএমইএ জানিয়েছে, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের নির্বাহী আদেশ অনুযায়ী বাংলাদেশ থেকে রপ্তানি করা পোশাকে যদি ২০ শতাংশ বা তার বেশি মার্কিন কাঁচামাল ব্যবহৃত হয়, তাহলে সেই অংশের ওপর আরোপিত ২০ শতাংশ অতিরিক্ত শুষ্ক থেকে আনুপাতিক হারে ছাড় পাওয়া যাবে।

বিজিএমইএ নেতারা এ প্রক্রিয়ার বিষয়ে জানতে চাইলে মার্কিন কর্মকর্তারা বলেছেন, যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের শুষ্ক বিভাগ বিষয়টি নিয়ে কাজ করছে এবং নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে শেষ হবে বলে আশা করা যাচ্ছে।



বণিক বার্তা

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বিজিএমইএকে ইউএসটিআর রফতানি পণ্যে ২০% মার্কিন কাঁচামাল ব্যবহার করলে শুল্ক কমবে

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক ■

বাংলাদেশ থেকে মার্কিন বাজারে রফতানীকৃত পোশাকে যদি ২০ শতাংশ বা তার বেশি যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কাঁচামাল ব্যবহার হয়, তবে সেই পণ্যের ওপর আরোপিত ২০ শতাংশ অতিরিক্ত শুল্ক থেকে আনুপাতিক হারে অব্যাহতি পাওয়া যাবে। ঢাকা সফররত যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধির দপ্তরের (ইউএসটিআর) প্রতিনিধি দল এ তথ্য জানিয়েছে। ইউএসটিআর কর্মকর্তারা গতকাল বাংলাদেশ গার্মেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারার্স অ্যান্ড এক্সপোর্টার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের (বিজিএমইএ) একটি প্রতিনিধি দলের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেন। এ সময় যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সহকারী বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধি (ইউএসটিআর) ব্রেভেন লিঞ্চ তাদের এ কথা জানান। রাজধানীর গুলশানে চিফ অব মিশন রেসিডেন্সে এ সভার আয়োজন করে ঢাকার মার্কিন দূতাবাস। অন্যদিকে এদিন প্রধান উপদেষ্টা ড. মুহাম্মদ ইউনুসের সঙ্গেও বৈঠক করেন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সহকারী বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধি ব্রেভেন লিঞ্চ।

বিজিএমইএ সভাপতি মাহমুদ হাসান খানের নেতৃত্বে বিজিএমইএ প্রতিনিধি দলে আরো উপস্থিত ছিলেন সহসভাপতি রেজওয়ান সেলিম, পরিচালক ফয়সাল সামাদ, পরিচালক আবদুস সালাম ও স্ট্যান্ডিং কমিটি অন এফটিএ অ্যান্ড পিটিএর চেয়ারম্যান লুৎফে এম আইয়ুব। বৈঠকে মার্কিন প্রতিনিধি দলের অন্য দুই সদস্য ছাড়াও ঢাকার যুক্তরাষ্ট্র দূতাবাসের ভারপ্রাপ্ত রাষ্ট্রদূত ট্রেসি অ্যান জ্যাকবসন ও লেবার অ্যাটাশে লীনা খান উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

আলোচনায় বিজিএমইএ নেতারা জানতে চান, কোন প্রক্রিয়া বা ফর্মুলায় যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কাঁচামাল ব্যবহারের মূল্যায়ন ও ট্রেসেবিলিটি তা নিশ্চিত করা হবে। জবাবে মার্কিন কর্মকর্তারা জানান, ইউএস কাষ্টমস বিষয়টি নিয়ে বর্তমানে কাজ করছে। আশা করা যায় যে, নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে এটি সম্পন্ন হবে।

এছাড়া ইউএসটিআর প্রতিনিধিরা বাংলাদেশের বিদ্যমান শ্রম আইন আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রম সংস্থার (আইএলও) গাইডলাইন অনুযায়ী সংশোধনের ওপরও গুরুত্বারোপ করেন।

