

WTO comes under LDC wrath over trade barrier

Second ministerial conference begins

STAR REPORT

The World Trade Organisation and the developed nations yesterday came under severe criticism from the least developed countries (LDCs) at the opening session of the three-day second conference of trade ministers of the world's poorest nations.

The delegates called upon the developed countries to remove trade barriers and fulfil their repeated pledges concerning a wide range of other trade facilitation measures.

Tanzanian Minister for Industry and Trade Juma A Ngasongwa, who chaired the LDCs' first ministerial conference in Zanzibar, handed over chairmanship of the second one to Bangladesh Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury.

The Dhaka meeting aims to set a common agenda of the LDCs for the WTO ministerial conference at Cancun in Mexico in September this year.



Delegates from the least developed countries at the opening session of the trade ministers' conference at a city hotel yesterday.

Question throws students in soup

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Examinees were perplexed by a question of the English first paper of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

The question, mandatory for the examinees irrespective of their religious belief, asked to write a paragraph on the Eid-ul-fitr, the greatest Muslim festival. It gave six hints intended to help them write the paragraph. It asked the students how did they celebrate the Eid this year and what did their mother and sisters do in the morning on the Eid day. They were also asked to write what they did in the morning and what they saw at the Eidgah.

And, as if these were not bizarre enough, examinees were asked to write the feast that were arranged at their home and how did they spend the afternoon.

It created a whole lot of problem for the examinees.

6 bullet-hit as Sarbahara men open fire in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least six villagers received gunshots as Sarbahara Party men opened fire to make their escape after a futile attempt to extort money at a village in Uzirpur here, police said.

The incident took place Friday night when the armed outlawed activists were trapped in an electric wire ambush as they went to the village.

Dhaka Declaration to dwell on more market

NAZMUL AHSAN

The demand for enhancing the market share of least developed countries (LDCs) in global trade has figured prominently in the final draft of the Dhaka Declaration to be adopted tomorrow on the basis of the final draft.

The stakeholders were unanimous on the final draft during their discussion yesterday.

Bangladesh hosts the second trade ministers' meeting of the LDCs, organised mainly to take a common stand on the WTO (World Trade Organisation) issues ahead of its fifth ministerial meeting in September this year at Cancun in Mexico.

According to statistics with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

(UNCTAD), market share of the LDCs in global trade declined from two per cent in 1960 to one per cent in 1970. The share further declined from 0.8 per cent in 1980 to 0.4 per cent in 2001.

Export from the LDCs has been hit hard due to compliance requirements of the developed countries and their protectionist measures in the name of environment, labour and workplace standards, sources pointed out.

"Our experience of these past years has been that the global trading regime is making our developmental effort more difficult -- the potential opportunities have remained largely elusive and com-

plex." said the Bangladesh Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury.

The draft declaration was placed yesterday for discussion by the

delegations of 39 LDCs, out of the 49, attending the trade ministers' conference.

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142 including 41 children killed in May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and forty-two people including 41 children were killed through the violation of human rights across the country last month. Odhikar, a human rights organisation, also said in its monthly report that 31 women were killed over dowry. Four women committed suicide while 10 including three men were tortured in dowry-related incidents.

One hundred and forty-nine women and children were raped, 14 of them were killed thereafter. Besides, 32 became victims of acid-throwing, an Odhikar monthly report, based on newspaper reports, said.

One hundred and eighty-three children were tortured. Of them, 57 were violated, 25 injured and 12 were killed.

AL leader killed in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A top leader of Bagerhat district Awami League was gunned down by unknown miscreants near his fish farm in Sharha Charani village on Friday night.

Police said the gang picked up Mostafa Nakib, 45, from his temporary lodge at a shrimp enclosure and shot him dead before slaughtering at a nearby place.

The killers dumped the body in a canal, half-a-kilometre off the scene, from where it was retrieved by police this morning.

Police arrested four persons Ramanimohun, 72, Naren Bepari, 70, Keshab Bepari, 88, and Santosh Mistry, 55, -- in connection with the killing.

"They are being grilled," said Officer-in-Charge of the Sadar Police Station Ishaque Ali.

Relatives of Nakib said he was a victim of politics, but police linked the killing to conflict with his rivals over fish farm.

A case was lodged.

3 brothers to die for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A court here yesterday sentenced three brothers to death in a murder case.

All in their 20s, the three convicts Mithu, Rajan, and Titu, sons of Bisharat Ali of Mollahpara village in Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah were also fined Tk 20,000 each by the Additional District and Sessions Judge of Jhenidah Mohammad Hossain Helal who delivered the verdict.

The prosecution story said the three brothers attacked banana vendor Selim Hossain with sharp weapons on December 2, 2000 at Moheshpur bazaar during a dispute over the sale of bananas. Selim later died at the hospital.

Selim's brother Mizanur Rahman filed a case accusing the three young men. The court gave the verdict after examining 14 witnesses.

The court also asked the deputy commissioner of Jhenidah to realise the fine from sale of the convicts' property and hand over the money to Selim's parents.

Containers pile up as foreign feeder vessels stay away from port

RAFIQ HASAN

Over 700 containers were piled up at the Chittagong Port yesterday, the first day of suspension of operation by major foreign feeder vessel operators.

The port came to a near standstill as the foreign feeder vessels carrying around 80 per cent of goods to and from Bangladesh stopped

operation for an indefinite period protesting a new rule for getting waiver certificates before loading and unloading of goods.

The shipping ministry informed the prime minister about the port situation, sources said.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain blamed the local ship owners for 'misleading' the people by claiming to have full capacity of carrying all

inward-and outward-bound goods.

He said the local liners can meet only 25 per cent of container handling.

"If they have the full capacity, then they should immediately clear the piled-up containers," the minister said.

President of the Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners Association said the port situation is a disaster.



A feeder vessel floats quiet at the Chittagong Port yesterday as major foreign operators suspended their operation for an indefinite period protesting a new rule for getting waiver certificates before loading and unloading of goods.

Quiet forex market under BB vigil

INAM AHMED

Strict market vigilance by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) kept dollar rates both in the inter-bank market and at client ends static on the first day of making exchange rate free of

any band. Most banks quoted Thursday's rates for dollar, true to the forecast of economists and bankers who allayed fear of volatility.

Three dollar-taka inter-bank

deals were cut on the day by Agrani Bank, HSBC, Citibank NA and Bank Asia. They quoted rates at Tk 58.65 a dollar against Thursday's Tk 58.65.

Three dollar-taka inter-bank

Suu Kyi held after supporters clash with pro-junta men



Aung San Suu Kyi

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been put under temporary arrest in the country's north after a violent clash between her supporters and a pro-junta group which left four dead, the junta said yesterday.

"Aung San Suu Kyi has been temporarily placed under the protection of local authorities," military spokesman Brigadier General Than Tun told reporters, adding that her entourage was also taken to the safe house and put in "protective custody."

Than Tun said eight motor vehicles and nine motorcycles were destroyed in the melee, which broke out in the town of Ye U in Sagaing division on Friday night at 8:00 pm local time and continued for three

hours.

"Four persons died during the scuffle and 50 were injured," Than Tun said. The four were killed in a car accident during the scuffle, he said, but did not specify which group they belonged to.

Aung San Suu Kyi was on a month-long political tour of Myanmar's north, which became increasingly tense as her supporters repeatedly clashed with members of the junta-sponsored Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA).

Than Tun accused NLD members of setting fire to at least one of the vehicles used by the USDA. Some 5,000 members of the pro-junta group had been waiting in Ye U

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Heat wave toll soars to 10

No respite in sight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Death toll from the searing heat wave parching Bangladesh rose to 10 with the death of three more people in Nilphamari and Pirojpur districts on Friday and yesterday.

Abdul Latif, 55, and Marium, 8, died in Nilphamari and fisherman Emajuddin, 50, in Pirojpur. Details were not known yet.

The highest temperature shot up to 38 degrees Celsius in Jessore and 37 degrees in Dhaka.

Although the situation improved a little, frequent blackouts coupled with elusive water supply continued to paralyse life in Dhaka and elsewhere.

Traffic was thin on Dhaka roads at midday, as most people preferred to stay indoors. In some leafy areas, rickshaw-pullers were seen lazing under trees.

Day-labourers were, however, the worst victims of the scorching. The sufferings of Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examinees were also no less.

The meteorological office said there was no respite in sight as the sizzler was set to smother life for a few more days.

It said the sultry weather might bake the northern region for the next two to three days, but predicted scattered thunderstorms in the

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