

Break WTO deadlock

IMF, WB, OECD urge rich states

AFP, Paris

Industrialised countries at next week's WTO trade conference in Mexico must spearhead efforts to overcome obstacles that have so far held up progress on global trade liberalisation, the heads of three influential international bodies declared Thursday.

"Rich countries have to take the lead in areas now blocking the talks, particularly agriculture," IMF Managing Director Horst Koehler, World Bank President James Wolfensohn and OECD Secretary General Donald Johnston said in a joint statement ahead of a WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico September 10-14.

"Middle income countries have to contribute as well, reducing tariffs that affect not only their own citizens but other developing countries," they added.

The Cancun conference has been called to galvanize momentum in negotiations under way since November 2001 that are aimed at tearing down world trade barriers.

The talks are being held under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, whose members launched a fresh round of multilateral trade talks in the Qatari capital Doha two years ago.

With a January 1, 2005 deadline looming, the negotiations have largely foundered to date, notably on the question of government subsidies to agriculture.

"Development countries impose tariffs on agriculture that are eight to 10 times higher than on industrial goods," the joint statement noted.

"Many continue to use various forms of export subsidies that drive down world prices and take markets away from farmers in poorer countries.

"In every sector except agriculture, these same countries long ago agreed to prohibit export subsidies," they said.

Agricultural support costs the average household in the European Union, Japan and the United States more than a thousand US dollars a year, they added.

"We need a decisive break with trade policies that hurt economic development.

"Donors cannot provide aid to create development opportunities with one hand and then use trade restrictions to take these opportunities away with the other - and expect that their development dollars will be effective," the statement maintained.

Meanwhile, Reuters from Canberra adds: Pushing developing nations into liberalising their markets and exporting a narrow range of products leads to trade volatility,

lower economic growth and increased poverty, according to a survey by charity World Vision.

The report by economist Brett Parris, released ahead of next week's WTO meeting in Mexico, examined economic data from 84 developing countries between 1981 and 2000 to test the principle of urging them to liberalise trade, specialise in exporting what they are good at and let others produce the rest.

Parris said the findings contradicted the merit of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ethos, and World Bank agreements that tie loans or grants to free trade or an openness to foreign investment.

"We are concerned that the policy options open to developing

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Muktijodha lift NFL title

SPORTS REPORTER

Muktijodha Sangsad Krira Chakara became new champions in the NitolTata National Football League dethroning holders Mohammedan Sporting Club 3-2 in the tiebreaker at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The two soccer giants of the country were locked 1-1 in the regulation 90 minutes and also in the 30-minute extra time.

National striker Kanchan put the black and whites ahead in the 18th minute with a placing shot from a Tito pass (1-0).

Saifur Rahman Moni restored parity for the Reds in the 65th minute after star striker Alfaz had done the hard work.

Moni of Muktijodha, with seven goals, earned the distinction of becoming the highest scorer in the league.

The match was again locked 2-2 after the first nine shots in tiebreaker. Finally, national defender Mohammad Sujon scored the matchwinner by converting the 10th and last penalty.



President Iajuddin Ahmed hands over the NitolTata National Football League trophy to Muktijodha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik and a cheque for Tk 5 lakh in addition to the keys to a Tata Indica car.

3 babies die after 'measles vaccine'

BSS, Jamalpur

Three infants died while six others fell sick yesterday, having been injected 'measles vaccine' on Thursday at an EPI (Extended Programme of Immunisation) centre at Sablapur under Melandah upazila.

The dead, each aged about 10 months, were Mitu, daughter of Khoka Sheikh, Sumyia, daughter of Shakhawat Hossain, and Abu Bakar, son of Suja Mia of Sablapur village.

Their bodies were sent to Jamalpur General Hospital for autopsy.

ABM Aminullah Nuri, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Melandah, confirmed the death of three infants, adding that the cause of their deaths is yet to be determined.

The UNO said the cause of death will be determined after autopsy. An expert team is expected to arrive here today for further investigation, he added.

Meanwhile, six others - Lima, SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Amra Dhakabasi, a socio-cultural organisation, form a human chain on the Dhaka University campus yesterday with calls for efforts to save the Buriganga, the lifeline of the city.

Rashida dies, doctors say from starvation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Unconscious for long 24 days after an operation, Rashida Begum died at home in remote Bhorhotta village in Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi on Sunday, fomenting controversy.

Wife of a day labourer and mother of three, Rashida remained unconscious since she was operated upon allegedly without any laboratory tests at an unregistered clinic in the city by non-specialist surgeons on August 8.

As Rashida did not regain senses, she was given saline after she was shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). But her mysterious disappearance from the hospital on August 27 stopped the process.

Doctors said she might have died

of starvation, as she was not administered saline at home.

Her family said they could not feed her anything and quacks at the village could not administer saline.

The news of Rashida's death was known Thursday when a group of newsmen visited her house. Family members blamed the clinic for her death.

Day labourer Mofiz Uddin's wife Rashida was taken to Nazma Clinic by a broker when she came to the city with serious abdominal pain on August 8. The clinic staff told her husband she should be operated upon immediately for removal of a big ovarian tumour.

Then they took her to the operating theatre and gave anaesthesia.

But she was taken out, as the surgeon concerned did not reach in time.

She was again taken to the operating table three hours later and given local anaesthesia by Dr Yadul Islam. Dr Sarmin Sultana, a medical officer at Paba Upazila Health and Family Welfare Centre, operated upon her.

She never regained her senses. "Her life could probably be saved if she was treated at the RMCH for some more days as advised by us. But her family members mysteriously took her away," said Professor Dr Lutfar Rahman of neurology

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Researchers confirm SARS came from animals

REUTERS, Washington

Genetic testing of animals sold as delicacies in a southern Chinese market confirms suspicions that the deadly SARS virus jumped from animals to people, Chinese researchers said on Thursday.

The researchers found clear differences between the animal and human versions of the virus, but said they were minor enough to show that SARS jumped from animals, as influenza and other viruses have done.

"It's a landmark discovery," said Kathryn Holmes of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Centre, a leading expert on the coronavirus family that SARS belongs to.

"The question that everyone has had is, 'how did this virus appear in the human population?'" Holmes added in a telephone interview. "This is the first major clue about where the contact might have come from."

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome emerged in southern China last November. Its symptoms include severe pneumonia.

Between November and May SARS infected an estimated 8,500 people in 30 countries, killing more than 800. It spread as far as Toronto.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 06		6-13 pm
Sept 07	5-42 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-33	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-24
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Opposition parties' quest for a common ground

REAZ AHMAD

Mainstream opposition parties are making hectic efforts to unite on common agenda that may pave the way for an alliance in the next parliamentary polls.

One of the common agenda is a movement against the alarming rise in militant activities, law and order downside and freewheeling retrenchment of public sector workers and employees, said opposition sources.

After months of formal and informal meetings with some left-leaning political parties, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at a weekend programme made a strong plea for what she called an effective political alliance with pro-liberation forces.

"The Awami League calls for an alliance. Come and join us to unseat the autocratic government," Hasina told a seminar in the city Thursday evening.

"We have to root out all militant groups and establish a secular democracy and it's through a fresh united move," said the leader of the opposition, blaming the ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami for expanding "terror network across the country under protection of the four-party alliance government".

The AL call for forging a unity came at a time when several Marxist parties are on a desperate move for unification, the opposition sources said.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Workers'

Party (WP) had at least a dozen meetings over the last one year to evolve agreed formula for the two socialist adherents to merge.

WP leader Rashed Khan Menon told The Daily Star yesterday that a rapprochement move was on and CPB leader Mujahidul Islam Selim hoped both parties would be able to reach a consensus on unification.

As one of the oldest political parties in Bangladesh and an inheritor of communist movement in the Indian subcontinent, the CPB started dialogues with other left-leaning parties to make a common ground, hopeful of creating an impact on future politics.

The CPB had meetings with a faction led by Hasanul Haq Inu of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)

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Contractor shot dead in Chuadanga

UNB, Chuadanga

A contractor was gunned down by miscreants at Amirpur village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim was identified as Minarul Islam Suruj, 40, son of Haji Nurul Islam of Poradah in Kushtia.

Police and locals said a gang of 12 sprayed bullets on Suruj when he was supervising road construction work at the village at about 2:00pm. He died on the spot.

The attackers left the scene, raising slogans of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Alleged kidnapper of Bangladeshi child sent to jail in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged child trafficker was sent to jail by a court in India's Cooch Bihar for kidnapping a female Bangladeshi child from Kurigram on August 25, the BBC reported yesterday.

Indian police had arrested the alleged kidnapper Noor Jamal of Cooch Bihar on Thursday and produced him before the court following a complaint lodged with the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) by the victim's father Ayub Ali.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned to put the child, Arifa, in the care of a shelter home in Kolkata's Salt Lake area.

It will, however, take a while for the child to be sent back to her parents, BBC quoted police as saying.

Police is keeping the deputy commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata posted on the matter, said Probin Kumar, superintendent of police of Cooch Bihar, while talking to the BBC.



PHOTO: STAR

A pothole-strewn road is difficult for both traffic and pedestrians to move on. The rundown, rainwater-filled stretch of the road in front of Ayesha Market in Maibagh has been a major hurdle to commuters for the last six months.

Trader shot dead in Tongi

UNB, Gazipur

A young trader was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Tongi on Thursday night.

Police said the assailants sprayed bullets on Awlad Hossain Shamim, 28, when he along with his brother was returning home from his shop at Tongi Bazar at 10:45pm.

Critically injured Shamim was rushed to Tongi Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The victim's brother Alamgir Hossain Shafiq filed a case accusing his father Rashid Molla and step brothers Delwar Hossain, Anwar Hossain and Monir Hossain of the killing.

A source close to the victim said conflict over property might be the reason for the killing.