

## Ways to protect business interests must to face global trade challenges

### Khosru tells int'l employers' confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Business organisations will run into a crisis unless they developed strategies to protect and promote their business interests in the context of the global trade challenges, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury warned yesterday.

"The readymade garment sector, in collaboration with top international organisations, has already established a unique culture of corporate responsibility by taking children out of factories and putting them in educational and vocational institutes to acquire skills necessary to develop their full potentials," he said.

Khosru was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the 6th Asia-Pacific High-level Employers' Conference at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

He said several other sectors needed to take up similar programmes to save the children engaged in "the worst forms of child labour".

The commerce minister said globalisation is yet to be equitable because the least developed countries (LDCs) continue to find it difficult to have their due share in the world market. "The share of LDCs in world trade shows a marked decline - from 0.7 per cent in the 1980s to 0.4 per cent in the 1990s -- and the slide continues."

Referring to the latest World Investment Report compiled by the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), he said FDI only flowed to a handful of developing countries while LDCs were left out of the process.

The minister urged employers' organisations of developed Asian countries to help their counterparts in small countries like Bangladesh frame a corporate code of conduct based on Asian values and culture and with a view to gaining social confidence on businesses.

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in collaboration with International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organisation of Employees (IOE), Geneva, and Japan Business Federation (JBF) is organising the three-day conference.

Other speakers at the conference included Francois Perigot, president

of IOE, Hiroshi Okuda, chairman of JBF, Yasuyuki Nodera, regional director of ILO (Asia-Pacific), Amanullah Aman, state minister for labour and employment, and CK Hyder, secretary general of BEF.

Francois Perigot said businessmen should take up the challenge to fulfill people's expectations. "We must face these challenges. Consumers, on the other hand, should also realise that some demands will remain unfulfilled."

Yasuyuki Nodera said globalisation has generated some misunderstandings as well as fears. BEF President M Anis Ud Dowla who chaired the conference said businessmen couldn't afford to remain indifferent to social expectations. At the same time, he said, businesses need to have the organisational ability to resist undue demands from special interest groups including some foreign buyers who impose compliance requirements one after another.

"Many of these buyers also tend to go elsewhere after suppliers have spent time and money fulfilling their requirements," he observed.

CK Hyder said free trade should be fair and equitable, but the fact that it hasn't been so is alarming. "Often there are trade barriers. These issues need to be addressed."

A total of 100 delegates from 21 countries are participating in the conference.

## Rickshaw ban

FROM PAGE 1

New Market was supposed to go off-limits.

"As banning rickshaws on these roads will affect the poor, we will conduct a survey before taking the final decision," said a DTCC official.

Earlier, rickshaws were banned on the Mirpur Road between Gabtali and Russell Square on December 20 last year.

Meanwhile, different rickshaw owners' and pullers' associations protested the government move to make roads off-limits to rickshaws and threatened to wage a movement unless the decision was rescinded.

A group called Committee to Resist Rickshaw Eviction (CRRE) brought out a procession from Nilkhet to protest the planned rickshaw ban and marched through to Shahbagh.

## Top criminal Didar gets life

BSS, Ctg

A court here yesterday sentenced a top criminal to life imprisonment for gunfight with police at a village in Fatikchhari upazila in 2001.

Judge Mohammad Abdur Rahman Patwari of the Court of District and Sessions Judge handed down the verdict in absence of the convict, Diarul Alam alias Didar.

Acting on a tip off, Fatikchhari police went to Chandunia village on January 28, 2001 to nab Didar and his accomplices. Sensing presence of the police, Didar and his men opened fire. Police returned fire. After an hour-long gunfight with police, Didar and his accomplices fled the spot, leaving arms and ammunition that were later recovered by police.

After investigation, police pressed charge against Didar.

Public Prosecutor Kafiluddin Chowdhury pleaded on behalf of the state.

## BCS question

FROM PAGE 1

A source in the PSC, however, said the commission used an alternative set of question papers amid widespread allegations of leaks in newspapers.

Many examinees believe the commission conducted the test with a new set of questions.

Mohammad Shohrab Ali, a member of the PSC, told The Daily Star that they were happy, as the allegations proved false. He said some unscrupulous people spread the rumours with the intent of making brisk money exploiting examinees' anxiety.

On the change of question paper for the Bangla exam, he said he knew nothing of it.

The test of General English (Compulsory) will be held today.

Students who bought the rumoured 'leaked questions' at high prices felt cheated and expressed anger at rumourmongers.

"All my money went in vain," said an examinee in the city's Dr Malika College centre.

Abdur Razzak, who along with four other friends bought a set of question papers rumoured to be leaked at Tk 1,000 on Sunday, said: "He cheated us. No question matched with the real question papers."

Some said their last minute preparations were hampered by the flying rumours of leaks.

Photocopies of hand written questions of five compulsory subjects of the test -- Bangla, English, International Affairs, Mathematics and General Science -- sold as high as Tk 5,000 a set at different educational institutions and dormitories in Dhaka and elsewhere in the run-up to the examinations.

Some 47,000 examinees are sitting the exams for about 4,500 cadre service posts.

The examinations were held simultaneously at different centres in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and London.

The PSC cancelled the 24th BCS preliminary test held on February 28 over allegations of question leaks and held the test again on August 8 amid further allegations of leaks.

## World AIDS Day

FROM PAGE 12

Welfare Minister Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain yesterday disclosed that 115 more people were tested HIV positive this year raising the total to 363. Out of 57 AIDS cases, 30 patients have died, Mosharrif added.

A member of National AIDS Committee said that the news of 136 new HIV patients as published in different dailies on Monday was incorrect.

Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA's country representative in Bangladesh, said half of the newly infected patients are youths and so the young generation should be informed about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

Though the country is a low HIV/AIDS prevalence country, it is at a critical point as the condom usage rate is low here and drug abusers are among the vulnerable groups, said Dr Sunitee Acharya, WHO representative in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is bordered with India, the second largest HIV infected country in the world; the country is therefore at high risk for the HIV/AIDS epidemic, said Morten Giersing, UNICEF's country representative.

An estimated 13,000 people are living with the virus in the country but the actual figure would be more taking those who are yet to be diagnosed, said MA Hadi, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Earlier, ASM Motiur Rahman, chairman of the National AIDS Committee, presented the keynote paper on the overall scenario of the disease worldwide. Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman, director general of health department, presided over the discussion meeting.

CARE Bangladesh, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh Medical Association, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and Bangladesh Parliament Members Group took separate programmes to mark the day.

## WHO okays use of new combination Aids pills

REUTERS, Nairobi

The World Health Organization said yesterday it had approved for use three separate three-in-one combination Aids treatment pills under a new plan to rush anti-retroviral (ARV) medicines to three million people.

WHO officials said the pills, key to its ambitious goal of getting ARVs to the world's poor, were made by India's generic drugs firms Ranbaxy Laboratories and Cipla Ltd. and combined the drugs lamivudine, stavudine and nevirapine.

Making the announcement, WHO Assistant Director-General Jack Chow told a news conference that research was helping simplify Aids therapy and his organization now recommended just four treatment regimens, whereas previously it recommended 35.

Of the four, the most appropriate regimen for people living in deep poverty is so-called fixed-dose combination therapy that combines medicines in a pill that needs to be taken only twice a day, in the morning and evening, WHO experts say.

"The exciting development of single pills containing all three drugs will make treatment even simpler," Chow said.

"Today, we are pleased to

announce that WHO has prequalified three preparations of this single pill three drug combination."

WHO officials said it was the first time WHO had approved the use of a three-in-one combination pill that was suitable for what WHO terms "front line" conditions of extreme poverty.

Prequalification means the WHO experts have visited and inspected the factories making the pills and satisfied themselves the product is safe, effective and of good quality.

WHO is not a global regulator of pharmaceutical production but its recommendations guide government policymakers around the world, and government purchasers feel confident buying products that have the WHO seal of approval.

The patents for lamivudine, stavudine and nevirapine are controlled by multinational drug companies GlaxoSmithKline Plc, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co and Boehringer Ingelheim, respectively.

To date the brand pharmaceutical companies have not cooperated to combine their medicines into a single pill; only generics companies offer fixed-dose combination anti-Aids pills seen as workable in settings of poverty, experts say.

## PCJSS siege

FROM PAGE 1

Accord was signed between the PCJSS and the past Awami League government on December 2, 1997.

The peace agreement was inked with a broad perspective, for changing the fate of the hills people and restore their rights that were being denied for decades. But it could not change the fate of the poor ethnic community of the CHT. Both the governments in the last six years -- former Awami League and the present BNP-Jamaat alliance governments -- seemed reluctant to implement the accord.

"Implementation of the pact has become totally uncertain now. The government has been violating the accord from the very beginning as the prime minister kept the CHT ministry in her own hands," said Jyotindra Bodhipriya Larma, the chairman of the CHT regional council. "I don't see any difference between the past and the present governments so far as the implementation of the accord is concerned," he said. "The government will be fully responsible for any situation arising out of the non-implementation of the accord," he said.

After the signing of the peace accord, the Awami League government could only form certain committees and establish some offices in their three and half years in power. But in the real sense they could not go far enough to implement the accord.

After the signing of the accord, the hills people did not get the taste of development, as the donors are yet to start their development work. However, the UNDP formally announced launching their development activities in the region from last July.

Land Commission, the vital body constituted to resolve land disputes in the CHT, is yet to begin its activities while clashes over land are upsetting the peace process. Most of the 64,000 indigenous internal refugees, who have returned home from India following the accord.

The BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami, key constituents of the current coalition government, vehemently opposed the signing of the accord, terming it a serious threat to independence and sovereignty.

The present government did not make clear their position on the peace accord. It has however filled some vacant positions as per the accord, but has been violating some clauses of the accord. It has also taken measures to cut different facilities to the hills people and increase those of the Bangalee settlers. The government is yet to make separate voters' list of the natives of the region, alleged a PCJSS leader.

The PCJSS's demands include proper implementation of the CHT peace accord, removal of Wadud Bhuiyan, president of the CHT Development Board, appointment of a full minister at the CHT affairs ministry and withdrawal of security camps from the region.

United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), another platform of the indigenous people, has been opposing the accord from the very beginning.

"We knew it all along -- the government signed the accord as an eyewash. The pact would not change the fate of the indigenous people of the CHT region. Only full autonomy can change the situation," said a top leader of the UPDF.

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## Man to die for killing wife, son

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his wife and son in July 1997.

Judge Hussain Shaheed Ahmad of the Court of Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge gave the verdict at a crowded courtroom in presence of convict Mohammad Shahadat Hossain.

The convict can appeal to the High Court against the judgement within seven days.

The prosecution story in brief is that Shahadat Hossain beat his wife Sharifa Khatun alias Nayan Tara and his son Ronny dead following a family feud at their Uttar Bhasantek residence in the city's Cantonment area around 8:45am on July 27, 1997.

Mohammad Kafiluddin, brother of the wife, filed a murder case with Cantonment Police Station accusing Shahadat the same day.

The investigation officer of the case pressed charge against Shahadat on November 3, 1997. The court framed charge against him on August 19, 1998.

Sixteen prosecution witnesses were examined during the trial.

## Sonia

FROM PAGE 12

Madhya Pradesh.

"It seems the entire federal government is fighting the polls in Madhya Pradesh," said the state's Congress Chief Minister Digvijay Singh of desperate pre-poll campaigning by the BJP and its coalition partners.

Hindu nun Uma Bharti, running for the chief ministerial post in Madhya Pradesh for the BJP, scorned Singh and said her party would sail past the Congress, which has run the state for 10 years, when the results are declared on Thursday.

Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit too predicted a win with "distinction" for Congress in the 70-seat city assembly and charged the BJP with "terrorising" voters during Monday's voting. Casting her vote, Dikshit said Congress had turned the capital of 14 million people into a modern city.

"We have done our job and now we await the approval of the people of our work," the charismatic leader said.

In the fray for the 590 assembly seats up for grabs Monday are 5,348 candidates including eunuchs, street hawkers and former princes.

Voting was not without hitches. In Rajasthan's Almasar seat, Begum Nazia 93 found that she was identified as a 36-year-old voter and in the state capital of Jaipur Chief Electoral Officer Lalit Kohari was embarrassed when the voting machine broke down and he could not vote.

Vajpayee himself was not due to vote as his parliamentary constituency is in Lucknow, capital of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

The northeastern province of Mizoram, which is ruled by a regional party, voted November 20.

## BDR deployed

FROM PAGE 12

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina visits scene of the blood-bath at Shilpara today. She is also expected to address a public rally at Banskhalhi, party sources said.

Visitors from different socio-political organisations continued to pour into Banskhalhi regularly to visit the scene of the carnage.

Supporters of Chattagram Mahanagari Puja Udjapan Parishad marched down the city streets yesterday after a rally demanding an immediate judicial enquiry into the bloodbath. They also submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner of Chittagong.

The Parishad also announced a set of agitation programmes protesting the carnage.

The programmes include a two-hour sit-in on Chittagong Press Club premises from 2:00pm on December 2, protest rallies across the city and different upazilas of Chittagong on December 3 and 4 and another protest rally at Central Shaheed Minar at 3:00pm on December 5.

## Badda arms haul

FROM PAGE 1

Badda police sources said plainclothes and uniformed law enforcers are still stationed at different points.

Rasul said hunt is on for one Lincoln of Ashkona in Uttara, who, he believes, carted the arms to the shop. "He is an identified drug smuggler and involved in the gunrunning."

It was learnt that Lincoln has hideouts at Tongi Board Bazar and nearby areas.

"We have already raided these places but could not find him," Rasul said.

Meanwhile, Mehedi Hasan Manik, owner of Tulir Parash, a Colombian and two South Koreans as well as two American soldiers, in what US commanders called a deliberate attempt to intimidate Washington's allies.

DB Inspector Sirajul Islam, who is probing the case, produced Manik before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

In his remand petition, the inspector said Manik knows if more arms are kept hidden and he needs to be quizzed to solve the case.

Denying his involvement in the gunrunning, Manik told police he took the key of his shop on Saturday afternoon saying he would stay there because he had quarrelled with his parents. Lincoln remained inside the shop at least till 8:00pm, Manik said.

## Shantu warns

FROM PAGE 1

Their interest and ours do not clash apparently," he said.

The former chief justice said that the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) had shown lot of patience until this time and hopefully it would show more. He expected the leaders would avoid any sort of violence in the country.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum and Research and Development Collectives (RDC) jointly organised the roundtable.

Besides the leaders of the PCJSS, researchers, media personnel, politicians and members of the civil society attended the roundtable. Rupayan Dewan, vice president of the PCJSS and Dr Mesbah Kamal presented keynote papers at the meeting.

Shantu Larma accused the government of not implementing the peace pact. He said that they have achieved the peace accord after 20 years of struggle. There was a lot of bloodshed and sacrifice behind the peace pact and that cannot be wasted in such a way, he said. The people of the CHT region were divided, he said, due to the conspiracy of the party in power.

Secretary General of the Bangladesh Awami League Abdul Jalil said that they had the goodwill to implement the accord. But they could not do so due to some obligations that were difficult to avoid at that time. However, he said, now it should be made a national issue so that it could be implemented.

The speakers urged to form a forum on CHT comprising members of the civil society and politicians to monitor the situation and take necessary steps. They said that CHT problem was not a regional one and should be raised at the national level to resolve it.

Rupayan Dewan described the little progress and achievements of the peace accord under the present government. He said that the government was slowly vitiating the situation in the CHT owing to its lack of goodwill in implementing the pact.

Bazlur Rahman, acting editor of The Sangbad, said that the present government should make its stand on the peace accord clear.

The government has been pitting the Bangalees against the indigenous people, observed Dr

## Slain journalist

FROM PAGE 12

Earlier, Lucky filed another naraji petition to a Magistrate Court on September 15. But the court rejected the petition on October 27.

On May 20, 2001, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police filed charge in the case accusing 16 persons of the murder. But the CID reinvestigated the case this year without Lucky's consent and submitted an extended charge sheet.

The new charge sheet included Rahman's close friend Farazi Ajmal Hossain who is also vice president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and senior staff correspondent of Daily Ittefaq.

Unidentified assailants gunned down Rahman in his office on July 16, 2000. Lucky lodged a first information report with Jessore Kotwali Police Station the same day.

## US troops kill 54 Iraqis

FROM PAGE 1

city, where Washington's public enemy number two in Iraq, Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri -- Saddam Hussein's longtime deputy and the alleged paymaster of many attacks against the coalition -- maintained two houses that were destroyed by US warplanes in mid-November.

The troops "repelled multiple ambush attempts on two separate logistical convoys, killing 46 attackers, wounding at least 18 and capturing eight" during the afternoon, said the US spokesman.

He said US forces destroyed three buildings used in the attacks and notably fired tank guns against the attackers, who were wearing the black uniforms of pro-Saddam Fedayeen fighters.

"We're sending a clear message that anyone who attempts to attack our convoys will pay the price," said MacDonald.

The US military has taken off its gloves in its battle with Iraqi insurgents in the past couple of weeks, launching massive counter-insurgency operations both in and around Baghdad and in the 4 ID's operational area in north-central Iraq.

Sunday's bloodshed topped a series of assaults on the US-led coalition and its allies in Iraq over the weekend, taking the lives of seven Spanish intelligence agents, two Japanese diplomats, a Colombian and two South Koreans as well as two American soldiers, in what US commanders called a deliberate attempt to intimidate Washington's allies.

Meanwhile, three men suspected of belonging to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network were captured by US troops in the main northern Iraqi city of Mosul, a US military spokesman said Monday.

The suspects, whose nationality was not disclosed, were arrested in Mosul two weeks ago and transferred to Baghdad, said Major Hugh Gate from the Mosul-based 101st Airborne Division.

US President George W. Bush's administration has long argued that toppled Iraqi president

Mesbah Kamal.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Bangladesh Communist Party, said the government should first decide whether all communities of the country have the right to govern themselves or only powerful communities would dominate others.

Worker's Party Chairman Rashed Khan Menon said that the government should take the matter seriously and sincerely try to resolve it.

Prof Ajay Ray said that the army was administering the CHT region and that should not continue any longer in any democratic country.

Dr Kazi Faruk Ahmed said that proper development was not possible in any divided society as in the CHT region.

Drama activist Mamunur Rashid, Sumanalankar Mahathero, Yusuf Islam, Dr Sadeqa Halim, Neem Chandra Bhounik, Nasrin Siraj, Santashito Chakma Bakul also addressed the meeting. Prof HK Arefin delivered the welcome address.

## Ctg mayor

FROM PAGE 12

Jamal part past two days following an instruction from the higher authorities, DB sources said.

The IO went to the mayor's office on Sunday, but the mayor was not in office due to illness, the sources added.

Assistant Commissioner of the DB Shaque Uddin said, "We are trying to collect information from the mayor as he recently made a public statement that Jamal's body was burnt in a brick-kiln after he was killed."

"We want to verify the mayor's statement about the fate of Jamal. It will be helpful for us to take a line of investigation in this regard and that is why we want to talk to the mayor. We now want to meet the mayor for this purpose," the assistant commissioner added.

Meanwhile, the drive to rescue Jamal has almost fizzled out although some raids were conducted a week back after his family members met the prime minister and home minister, sources said.

Police officials said the source network could not be re-established to collect information about the abductee.

Jamal's wife Nazma Chowdhury said, "We have received information from political channel that my husband is alive." "But we have not been informed about the whereabouts of my husband," she added.

## Gas supply

FROM PAGE 1

pressure are Tejgaon, Gulshan, Baniani, Baridhara, Mirpur, Mohakhali, Moghbazar, Malibagh and Khilgaon.

Officials concerned attributed the probable supply disruption to commissioning of a 'tie-in' at Tejgaon to improve overall gas pressure in the Tejgaon-Gulshan circle. A trial shutdown of the line was already performed from 9:00pm to 12 midnight on November 30 without causing any major disruption in supply, sources added.

## Economic coordination

FROM PAGE 1

tries," he observed.

A Planning Commission official blamed monga or near-famine in the northern region on the lack of coordination, saying it could have