



\$ 2.60 lakh Dutch aid for Rohingya repatriation

The government of Netherlands will contribute about US dollar 260,000 for the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, reports UNB.

Export earnings up by 11.59 pc

Country's export earning during July-January fell 6.63 per cent short of the target but registered an 11.59 per cent rise over the corresponding period last year, reports UNB.

The Export Promotion Bureau attributed the shortfall in export to lower sales of jute and readymade garments, hides and skin, knitwear, petroleum products and agricultural commodities.

Jute and jute goods fetched 205.42 million dollars, frozen food and fish 134.21 million dollars, garments 850.17 million dollars, tea 27.72 million dollars, hides and skin 93.27 million dollars and knitwear 139.09 dollars.

Bangladesh Bank seminar concludes

The three-day seminar which was jointly organized by the IMF Institute, Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Bank concluded yesterday, says a press release.

A very lively panel discussion was held. It was participated among others by the Governor of the Bangladesh Bank Khorshed Alam, Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed, Chairman Tariff Commission Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Secretary, Ministry of Communications, Railway Division Dr A K M Mashur Rahman, Secretary Statistical Division Dr Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank A B M Mahbul Amin Khan, Narankhiri Tith, Charles Sisson, David Robinson and Salaheddine Khenissi of the IMF.

The Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Khorshed Alam particularly dwelt at length on the various aspects of the structural adjustment particularly those relating to financial reform programme and underscored the importance of faster and smooth implementation of the on-going reforms to bring about the desired financial discipline to help sustained accelerated investment and growth in the country.

Bangladesh-Mexico agree to sign trade accord

Bangladesh and Mexico yesterday agreed to sign trade agreement in order to expand the volume of trade between the two countries, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting between Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam and Ambassador of Mexico to Bangladesh Pedro Gonzalez Rubio Sanchez.

They also discussed the matters of mutual interest particularly to strengthen the existing trade relations between the two countries. Shamsul Islam thanked the Ambassador for showing his interest in expanding trade between Bangladesh and Mexico and hoped that necessary action would be taken in signing trade agreement between the two countries shortly.

Clinton risks losing in trade war with Tokyo, Beijing

WASHINGTON, Apr 28: President Clinton faces pivotal decisions in relations with the two economic superpowers of Asia. In dealing with Japan and China, he risks considerable losses by pushing too hard, reports AP.

At the same time, he must appease important Democratic constituencies at home who are pressing for more human rights progress in China and more market openings in Japan.

Clinton scored big successes in his first year in office in the international economic arena. But his combative approach towards Japan and China — mostly reflecting domestic political dynamics — is threatening trade wars with both Tokyo and Beijing.

As he headed to Southern California on Wednesday to honour former President Richard Nixon — the president known for opening the door to China — Clinton is being portrayed by some critics as the president most likely to nudge it shut.

On the other hand, Clinton has the opportunity to solidify the commercial relationship by separating the human rights issue from the trade issue.

said Robert Hormats, vice-chairman of Goldman Sachs International. "I think he should use the Nixon legacy to do that."

Administration trade warriors have adopted a get-tough stance toward Japan and China that free traders claim will backfire.

Some have even blamed the administration's aggressive comments for contributing to the current political turmoil in recession-wrecked Japan.

On China, the world's third-largest economy, Clinton has threatened to revoke most-favoured-nation (MFN) status unless Beijing improves its human rights record. He must act by June 3.

MFN — guaranteeing the lowest possible import fees for Chinese-made goods — was granted to Beijing in 1973 in the aftermath of President Nixon's now-celebrated efforts to normalize relations with the communist state.

Since Clinton's ultimatum last year, China has frequently accused the administration of seeking to meddle in its internal affairs, resumed nuclear testing and jailed dozens of dissidents — including several

while Secretary of State Warren Christopher was in Beijing.

Trade between the United States and China has quadrupled since 1987 to 40 billion dollars. US business argues that American companies would be hurt the most if trade benefits were withdrawn.

"I think the administration has it all wrong on China," said Edward Graham, a senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics. He said the White House is frozen in a "time warp" dating to the Carter years.

"China has made more progress towards being a responsible member of the international community than virtually every nation you could name," Graham said. "There have been mind-boggling changes there over the past 12 years."

The fall in Japan of former Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa cost the United States a friend and reform and trade. Some analysts suggest the administration's unwillingness to give ground in trade talks initiated by Hosokawa helped to undermine his authority.

Now trade relations with Japan are becoming even more perilous as the newly formed government of Tautomu Hata struggles for its own survival.

There are some signs the administration is ready to be more flexible, at least on China.

For instance, Clinton this week praised Beijing's release of a Chinese dissident so he could come to the United States for medical care.

Administration officials said they are studying ways to renew the trade benefits without alienating human rights activists, such as sanctions on selected products made just by state-run businesses.

Leonard Woodcock, the former United Auto Workers president who was ambassador to China during the Carter administration, said Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping once told him Richard Nixon, "was a great man because he opened the door to China.... Maybe a Democrat couldn't have done that."

Clinton has advertised himself as a different kind of Democrat. Now comes a chance for him to show what that means.



Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman (2nd-R) addressing the 15th meeting of the Consultative Committee of the National Board of Revenue at MCCI auditorium yesterday. State Minister for Finance Mojibur Rahman, FBCCI President Mahbubur Rahman and Chairman NBR Dr Akbar Ali Khan are also seen in the picture.

Delhi stalls key vote on GATT issue in House

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: The Indian government, fighting opposition charges that it has betrayed the nation's interests by signing the GATT international trade deal, stalled a key vote on the issue in Parliament yesterday.

The speaker of Lok Sabha, the lower house, Shivraj Patil, postponed a debate on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade after the opposition demanded a vote at the end of the discussion and the ruling Congress Party said no.

"It would be bad for India's image abroad," Congress spokesman Chandul Chandra told Reuters after Patil told the two sides to resolve their differences on whether a discussion could be held without a vote.

Politicians said Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, a strong advocate of India's participation in the GATT agreement, could be seriously embarrassed by a vote in Parliament.

"We don't want the issue to be a mere formality," said centrist Janata Dal Party deputy Sharad Yadav after the debate was postponed.

A vote on the GATT deal would have no formal impact on an agreement that India signed earlier this month.

But the issues is so sensitive in India that Congress deputies say the government prefers not to have a vote that might show up opposition within the party or give more fuel to an anti-GATT campaign.

Opposition deputies, citing South Korea's example, have demanded Rao's resignation over his GATT policy.

The South Korean Prime Minister resigned owning moral responsibility for this unequal agreement," said a Marxist deputy.

The Indian opposition argues that the deal will harm India's farmers.

Thousands of anti-GATT farmers have joined demonstrations in recent months. In at least two incidents, they have attacked offices of US based multinational Cargill in the southern state of Karnataka.

Farmers allege that new GATT rules allowing seeds to

be patented will enable Cargill to push up the prices Indian farmers are charged. Cargill denies it intends to patent seeds.

Deputies say several GATT clauses, including proposals to cut agricultural subsidies, could trigger a political backlash.

Rao's government embarked nearly three years ago on a major economic reform programme designed to dismantle high protectionist barriers and integrate the country of 900 million people with the global trading system.

Dhaka to take part at Berlin Import Fair '94

Bangladesh, among 61 countries, will take part at the Import Fair Berlin, 1994 due to take place from June 8 to 11 on the Berlin exhibition grounds, reports BSS.

Focusing on clothing household textiles, leather goods, gifts and accessories for the home, this trade fair for the German and European import trade and for wholesalers and retailers had become an even more popular event on the commercial calendar, a German press communique said.

The Berlin import fair has also consolidated its position as the ideal place to establish contacts with representatives of the German and European import trade and with exporting companies from overseas and from the countries of Central, Eastern and South-

Eastern Europe.

For exhibitors from all over the world who come to Berlin to present their product ranges, it continues to be an important platform for their displays and for establishing contacts in order to gain a foothold in trade with Germany and Europe.

A visit to this fair offers insights into many different aspects in the various potential supplier countries and gives a fresh impetus to the trade and its international purchasing policy, the communique said.

It said that the companies and trading organisations which have already announced their intention of taking part in the Import Fair Berlin 1994 in order to present their export products will be coming from Africa, America, Asia, and Europe.



The three-day seminar which was jointly organised by the IMF Institute, Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Bank concluded yesterday. The Governor of Bangladesh Bank Khorshed Alam is seen speaking at a panel discussion.

Tea auctions to begin in Chittagong May 3

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 28: The country's tea auctions will begin here on May 3 heralding a new season of tea sale this year after a break for over a month, according to brokers and official sources. The new season is scheduled to include a total of 45 auctions to be held in Chittagong Port city with the participation of both foreign and local buyers.

The last season ended with auction no. 45 held on March 8, 1994, amid brisk trading as export buyers were more active.

Market reports said the tea price in the just-ended season recorded an increase of around Taka 5 per kg on average. The price on average rose to Taka 49.12 per kg in the last season from Taka 45.07 per kg the previous season.

In all the 45 auctions of the just-ended season, a total of

44.13 million kgs of tea were sold up from 41.67 million kgs the previous season.

The export sale also went up to 28.12 million kg in the last season from 25.29 million kgs the previous season, according to market reports.

Tea brokers and officials attributed the export rise to better demand of Bangladesh tea abroad.

Bangladesh in '93-94 fiscal year targeted to export 31.60 million kgs of tea.

Bangladesh tea is exported to about 25 countries of the world. CIS countries, Poland, Pakistan and Iran are among the traditional buyers of Bangladesh tea.

In 1993 Bangladesh produced 51 million kgs of tea, an increase of 3 million kgs compared with previous years, from all its 156 tea gardens.

Calcutta Chamber team to visit Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

A 12-member business delegation from the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Calcutta will be in Dhaka during the first week of May.

The delegation will be led by the chamber president Samir Kumar Gosh, a prominent ceramics industrialist, says a press release of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry received in Dhaka.

The delegation would discuss with the Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and businessmen ways to strengthen and expand commercial and industrial relations between Bangladesh and India to mutual advantage.

Ceramics, shipping, tea manufacturing, pumps, synthetic adhesives, plastics, pharmaceutical chemicals, construction chemicals, waterproof

garments and rubber, non-banking financial services, tourism, textile machinery, fabrics etc., would be the possible areas explored during the delegation's visit.

The delegation would also meet M Zahiruddin Khan, the Minister for Industry and Abdul Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism.

The delegation has also expressed its desire to meet the Prime Minister during its visit.

US to invest \$1b in computer sector

WASHINGTON, Apr 28: The US government will invest up to one billion dollars to help the computer industry compete with Japan in developing flat-panel computer display screens the New York Times said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Calm prevails in labour violence-torn North Sumatra

JAKARTA, Apr 28: The army has restored calm after more than a week of strikes, rioting and ethnic clashes in Indonesia's third largest city but there was no sign Thursday that origins of the violence will be dealt with, reports AP.

Low wages and a smoldering sense of injustice were the onward causes of labour unrest in the North Sumatra capital of Medan that left at least three people dead and nearly 200 shops and factories damaged.

The trouble started on April 14, when some 50,000 workers rallied to demand a minimum salary increase from the current 3,100 rupiahs (1.40 dollars) to 7,000 rupiahs (3.20 dollars) a day.

They also sought official recognition for the independent Indonesia Welfare Labour Union and a probe into the unexplained death of a worker in a similar demonstration early last month.

The protests flared into rioting that — as many times in the past — took an anti-Chinese turn.

Ethnic Chinese factory owner Kwok Joe Lip, 53, was dragged from his car and beaten to death by a mob when he drove toward his factory, apparently in the hope of protecting it.

Indonesia has more than 185 million people, 90 per cent of them at least nominally Muslim. Some of them envy the unassimilated Chinese their wealth and question their patriotism.

Ethnic Chinese number about 5 million, or about 3 per cent of the population, yet they dominate the economy. More than 70 per cent of the trading sector is in Chinese hands.

Although a group apart and often resented by the majority, they are a major force in banking and financial services and are the main investors in the country's industrialization programme.

Ethnic hostility dates to colonial days, when the hard-working Chinese officially functioned between the Dutch elite and the mass of natives. The Chinese prospered as tax

collectors and pawnshop owners. They also ran the salt monopoly and the opium trade on behalf of colonial authorities.

Racial conflict has been common. There have been at least eight major anti-Chinese uprisings in the last 29 years involving killings, rioting, looting and arson in widely separated communities.

By far the worst violence followed a coup attempt in 1965, when an anti-communist and anti-Chinese uprising left more than 300,000 dead. Tens of thousand of the victims were Chinese.

Many were killed then in Medan, where the Chinese community is larger and less integrated than others. About 12 per cent of the population of 2.2 million are Chinese.

Communism was banned after the 1965 blood bath. Chinese schools were closed and Chinese-language newspapers suspended, Chinese were urged to adopt Indonesian

names. The country's best known Chinese and President Suharto's closest business associate, tycoon Liem Sioe Liong, is officially referred to as Soedomo Sallim.

Meantime, finger-pointing was common as mopping up continued after the latest outbreak.

Critics blame the Labour Department, accusing it of indifference to workers complaints.

"To me the cause of all this is that the Labour Department isn't doing its job well," said Anni Abas Manopo, a prominent Medan attorney and law lecturer at the University of North Sumatra.

The authorities pin most of the blame on the Welfare Union and other agitators.

Minister of Manpower Abdul Latief called the workers' demands ridiculous, saying there were no grounds for a wage raise of more than twice the officially sanctioned rate.

government.

A spokesman for North Sumatra police, Lt Col Leo Sukardi, said all those detained would be investigated before going on trial.

"They will face various charges, including murder, vandalism and looting," he said.

About 47 people are expected to be charged in connection with the violence.

Welfare Union Chairman Muchtar Pakpahan has acknowledged organizing the strikes, but denied any motive to create disorder and violence.

The government-sponsored All Indonesia Workers Union is the only union recognized by the authorities.

Under heavy pressure from the United States, Jakarta has made several moves to improve the lot of labour in the past eight months. These include raising the daily minimum wage for workers in Jakarta and West Java to 3,800 rupiahs 1.80 dollar in January.

Washington had threatened

to withdraw some trade privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences unless labour conditions were improved by February. That deadline was extended for another six months.

"At the root of the Medan riots is social envy," said Defense Minister Edi Sudrajat, who added: "In looking at this envy, one cannot be one-dimensional. Those who are envious should ask themselves, why are they successful while we are not? What is lacking in us?"

He said those who are already rich should remain tolerant and not be arrogant, while those of modest means should refrain from being unproportionately envious.

China's Foreign Ministry has expressed concern over the violence in Medan. Jakarta's response was that Beijing had no cause for concern, and that the strike was not directed against certain ethnic groups.

Iranian parliament may control prices of goods, services

TEHRAN, Apr 28: Iran's parliament on Wednesday took a first step towards wresting price-setting powers from an executive body in a potential blow to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's economic reform programme, reports Reuter.

Tehran radio said a group of deputies presented a motion to transfer the power to set prices of goods and services from the Supreme Economic Council, headed by Rafsanjani, to parliament. They also want price rises which were announced after March 21 to be cancelled.

Parliament voted to treat the motion as urgent. A parliament public relations officer said the legislature would debate it on May 8.

There was no immediate reaction from the government to be motion which was presented less than two weeks after Rafsanjani strongly defended the policy of letting prices rise to eliminate unjust subsidies.