

Help ratify GATT accord, Clinton asks trade leaders

WASHINGTON, June 22: President Bill Clinton called on business leaders Tuesday to press Congress to ratify a new global trade accord, saying the benefits of sharply reduced tariffs would outweigh the costs, reports AFP.

Speaking before the business round table of top corporate leaders, Clinton reiterated that he would make approval of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) a priority this year.

"You and I know GATT will make the government money, but under our budget rules, we have to pretend that it's going to cost us money," Clinton said. He was referring to the

budget agreement calling for Congress to find funds to pay for any new legislation or treaty that costs money to the US treasury.

The GATT accord, signed in April after seven years of negotiations on sweeping trade reforms, would reduce income from tariffs by an estimated 14 billion dollars over five years.

But backers say the stimulative effect on the economy would lead to increase tax revenues.

"I want to urge you in the strongest possible terms to do everything you can to persuade the Congress to give this priority, to pass it with as little controversy and as little delay as possible," Clinton said.

"We need your help and we must do it this year, not next year," the President said.

Although his audience did not include strong backers of his Democratic administration, Clinton also appealed for support for his proposals for welfare reform, restructuring the unemployment insurance system and health care reform.

Speaking on health care, Clinton said, "We need to deal with this issue this year... don't walk away from health care."

Lebanese economy sees recovery

ABU DHABI, June 22: Lebanon's economy has steadily recovered since the end of the civil war in 1990, with the pound gaining ground against the dollar, investment flowing in and a balance of payments surplus sharply widening. Lebanon's central bank governor was quoted yesterday as saying, reports AFP.

Plans were underway to re-open Beirut's famous stock exchange next year and rehabilitate other war-damaged facilities to attract investment, Riad Salama told the United Arab

Emirates Daily Al-Khaleej. "The secondary stock market will open on Thursday while the Beirut exchange will open next year. We are planning to attract around 18 billion dollars in investment from abroad over the next 10 years," he said.

He said such investments would include part of overseas Lebanese assets, which he estimated at around 20 billion dollars.

Salama said investments had already started to flow into Lebanon since the end of the

15-year civil strife. Over the past year, around three billion dollars were transferred to Lebanon in the form of investment, he said.

"They covered 1.5 billion dollars in the form of bonds, 850 million dollars in bank deposits and 650 million dollars in subscriptions to solid-state company for reconstruction of the capital's centre," he added.

"There are efforts now to restore Lebanon's position as one of the main financial and banking centres in the Middle East."



Mahbubur Rahman, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) addressing the participants at the two-day Workshop on "Chamber Management Asia (ZDH-TA)" at the chamber auditorium in the city yesterday. Harihar Subedi, Resident Representative, ZDH-TA Project, Nepal (extreme right), Sunil Banik, Secretary BNCCI, India (2nd L) and Md. Azizur Rahman, Resident Representative, ZDH-TA Partnership Programme, Bangladesh (extreme left) are also seen in the picture.



Latifur Rahman (2nd-R), President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, seen seated with other participants of the monthly meeting of the American Bangladesh Economic Forum on Bangladesh government budget for 1994-95 at Dhaka Sheraton yesterday. Story on Page 1.

US-led embargo hamstrings Haiti's economy

PORT-AU-PRINCE, June 22: The US-led embargo has hamstrung Haiti's economy as intended. What's less clear is when, if ever, economic pain will compel the ruling generals to step aside, reports AP.

People throughout this Caribbean nation of six million are suffering. Spare parts, medicines, powdered milk, disposable diapers, machinery and other imports are in short supply.

"I used to buy and sell cars. No more," sighed a middle-aged clerk at a rental car office. "Prices have gone up three times, and even if I could buy one and fix it up, who would I sell it to?"

"The rich only buy new cars. No one else has any money. The embargo is making me poorer."

What is available — gasoline, for example, smuggled over the border from the Dominican Republic — often is too expensive for most people to afford. The generals are reported to profit from smuggling.

The US Embassy sees grumbling among the business community, and reportedly within the armed forces, as signs the embargo is having an impact.

"You start with with dis-

sensions. You start with divisions within an elite group and you chip away," embassy spokesman Stanley Schragger told reporters Tuesday.

Sooner or later, it has to implode from within," he said. "The question is how long that will take."

Sanctions were first imposed after Haiti's military deposed democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a 1991 coup. At US urging, the United Nations imposed a total trade embargo May 21.

On Friday, the stakes get higher, when a ban on commercial flights declared by US President Bill Clinton takes effect. Clinton also ordered a halt to most financial transactions with Haiti.

Most regional airlines say they will join US carriers in stopping flights on Friday. Air France planned to continue several flights a week from neighboring Caribbean islands.

The next step? Clinton has publicly refused to rule out an invasion. But many Haitians pray that won't be necessary.

"We hope the stricter embargo leads to a good result," said Rene Belance, 79, a retired lecturer in French literature at Brown University.

His fellow passengers

waited patiently at the crowded American Airlines counter at the airport. Many were schoolchildren with small backpacks, headed to see relatives in New York and Miami during summer vacation.

There was little overt sense of dread in this city of 1 million, even if bodies, sometimes those of Aristide supporters, still turn up with disarming frequency, and many Haitians still flee in leaky boats, often trying to reach Miami, 700 miles (1,120 kilometers) away.

The army-installed government of President Emile Jonassaint has responded to the sanctions with security decrees, the latest of which requires reporters to obtain written permission to travel outside the capital.

Yet foreigners interviewed at random this week said they didn't feel threatened. In fact, some 6,000 out of 8,000 Americans or Haitian-Americans with dual passports apparently have chosen to remain in Haiti despite US State Department warnings that they leave.

"I'd like to stay until the president (Aristide) is back and long after that," said Ron Voss, 53, an American missionary.

Bangladeshi cuisine launched in UK

LONDON, June 22: Bangladesh Caterers Association in UK has formally launched Bangladeshi cuisine, in its bid to provide real identity of Bangladeshi food otherwise known as Indian cuisine in Britain, at a function held in the House of Commons on Monday, reports BSS.

The Caterers Association, which represents most of the 10,000 so-called Indian restaurants throughout the UK, organised the function in members' dining room of the British Parliament to reintroduce the Bangladeshi curry dishes, which for the past 50 years have been known as "Indian food."

A number of British ministers and MPs, belonging to Conservative and Labour Parties attend the function where a variety of traditional dishes from Bangladesh were served.

Majority of the 'Indian restaurants' are owned, staffed and managed by Bangladeshis with employees of 60,000 having a turn-over of 1.5 billion pound.

The curry and rice have become part of the British cuisine with sheer efforts of people who came from Bangladesh at the end of the Second World War.

The Bangladesh Caterers Association, set up in 1960, decided to provide Bangla-

deshi cuisine its distinct identity on the occasion of its 35th anniversary celebration.

Continuous hard work, research and training programme for Bangladeshi restaurateurs could possibly develop further to earn the appreciation of mass British and European people for the taste of Bangladeshi cuisine.

Bangladeshi cuisine has already become known to almost every household. Night out in such eating places have become not only a prime leisure attraction for many people but also a healthy way of eating.

With full honour and respect to all ethnic cuisine, we believe that time has come to give "Bangladeshi cuisine" "privileges and distinct identity of its own right," Abdur Rahman, President of the association, said while addressing the function.

British Prime Minister John Major and Prince Charles facilitated the Association for its endeavour. Information Minister, Barrister Nazmul Huda, in a message also welcomed the association for their efforts to establish their true identity.

In a message of felicitation the High Commissioner of Bangladesh Dr A F M Yusuf, wished the Association all success.

Greenback rises in European trading

LONDON, June 22: The US dollar rose Wednesday in early European trading, bouncing back slightly from its recent fall against other major currencies. Gold prices were also higher, reports AP.

In trading on Asian markets Wednesday the dollar fell sharply against the Japanese yen, despite heavy intervention by Japan's central bank.

In Tokyo, the dollar closed at 100.65 yen, down 1.50 from Tuesday's close and the dollar's lowest level in Tokyo since modern exchange rates were set after World War II. The previous record low close was 101.25 yen on August 16, 1993.

Later in London, the dollar was quoted at 100.85 yen.

European analysts said the dollar's early rise Wednesday was just a momentary pause and predicted the dollar would fall further.

A Milan trader said the dollar is "very weak" and nothing has changed to stem the dollar's drop.

Traders said they didn't expect to see central banks intervene, as the Japanese had done earlier.

"Intervention is not going to stop the dollar from falling," said Marc Hendricks, an international economist at Swiss Bank Corp. in London. "I can see there is no support for the dollar at the moment."

Pressure on the dollar has increased steadily in recent weeks as investors see US interest rates levelling off and a possibility of German interest rates rising. Investors get a better return on currencies of countries with higher interest rates.

Traders said markets would be watching for clues about US interest rates when Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan testifies before the House of Representatives budget committee later Wednesday.

Other dollar rates compared with late Tuesday: — 1.6005 German marks, up from 1.5935 — 1.3485 Swiss francs, up from 1.3440 — 5.4710 French francs, up from 5.4525 — 1.7927 Dutch guilders, up from 1.7877 — 1.573.15 Italian lire, down from 1.576 — 1.3870 Canadian dollars, down from 1.3897.

S Asian workshop on women's employment begins

A two-day South Asian regional workshop on women and their self-employment began here yesterday, reports BSS.

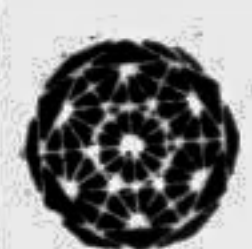
Inaugurating the workshop State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Begum Sarwar Rahman attached importance to the united efforts of professionals, technologists and development agencies of SAARC nations for promoting, expanding and upgrading self-employment programmes and projects for the women.

The state minister said, "We must recognise that the problems of our women are not different in country to country but only differ in the degree and intensity."

Begum Rahman said the women in the region are associated with lawlessness, low agricultural productivity and lack of employment opportunity though they had to assume the major responsibility for the survival of their families.

The State Minister said the workshop will bring forth ideas and recommendations suiting the regional progress and prosperity for the women.

About 20 delegates from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and host Bangladesh are taking part in the workshop.



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Low-cost housing planned for city dwellers in China

BEIJING, June 22: The Chinese government plans to provide low-cost housing to millions of middle-income city dwellers starting from next year, according to an official report today, says PTI.

Under the "comfort housing project," houses will be sold at 1000 yuan (115 dollars) per square metre, 1000 yuan (345 dollars) less than the current market rate, and the government would fund the massive project, official China Daily said quoting a construction ministry official.

Real estate developers participating in the project will get free access to state land, tax breaks and other premiums in order to reduce building costs, Liang Xiaoping was quoted, as saying.

Fresh income tax burden on individual assesseees

By Md. Nurul Haque

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman presented the National Budget for 1994-95 before the parliament on June 9. The proposed budget has drawn my attention to the changes it seeks to bring in income tax rules, applicable to individuals. Saifur in his Budget speech argued that those changes will reduce overall tax burden on the individual assesseees (salaried employees).

I would like to say that the burden on individual tax payers will increase. Saifur has tried to show that due to the following amendments in the budget, the income tax burden on individual assesseees will be reduced.

1. Minimum taxable income limit has been increased from Tk 50,000 to Tk 55,000;
2. House rent allowance exemption limit extended, from Tk 60,000 to Tk 72,000;
3. a. Tax imposed @ 15 per cent on the income over Tk 55,000 but maximum up to Tk 130,000 (presently @ 15 per cent on the income over Tk 50,000 but maximum up to Tk 100,000);

b. Tax on next Tk 160,000 (beyond the above limit of Tk 130,000) will be @ 20 per cent (presently @ 20 per cent on income of Tk 150,000 after Tk 100,000 p.a. above);

c. Over the amount of income as stated above, tax will be charged @ 25 per cent (presently @ 25 per cent over the income amount Tk 250,000);

4. Investment rebate has been withdrawn fully (presently @ 15 per cent tax credit is permissible on 20 per cent of total income excluding Co's contribution to PF Fund, subject to maximum of Tk 100,000).

All these proposed changes apparently show a reduction of tax burden for the individual assesseees. Let me provide a comparative statement on the tax implications of the proposed budget 1994-95.

| | Ahmed | Hossain | Khan |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|--------|
| Basic Pay | 10,000 | 6,700 | 6,200 |
| House Rent Allowance | 5,500 | 3,900 | 3,650 |
| Conveyance Allowance | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| Medical Allowance | 1,000 | 900 | 800 |
| Total Monthly Salary Tk | 16,750 | 11,750 | 10,900 |

Besides each of them is getting an amount equivalent to two months' basic pay as bonus per year and contributing @ 10 per cent of the basic pay to the Contributory Provident Fund.

Computation of annual taxable income and tax thereon

| | As per existing rules | | | As per budget 1994-95 | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|--------|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| | Ahmed | Hossain | Khan | Ahmed | Hossain | Khan |
| Basic Pay | 120,000 | 80,400 | 74,400 | 120,000 | 80,400 | 74,400 |
| House Rent (exemption up to Tk 60,000/72,000 but maximum of 50% of Basic Salary) | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Conveyance (exemption up to Tk 3,000) | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Medical (suppose full amount expended of actual) | 1,000 | 900 | 800 | 1,000 | 900 | 800 |
| Bonus (equivalent to) | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2. Basic | 20,000 | 13,400 | 12,400 | 20,000 | 13,400 | 12,400 |
| Add: Co's contribution to Provident Fund | 146,000 | 100,400 | 93,400 | 146,000 | 100,400 | 93,400 |
| Total Taxable Income | 166,000 | 113,800 | 105,800 | 166,000 | 113,800 | 105,800 |
| Income Tax Calculation: | | | | | | |
| On 1st Tk 50,000 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 |
| On next Tk 50,000 @ 15% | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 |
| On next Tk 150,000 @ 20% | 11,500 | 1,888 | 188 | 11,250 | 8,016 | 6,876 |
| On balance income @ 25% | 19,100 | 9,188 | 7,668 | 16,850 | 8,016 | 6,876 |
| Less: Tax Credit @ 15% on investment being 20% of Income excluding Co's cont. to Provident Fund maximum of Tk 100,000 | 4,380 | 3,012 | 2,802 | 4,380 | 3,012 | 2,802 |
| Net Tax Payable | 14,720 | 6,176 | 4,866 | 16,850 | 8,016 | 6,876 |

Excess tax burden on introduction of new National Budget 94-95 Increase of Tax in % (as per proposed Budget 1994-95)

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2.130 | 1.840 | 2.010 |
| | 14.5% | 29.6% | 41.3% |

It appears from the above calculation that individual assesseees' income tax burden will be increased following the introduction of new budget, which is not at all expected.

There are only limited number of tax payers (salaried employees) working in the private sector who are paying taxes fairly, specially the employees of the multinational companies. Rest are in the privileged group.

Honestly speaking, if a proper survey is conducted, it will certainly be found that a good number of government/corporation employees have two/three houses in Dhaka city although they are having fixed incomes. It is most unfortunate that those people hardly submit their Annual Income Returns and Wealth Returns, in adequate detail. On the other hand employees working in the private sector are subject to submit their Income Returns/Wealth Returns and pay taxes.

In fine I would request the hon'ble Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman to look into the matter and ensure:

a. that excess income tax is not imposed on the individual assesseees through 1994-95 budget.

b. that every wealthy person is submitting his or her Income/Wealth Returns and paying taxes including employees of the government, semi-government and autonomous organisations.

c. a proper investigation is initiated to find out how these people owned high value assets with their limited income.

d. retention of investment policy for the individual assesseees as in existence at present.

(The writer is a chartered accountant).



মংলা বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ

মংলা, বাগেরহাট

বিষয়ঃ— মংলা বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষের অধীনে ১৯৯৪ ও ১৯৯৫ সালের জন্য আইন উপদেষ্টা নিয়োগ/প্যানেলভুক্তির দরখাস্ত আহবান।

সরকারের আইন, বিচার ও সংসদ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের নির্দেশ মোতাবেক মংলা বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষের পক্ষে মামলা পরিচালনা ও আইনগত মতামত প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থানের জন্য আইন উপদেষ্টা নিয়োগ/প্যানেলভুক্তির নিমিত্তে বর্ণিত বোধ্যাসসম্পন্ন আইনজীবীদের নিকট হইতে জীবন বৃত্তান্তসহ সাদা কাগজে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাইতেছে।

| ক্রমিক নং | স্থান | তারিখ/কর্তৃপক্ষের সংখ্যা | যোগ্যতা |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|--|
| ১। | ঢাকা হাইকোর্ট ও হাইকোর্টের অন্যান্য সকল নিম্ন আদালত। | ২ (দুই) টি | অবসরপ্রাপ্ত জেলা জজ (অর্ধ ৬০ বৎসর) অথবা দেওয়ানী আদালতে মামলা পরিচালনার কার্যে ন্যূনতম ১০ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা। |
| ২। | খুলনা জেলার সকল আদালত (প্রথম আদালতসহ) | ৩ (তিন) টি | —এ— |
| ৩। | বাগেরহাট জেলার সকল আদালত | ৩ (তিন) টি | —এ— |
| ৪। | যশোর জেলার সকল আদালত | ২ (দুই) টি | —এ— |

শর্তাবলীঃ
১। উক্ত নিয়োগ/প্যানেল ভুক্তিতে নির্দেশিত না হইলে নিয়োগ পরবর্তী ২ (দুই) বৎসর পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকিবে।
২। নিয়োগ প্রাপ্ত/প্যানেলভুক্ত আইনজীবী আদালতে মামলা দায়ের ও পরিচালনার এবং আইনগত মতামত দেওয়ার জন্য বিধি মোতাবেক সরকার নির্ধারিত/কর্তৃপক্ষ ধার্যকৃত হারে ফি পাইবেন।
৩। আইনজীবীরা যে স্থানের জন্য নিয়োগ প্রাপ্তী সেই স্থানে তাহার নিজস্ব সেলেক্ট থাকিতে হইবে এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের প্রয়োজনে সময়ে সময়ে তাহা পরিবর্তিত হইতে পারে।
৪। আবেদনপত্রের সহিত গেজেটেড অফিসার/সার্ভিস বার অফিসিয়াল কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জাতীয়তা, যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ইত্যাদি সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি ও ৩ (তিন) কপি সনদ তেজালা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি সহ জীবন-বৃত্তান্ত সেরপ করিতে হইবে।
৫। বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক গত নভেম্বর '৯১ মাসের বিজ্ঞপ্তি মোতাবেক যাহারা আবেদন করিয়াছিলেন তাহাদেরকেও পুনরায় সনদসহ বিজ্ঞ সনদসিটের ব্যবহারে আবেদন করিতে হইবে।
৬। আবেদন আগামী ১৫-৭-৯৪ ইং তারিখের মধ্যে সেরপ করিতে হইবে।

এ.কে.এম. অহিউব আলী
পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)