

Negotiations extend to 3rd day with 'no progress'

## Barshefsky discouraged by talks with China on WTO entry

BELJING, Nov 12: US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky expressed discouragement over bilateral talks to get China into the World Trade Organisation, telling reporters no progress has been made in two days of negotiations, reports AFP.

The statement followed a series of high-level negotiations between Barshefsky and Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade Shi Guangsheng. Talks were slated to continue today.

Barshefsky's spokeswoman would not comment on the stumbling blocks that arose in negotiations. On Wednesday, Barshefsky described her discussions with Shi as "substantive and detailed".

To complete its 13-year quest to join the organisation, which sets global trading rules, China must reach market-opening agreements with the United States, the European Union, Canada and other members.

The goal was to complete these agreements before WTO members gathered in Seattle Nov. 30-Dec. 3 for the launch of a new round of global trade talks.

Meanwhile, Reuter report from Washington says: The White House said US trade offi-

cials would hold a third day of negotiations in Beijing on Friday aimed at bringing China into the World Trade Organisation, but called the talks "difficult" and cautioned against expecting a final breakthrough.

A senior administration official added, "I haven't gotten any hint that there's progress toward a breakthrough".

Buoyed by their most substantive trade talks in seven months, officials said US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, top White House aide Gene Sperling and other US negotiators would remain in Beijing Friday to press ahead with WTO talks.

The delegation had been expected to return to Washington after holding what Barshefsky described as "substantive and detailed" discussions on Wednesday and Thursday with Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade Shi Guangsheng.

US officials said the talks were extended at China's request. Sources said negotiations could drag on to Saturday or beyond if progress continued to be made.

The goal is to complete a market-opening agreement that would clear the way for China

to join the 134-member trade body before WTO members gather in Seattle from Nov. 30 to Dec. 3 for the launch of a new round of global trade talks.

"They feel it's been substantive," a US official said of the negotiations in Beijing. "Some of the times in the past these talks have bogged down on procedural matters. They're actually getting to the heart of what will make a strong commercial deal."

With world trade talks only a few weeks away, the United States and China have arrived at the moment of decision on Beijing's bid to join the WTO.

To complete its 13-year quest to join the organisation, which sets global trading rules, China must reach market-opening agreements with the United States, the European Union, Canada and other members.

In recent weeks, the Clinton administration has been fine-tuning its market-access demands, which could serve as the basis of a last-minute compromise.

That package was based on the market-opening concessions offered by Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji during a visit to Washington in April.

Zhu's offer included unprecedented access for US companies to Chinese markets in agricultural products, telecommunications and distribution services.

US officials concede they have little room to manoeuvre in the negotiations since US business interests and lawmakers are counting on an agreement that at least matched the April proposal.

"It would be a mistake to assume that some kind of casual or carefree throwing away of gains earlier scored would be well received by the business community," said US-China Business Council President Robert Kapp.

But Kapp said he fully expected the deal that emerges to look a lot like the April package. "With a drop of ingenuity and enough tampering around the margins of the April understanding, each side can say it was worth waiting seven long months."

US-China negotiations were suspended after the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May and only resumed in September when Clinton met President Jiang Zemin in New Zealand to mend fences.

The decision on whether to initiate proceedings will be taken by the 20-member "college" of European Commissioners when they meet in Strasbourg next Tuesday. More than half of them will have to support the move.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, under attack at home for his government's handling of the issue, spoke on the telephone for 30 minutes on Thursday with his French counterpart, Lionel Jospin.

A source close to Jospin said the will existed in Paris and London to reach an accord. "There is a common will to find an agreement. We will keep working," the source said.

Prodi said he hoped for an agreement on Friday or Saturday, saying the commission would do "everything in its power to find a solution tomorrow or the day after."

"It will try to do so tomorrow or the day after in the planned technical meetings. I hope that he will work together will have a positive outcome," he said.

The European Commission earlier warned France it faced legal action next week if it maintained its unilateral ban on British beef as the search for a negotiated solution to the cross-Channel row continued.

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No ministerial meetings were planned but French and British experts would discuss the beef row in Brussels on Friday.

Britain said it shared the desire to resolve the dispute. "The British have been saying that all along ... The British (agriculture) minister has made it clear that there's been a shared aim," an agriculture ministry spokesman said.

Blair and Jospin held what was described as a "perfectly friendly" telephone conversation but failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Blair's spokesman said French demands for extra

## WTO opponents launch \$40,000 ad campaign

SEATTLE, Nov 12: Opponents of World Trade Organisation meetings set to begin here in less than three weeks raised their profile Thursday with the launch of a \$40,000 outdoor advertising campaign, reports AP.

Ninety ads on buses and 14 billboards aimed at educating the public to what organisers call the behind-closed-doors practices of the WTO will begin appearing around town through November.

"I think everybody agrees that there is massive public ignorance about the WTO," said Jim Puckett, director of the Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange, which organised the campaign.

"And it's in the climate of this public ignorance that the WTO has been able to become so powerful and so unaccountable."

Puckett and representatives of some of the 15 participating labour, human rights and environmental groups launched the campaign at a news conference at the Mountaineers Club.

The ads pose a common question: "WTO: But what are we trading away?" Each suggests a different answer — from workers' rights to human rights, from clean air and clean water to forests, family farmers and endangered species.

The groups want more say in the WTO's free-trade talks.

"Until now, we've been completely locked out of what are supposed to be democratic negotiations," Puckett said, adding that many of the advisory committees that give input to the US Trade Representative are accessible only to preferred industries.

A small step in redressing that imbalance was achieved this week, when a federal judge here declared it illegal not to have "fairly balanced" viewpoints represented on such committees, said Patti Goldman, a lawyer for Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund.

On Tuesday, US District Judge Barbara Rothstein ordered the Paper Committee and the Lumber and Wood Products Committee to include an environmental representative as soon as possible.

Earthjustice, representing five environmental groups, had sued US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky in July on the issue.

The success of the campaign also would be measured in "less empty rhetoric" by presidential candidates, and by city, local and state officials taking the groups' issues seriously, Puckett said.

Dell operating profit up 42pc

DALLAS, Nov 12: Dell Computer Corp's operating profit rose 42 per cent over a year ago during its latest quarter as growing sales to small customers and over the Internet more than offset higher costs for components, says AP.

In the same quarter last year, Round Rock, Texas-based company had a profit of \$384 million, or 14 cents a share a year ago.

The latest results were right in line with analyst expectations, according to a survey by First Call/Thomson Financial. Third-quarter revenue grew 41 per cent to \$6.78 billion, up from \$4.82 billion the prior year.

In the first nine months of its fiscal year, Dell's operating profit totaled \$1.42 billion or 52 cents a share, up 38 per cent from \$1.04 billion or 37 cents a share the prior year.

Revenue for the year to date totaled \$18.46 billion, up 41 per cent from \$13.07 billion from year-ago levels.

## France shares common goal with UK to end beef row

Chirac says after meeting EC chief

## Daewoo Hilton Hotel sold to HK firm

SEOUL, Nov 12: Hong Leong Group, a Hong Kong hotel management firm, signed an agreement Friday to buy the Hilton Hotel in Seoul for \$228.5 million, reports AP.

The hotel is currently owned by South Korea's Daewoo Development Co., a unit of the ailing Daewoo group, which is selling assets to improve its financial condition.

Daewoo earlier had scrapped a deal to sell the hotel for \$215 million to General Mediterranean Holding Co. of Luxembourg when the latter failed to pay the money in time.

Daewoo narrowly escaped becoming the nation's largest-ever bankruptcy when domestic creditors agreed in July to delay repayment of billions of dollars in debt for six months.

In return, Daewoo promised to cut its debt drastically by selling or spinning off all but 12 of its 25 subsidiaries. It is undergoing a massive restructuring under the supervision of its creditors.

Under government pressure, Daewoo chairman Kim Woo-choong resigned last month.

Turkey, IMF may finalise 3-year accord in '99

ANKARA, Nov 12: Turkish Treasury Undersecretary Selcuk Demirralp said today that a planned loan accord with the International Monetary Fund, which Turkey hopes to finalise this year, will cover a three-year period, reports Reuter.

Speaking to reporters after meeting a senior IMF official, Demirralp said the accord envisaged cutting inflation to 25 per cent next year and 10 per cent in 2001, figures in line with previously announced targets. Annual consumer price inflation stood at 64.7 per cent in October.

## Government of Bangladesh

## Office of the Executive Engineer

PWD Division, Meherpur

## Notice Inviting Tenders

No 15/99-2000

1. Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from the valid enlisted bldg contractor/firm under PWD according to their financial limit for the undermentioned work & will be received by the undersigned & as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Jessore/Magura/Jhenidah/Kushtia/Narail/Chuadanga/Rajbari/Faridpur up to 12-00 Noon of 18/11/99 and will be opened on the same day at 12-15 PM in presence of the intending tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it.

The tender form will be sold up to 5-00 PM on 17-11-99.

2. Name of work: Construction of 12 Nos District in Bangladesh one at Meherpur (S.H: Constrn. of Kishore Prisoners Barrack).

3. Estimated cost : Tk 7,45,020/00 only.

4. Earnest money: Tk 14,900/00 only.

5. The intending tenderers/firm shall have to enclose the following documents duly attested by the class-I officers of this Deptt. with the tender failing which the tender will be summarily rejected:

- A) VAT registration certificate (10-Digits).
- B) Copy of update renewed of enlistment.
- C) TIN certificate.

6. Tender documents consisting of BD Form No 2911, schedule of items, additional terms & conditions etc. can be seen & obtained from the office of the Executive Engineers under PWD Circle, Jessore during the office hours.

7. In case of quoting same lowest rate by more than one tenderer/firm then the lowest tenders will be selected through lottery to be held on 01/12/99 at 11-30 AM in the office of the undersigned.

Md Abdul Mannan  
Executive Engineer  
PWD Division, Meherpur



## National Museum of Science and Technology

Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

## Tender Notice Regarding

## Purchase of Books

Sealed tenders are invited from bona fide firms for purchasing books for the library of the National Museum of Science and Technology. 2.5% (two and a half) of the quoted cost as the earnest money (refundable) in the form of Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank in favour of the Director, National Museum of Science and Technology, Agargaon, Dhaka will have to be deposited alongwith the tender.

Schedule of tender can be procured till November 17 99 during office hours from the office of the undersigned on payment of Taka 100/- (one hundred) taka. Tenders will have to be dropped in the tender box kept at the office of the undersigned till 12:00 noon on 18th November 99. Tenders will be opened the same day at 12:15 pm before the tenderers present (if anyone remains present).

The authority reserves the power to reject or accept any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Md Habibur Rahman Chowdhury  
Director  
G-1953  
Phone: 9112084

বিজ্ঞানমন্ত্র ইউনিভার্সিটি, বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তির চর্চা কর্মসূলী  
সম্মত বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলুন।



Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif hands over a claim settlement cheque to Sufia Begum, nominee of late Mohammad Ali, in presence of Al-haj Md Mockbul Hossain, MP and Chairman of Sandhani Life Insurance Company Ltd, M.A. Karim, Managing Director, Sadeq Khan, Commissioner of Ward No 47, and other senior officials of the company.

Sandhani Life photo

## WB funded Sharif govt probe into power sector blots

LONDON, Nov 12: The World Bank cooperated closely with the former government of Pakistan in a corruption investigation aimed at the regime's political enemies, the Financial Times reported today, reports Reuters.

The FT quoted from a Pakistani government document it said it obtained, alleging that the World Bank made available funds to help pay for an investigation into Pakistan's power sector.

The report said that the probe was directed at political opponents of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was deposed last month in a bloodless military coup.

The World Bank issued a statement early today confirming that it was indeed investigating corruption in the Pakistani power sector, but said its investigation was being conducted completely independently of the Pakistani government.

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It also categorically denied any suggestion that the bank had helped Sharif target his political enemies.

In the case of the Pakistani power sector, an investigation of corruption is still underway," said World Bank spokeswoman Caroline Anstey. She said the bank could not discuss the investigation until it was complete.

It is, however, absolutely untrue to suggest, as the article in today's Financial Times does, that we have at any time colluded with the government of Pakistan to target its political enemies," Anstey added.

The Financial Times said the targets of the investigation included Benazir Bhutto, Sharif's predecessor; her husband, Asif Ali Zardari; Ibrahim Elwan, a former World Bank manager; and several Pakistani power officials.

The World Bank has been active in financing the independent power sector in Pakistan, and has made loans totalling \$ 1.2 billion for the sector, the FT reported.

RHD Notice Inviting Tenders	
1. Tender Notice No :	01/SD/1999-2000.
2. Name of work :	Construction of 75.05 metre long (3x24.40m) simply supported RCC Bridge at Gap No. 41/1 (Darakhai Bridge) on 41st KM of Sylhet-Sunamganj Road Division during the year 1999-2000. (Ch. 168 REV)
3. Estimated cost :	Tk. 3,14,83,117/-
4. Earnest money :	Tk. 6,29,663/-</td