

E-commerce on APEC meet agenda

SINGAPORE, Feb 11: The gap between developed and developing countries when starting up Internet services will be one of the topics discussed when senior Asia-Pacific officials launch talks in Brunei this weekend, an official said Friday, reports AP.

The meeting of officials from the Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation will be the first of a series in the run-up to the November summit of the 21 APEC member economies, including the United States, Russia and China.

APEC officials will hold talks for 10 days in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of oil-rich Brunei, beginning Saturday.

E-commerce is one of the four main priorities for Brunei in its year as APEC leader.

"They're going to be looking at e-commerce, particularly the so-called 'digital divide,' which refers to the gaps in infrastructure, ability and capacity to make the most of e-commerce," said Bridget Romanes, director of public affairs for the APEC Secretariat.

"In particular this year they're going to look at the resource gap" involved in trying to get e-commerce going in less-developed countries, she said.

Myanmar's rice export falls by 21.57 pc

YANGON, Feb 11: Myanmar exported a total of 61,800 tons of rice in the first 10 months of 1999, a drop of 21.57 per cent over the same period of the previous year, according to the latest figures of the country's Central Statistical Organisation, reports Xinhua.

Myanmar was once well known to the world for its high rice production. Myanmar annually exported over 1 million tons in the 1950s. But in 1997, the country's rice export dropped to 16,600 tons, the lowest figures in history.

The sharp fall of Myanmar's rice exports is reportedly due to no much increase in the cultivated area of paddy. There was also less output of paddy for a length of time while Myanmar's population grows by 2 per cent annually.

At present, Myanmar's population nears 50 million, two times the figures in 1948 when Myanmar regained independence.

Meanwhile, the government has also exempted import duties on agricultural implements including machinery, pesticide and fertiliser.

Myanmar's cultivable land covers 18.22 million hectares, of which 9.31 million hectares have been utilised with 8.91 million hectares remaining to be reclaimed.

SB Dhaka-2 Div best managers awarded

The branch managers under Sonali Bank Dhaka-2 Division, who achieved commendable success in earning of profit, mobilisation of deposit, enhancement of investment and recovery of classified loans were awarded with Best Managers Crest on Thursday, says a press release.

Md Enamul Haq Chowdhury, MD of Sonali Bank, gave away the crests at a function held at the conference room of the bank's head office in the city.

In his speech Enamul Haq said if proper initiative, efficiency and talent are applied, success can easily be earned. This reality was established during last three months of the previous year. DMD Youssuf Ali Howlader was present as special guest at the function. GMs and DGMs of head office were also present.

Out of branch heads 183 of Dhaka Division-2, heads of 13 branches, corporate branches, principal office and regional offices secured the awards.

Similar awards will be given to other divisions of the country shortly, it said.

Filipino foreign debts rise to \$51b

MANILA, Feb 11: The Philippines' total foreign debts rose to \$1 billion US dollars at the end of September 1999 from \$4.13 billion dollars at end of June. Manila Bulletin newspaper reported today, says Xinhua.

The paper quoted data from the Central Bank of the Philippines as saying that 86 per cent of the total foreign debts were medium-to-long-term loans with the shortest maturity at three years. The rest was short-term debt.

Rafael Buenaventura, governor of the central bank, said the short-term debt was fully covered by the country's gross international reserves (GIR) which stood at about 15 billion dollars at the end of 1999.

"If you have GIR two and a half times the size of your short-term debt, then in any short-term crisis, there is no problem," he said.

The Philippines' interest payment for its foreign and local debts is forecast to increase by almost 20 per cent in 2000 to 12.7 billion pesos (3.2 billion dollars), the paper said.

The Philippine government last year borrowed substantially from the international market, including 400 million dollars in global bonds floated last December.

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The Daily Star BUSINESS

UNCTAD mulls globalisation as Bangkok meet begins today

Gathering promotes Asia as rich nations' dump ground: Greenpeace

BANGKOK, Feb 11: Spurred by a sense of crisis since the collapse of the World Trade Organisation summit in Seattle, some 180 nations are meeting in Bangkok this week to shape the global economy, says AP.

But as leaders and ministers talk and ponder, globalisation is happening a mouse-click, a share trade and a takeover at a time.

Governments and international bodies such as the United Nations acknowledge they aren't sure how to keep up — much less control — a phenomenon that is really led by companies, not treaties.

The process of globalisation is being driven by the activities of private enterprise," said Rubens Ricupero, secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

UNCTAD, which promotes

trade to help develop poor countries, opens its meeting Saturday under the greatest scrutiny in its 36-year history, precisely because of uncertainty over how to get a grip on globalisation.

The week-long meeting will bring together the leaders of Japan and Southeast Asian nations, plus trade ministers and development officials from most other countries.

Though UNCTAD does not have the power to negotiate and enforce treaties like the WTO, the two groups cover many of the same issues and Ricupero hopes the meeting will bring world trade talks out of paralysis.

The WTO has basically been moribund in the four months since Seattle. Representatives from the 135-member states have met twice.

The first time, they agreed to

not discuss Seattle. The second time, Monday, they agreed they should negotiate on services and agriculture — but not exactly how. Any agreement is years away.

But globalisation is happening without new treaties or government legislation. Consider a few events in the past week, all pointing to a more interconnected, Americanised world economy:

— High-tech firms in California's Silicon Valley, the cutting edge of the record-breaking US economy, are pressuring Congress to greatly increase the number of six-year visas granted to foreign engineers, mostly from China and India.

— IBM Corp. is forging a deal with Asian Internet providers to develop electronic business tools for companies in the region. Asia, where the Internet

has barely taken off, is considered to have great potential over the next few years.

— Top US business executive warned congressmen against blocking China's entry into the WTO, threatening make the issue a litmus test for campaign contributions. Bringing China's vast potential markets into a rules-based trading system is a "US multinationals."

— Environmental activists accused the trade conference in Bangkok of enabling rich nations to dump toxic waste in poor Asian countries.

They said the UN Conference on Trade and Development, which tries to promote trade as a tool for development in poor countries, was under pressure from waste exporting nations like the United States, Canada, Australia and Japan.



A Thai woman Friday passes by a billboard, announcing the UNCTAD meeting to be held in Bangkok 12-19 February. Leaders from Asia and around the world will join global trade and finance chiefs, hoping to secure a stake in the spoils of economic globalisation for the world's poorest people.

— AFP photo

US lawmakers slam Clinton for failed trade policy

Commerce secy confident Congress will back China pact

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: Outraged by the collapse of global trade talks in Seattle, US lawmakers yesterday lashed out at US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and accused President Bill Clinton of undermining a half-century of US leadership in market-opening, says Reuters.

The fierce attack, led by senior Democratic Sen Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, was a stinging rebuke for the president and his top trade negotiator as they try to build support in a hostile Congress for the administration's landmark trade agreement with China.

The criticism has also fuelled speculation in trade circles that Barshefsky will step down, a rumour her office vehemently denies.

American trade policy is in crisis, and it's a crisis that came about in this administration," Moynihan, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, told a hearing on US policy in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

"We're losing our way after 60 years in the right direction," he added, referring to US legislation that sharply increased tariffs and other trade barriers before World War Two.

The Finance Committee's Republican chairman, William Roth of Delaware, was equally harsh, and like Moynihan, singled out Clinton's labour policies for the collapse of December 1999 WTO negotiations in Seattle.

Barshefsky said the criticism was unfounded, and told senators a new round of global

trade talks was still possible this year if the EU, the United States and other WTO members showed more flexibility on farm subsidies and labour standards.

"I don't think one should despair," she said.

Clinton stunned his own negotiating team and developing nations in Seattle by suggesting the United States could sanction countries that violate labour standards.

The administration has backed off talk of sanctions, but continues to champion a proposal to increase the WTO's focus on labour.

Developing nations, three-quarters of the WTO's membership, oppose any provision that would link labour to trade deals, seeing it as opening the door for discrimination against

their goods simply because they are produced more cheaply.

Roth and Moynihan said Clinton should set the labour proposal aside to give US trade negotiators another chance at launching a new round this year.

Others said it was too late. "I don't think there's going to be any more rounds," said Sen Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat.

Another report says, US Commerce Secretary William Daley told farm groups yesterday he was confident Congress would approve a landmark trade agreement with China despite stiff opposition from organised labour.

"It will be tough. It will be difficult. But we will win this. There's no question in my mind," said Daley.

Chinese cotton exports beat imports

BEIJING, Feb 11: China has become a net raw cotton exporter with its net exports totaling 190,000 tons in 1999, reports Xinhua.

The country earned 280 million US dollars from cotton exports last year, four times more than in the previous year, "China Daily" reported today.

Despite the fact that global cotton output increased about five per cent last year while the demand grew only 1.2 per cent, Chinese companies are stepping up their exports of the products. They say the country is a universally acknowledged leading supplier of cotton products.

Given the large domestic supply and high costs of cotton inventories of Chinese companies, the Chinese Agriculture Ministry and other relevant agriculture departments estimate this year's output may drop further to 3.2 million tons.

Cotton growers, whose production enthusiasm was dampened by the government's deregulation of purchasing prices during the harvesting season, are seeking cooperation with foreign traders to increase profits.

Meanwhile, China's imports of raw cotton plummeted 76.5 per cent year-on-year to reach 46,000 tons in 1999 as a result of government's severe crackdown on smugglers and the requirement that all ginned cotton and cotton products imported as raw materials must be re-exported as finished products.

It is unclear how many copies of Windows 2000 have been downloaded illegally or how much money Microsoft has lost from such an activity.

"We really haven't quantified that," Murphy said of losses due to Windows 2000 piracy. The software's price tag ranges from \$149 for desktop upgrade to \$3,999 for the Advanced Server version.

To combat the piracy, which has been made easier by the Internet, Microsoft has assembled an arsenal of new weapons, including a virtual bloodhound to sniff out illegal copies lurking on the Web, holographic CD-ROMs and authenticity certificates that are harder to counterfeit than a 100-dollar bill, experts say.

According to the Business Software Alliance, more than 2 million Web sites are selling or distributing pirated software and numerous sites are posting beta copies of Windows 2000 for download.

In an effort to crack down on this increasing problem, Microsoft is also launching an aggressive Internet monitoring program to specifically address sites that post Microsoft software for illegal download.

Also, Windows 2000 will ship with verification badges using a copper holographic thread, unique identification numbers, and a company logo that shimmers gold and silver in the light.

News about climbing inflation comes just a week after the European Central Bank raised interest rates to try and check higher prices in the 11 countries using Europe's common currency, the euro.

The ECB manipulates the interest rate in an effort to keep inflation below 2 per cent in the 11 countries that adopted the euro, says AP.

Raising interest rates tends to cool off inflation. But higher interest rates could also stifle the fragile recovery of the beleaguered European economy by making it more expensive to borrow money.

FRANKFURT, Feb 11: The federal statistics bureau reported Friday that German inflation in 1999 was the highest since 1997, rekindling fears that prices are rising too fast in the country, says AP.

Over the course of 1999, prices rose by 1.6 per cent, shooting up 0.4 per cent in December.

"It was the highest yearly increase in inflation since December 1997," the report said. Prices rose 2 per cent over the course of that year.

Still, the 1999 figures came in slightly below government forecasts of a 1.7 per cent increase.

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ ইউনিভের্সিটি জাতীয় কমিশন

১৯৯৫ এশিয়ান মহাসভাক

গুলশান-নীলগাঁও

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বিষয়: Brunei Darussalam Government Scholarships for Isesco member countries tenable in Brunei Darussalam 2000/2001 session

ব্রনাই সরকারের পৃষ্ঠাপোকতায় দেশের বিভিন্ন শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে মাত্রক/পাস, মাত্রকের ও ডিপ্লোমা কোর্সে নিম্নলিখিত মেধাবিহীন ক্ষেত্রে আবেদন করা যাচ্ছে।

A. পাঠ্যবিষয়সমূহ

Institutions/Programmes

University Brunei Darussalam/First Degree

BA (Public Policy and Administration)

BA Ed. (Major in Geog., Econ., TESL or History and Minor in Geog., Econ., TESL, History or Maths.)

BSc. Ed. (Major or Minor chosen from Chemistry, Physics & Mathematics).

BA (Major in Malay Language, Economics, Geography, History or Malay Literature and one Minor chosen from Economics, Geography History, Account & Finance, Maths, English Lang. Age Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, South East Asian Studies).

B. Business Administration

B. Arabic Language

Master's

Master of Public Policy by coursework