



Call for informing people rightly about WTO activities

Incidin Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation working on issues of trade liberalisation, on Tuesday demanded that the people should be rightly informed about the activities of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), reports UNB.

The people of Bangladesh along with other WTO member countries should be kept informed about the developments in WTO," Ratan Sarkar, Executive Director of Incidin Bangladesh, told a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Criticising WTO's role, especially in the developing countries, Sarkar said that their objective was to prevent WTO measures, which are adversely affecting farmers and workers as well as rights and security of children, woman, and environment.

Incidin Bangladesh, financed by Oxfam, is engaged in creating WTO awareness among the people under a programme "Campaign for Post's Rights in Liberalisation." It will arrange roundtable discussions in different parts of the country, he said.

### Saudi non-oil exports down 8pc in '99

RIYADH, May 31: Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports totalled 19.9 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion) in 1999, down eight per cent on the previous year mostly due to higher tariffs in some foreign markets, a report published yesterday said, reports Reuters.

The report by the Saudi Export Development Centre, an offshoot of the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce, said 1998 non-oil exports stood at 21.7 billion riyals.

The report, published in Saudi newspapers, said chemical products were at the top of the non-oil exports list at 9.18 billion riyals, followed by plastics, electronic goods and live-stock.

Gulf Arab states were the largest importers from Saudi Arabia, followed by the United States and India.

### DBBL training programme concludes

The first Foundation Training course of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited ended recently, says a press release.

The fourteen-day course, held at the bank's training centre at city's Dilkusha, was conducted by its Human Resource and Training Division and attended by fourteen newly-recruited officers of the bank. Senior executives of the bank were the trainers. Md. Shawkat Ali, Managing Director of the Bank, distributed the certificates among the trainees.

Speaking on this occasion, Md. Shawkat Ali urged the participants of the training course to discharge their duties and responsibilities diligently and honestly for setting a unique standard of service in the banking arena of Bangladesh. The Deputy Managing Director and other senior executives of the bank were also present.

## EC-Dhaka co-op deal to okay free access of local goods

Jalil tells newsmen in city

The recently-signed EC-Bangladesh Cooperation agreement will provide duty-free access of all Bangladesh exportable to EC market, reports UNB.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said this while briefing newsmen at his office yesterday afternoon.

He said that EU would now assist Bangladesh to diversify its potential to promote two-way trade.

The agreement also aims at promoting investment and economic, technical and cultural links between Bangladesh and the EU," said Jalil.

He said the new agreement may not necessarily increase the volume of EC aid to Bangladesh, but will widen the scope of cooperation between Bangladesh and the European Union.

"It may also enable a meaningful financial support of the European Commission for future development programmes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area," said the commerce minister.

He said that the principal

objectives of the new agreement are to support sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh.

Women and the poorest sections of society in particular would be benefited because of the EU support ensured by the agreement, he added.

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In the field of development cooperation, the European Commission will continue to extend support to Bangladesh within the context of a cooperation strategy and dialogue based on agreed priorities, he said.

"Cooperation in the fields of drug control and AIDS is also included in the agreement."

In the fields of trade and commercial cooperation, Bangladesh and EU are committed to conduct trade in accordance with the agreement.

The minister said that the EU would provide similar cooperation in the fields of telecommunication, information technology and multi-media applications.

Terming the deal as the third generation agreement, the minister hoped that the new agreement would not only increase the volume of

said Jalil.

Referring to cooperation in the environmental field, the minister said that EU would support in ensuring environmental protection for achieving sustainable growth in Bangladesh.

In the field of economic co-operation, transfer of technology to Bangladesh would be made for private investment from Europe by channelling capital and technology," said Jalil.

The agreement will promote scientific and technological cooperation in areas of common interest. Both Bangladesh and the EC would cooperate in order to prevent diversion of drug precursor chemicals and check money laundering."

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Replies to a question on whether the US government's decision to provide duty-free access of Caribbean products into its market would affect Bangladesh exports there, he said he had written a letter to the US Commerce Secretary explaining the problem.

Bangladesh exports, but also promote introduction of new export items in the EU market.

During the first ten years of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh exported goods worth US 4593.73 million dollars to the European market compared to US \$4298.05 million during the same period in 1998-99. "This volume will definitely increase because of the agreement".

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