

Discord over trade union rights at EPZs

US likely to slash GSP facilities by half

By Rafiq Hasan

The US government is likely to cut by fifty per cent the GSP facilities for imports from Bangladesh as the government did not allow trade union right in Export Processing Zones.

The GSP Sub-committee at the US Trade Representative's Office (USTRO) has rejected the government's explanation on the issue.

Saying it is 'unacceptable' as it failed to incorporate 'essential elements', according to a message received at the Prime Minister's office.

Khulam Hussain, Commercial Counsellor in Bangladesh embassy in Washington sent the message after meeting the Sub-committee Chairman, Jon Rosenbaum.

It is learnt from Rosenbaum that the Sub-committee is preparing to recommend to the President for consideration of a partial (50%) cancellation of Bangladesh's GSP benefits, to be effective from October 1, 2000, the message said.

The formula prepared by the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) for selecting representatives to the Workers Welfare Committee does not recognise workers' right of association, Rosenbaum told Hussain.

There will be no formal hearing on the issue in the Sub-committee and its recommendation will be effective after the US President's approval, the message said.

However, the Sub-committee may consider a meeting with any delegation from Bangladesh, it said.

When contacted, official sources said the Foreign Minister or the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, whoever accompanies Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her forthcoming visit to US, will meet the Sub-committee on the issue. The Prime Minister leaves for US on September 3.

"If GSP facility is cancelled, the US-Bangladesh relation will be seriously affected," he said.

Immediately after hearing the news, Sinha met Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and recommended for not allowing

facilities under GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) for not allowing

See page 12 col 1

Top ten in 5 edn boards

37.47 pc pass HSC exams

Success rate lowest in three years

By Staff Correspondent

The average percentage of pass in Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations this year is 37.47 per cent, the lowest in three years and 15.93 per cent lower than last year's.

The five education boards in the country published the results yesterday.

Out of total 5,05,000 examinees under Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessor and Rajshahi Boards respectively.

There were 1,50,141 under Dhaka Board, 29,666 under Chittagong Board, 74,654 under Comilla Board, 93,151 under Jessor Board and 1,22,474 under Ra-

boards. 1,86,234 passed.

The percentages of pass are 35.38, 37.92, 40.38, 37.12 and 36.55 in Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessor and Rajshahi boards respectively.

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Out of total 5,05,000 examinees under Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessor and Rajshahi Boards respectively.

In Dhaka Board S.M. Shahriar Nirjon (roll-104087) of Dhaka College topped the combined merit lists of Science, Agricultural and Home Economics groups. He secured 953 marks with letters in four subjects.

In Humanities, Islamic Studies and Music groups, Ju-

See page 11 col 7

Shahriar Nirjon, 1st in Science group, DB

Saiful Alam, 1st in Commerce, DB

Nahid Mahfuza Alam, 1st among girls, DB

Jurana Aziz, 1st in Humanities, DB

See page 12 col 5

Rezwanul Huq, first in JB

MD Saiful Alam, 1st in Commerce, DB

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