

Non-inclusion of clause for withdrawing farm subsidy

Africa rebukes draft Dhaka Declaration

NAZMUL AHSAN

The representatives of African countries, attending the conference of the trade ministers of the least developed countries (LDCs), criticised the final draft of the Dhaka Declaration yesterday, as no clause for withdrawing agricultural subsidy has been included in it, sources said.

The USA, Japan and the European Union (EU) have long been providing both export and internal subsidies to certain sectors, resulting in further marginalisation of the LDCs, particularly the poor

African countries.

Meeting sources said the officials, representing the African countries on the second day of the meeting, criticised the developed countries and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for not implementing the pledges made during the Doha ministerial meeting on withdrawal of subsidies on agriculture.

Bangladesh, as the coordinator of the LDCs, finalised the draft of the Dhaka Declaration which incorporates 11-point demands.

The demands include increasing global market share of the LDCs

through duty free access of their products, implementation of special and differential treatment (S&D) etc.

A number of African countries raised objection on the issues like movement of natural persons and demand for moratorium on anti-dumping, sources said.

"These two are issues of Bangladesh from which the African countries would not be benefited," one of the African representatives said, arguing in favour of inclusion of the issue of agricultural subsidy in the Dhaka Declaration, meeting sources said.

But another source said two major African countries have opposed the idea as both of them are food-importing countries.

In the WTO's Doha ministerial Declaration, developed countries agreed to phase out their export subsidies and production support measures.

But nothing has so far been implemented in this respect.

The EU provides US\$ 40 billion per year as subsidy to the agriculture, while the US gives 4 billion yearly to the cotton sector alone.

The agri-subsidies, provided by

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Exports go haywire

1,200 containers stuck at port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exportables worth around Tk 200 crore are now stockpiled at the Chittagong port because of suspension of operation by major foreign feeder vessel operators, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference, they said around 1,200 containers are now stuck at the port and the buyers have stopped inspection of items ready for shipment.

They fear that export items worth another Tk 200 crore will soon be stockpiled at Zia International Airport for emergency air shipment because the garment exporters cannot afford to lose the 'lead time.'

They have called upon the gov-

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PHOTO: STAR

Container lie in piles at Chittagong Port yesterday as foreign feeder vessels have stopped operation to protest the Bangladesh Flag (Protection) Ordinance, 1982

Shallow motor engine-based vehicles banned on highways

BSS, Dhaka

Shallow motor engine-based illegally manufactured transports including nasimon, chander gari, vatvati, hauler and tempo have been banned from plying the highways across the country to improve road safety and reduce accidents.

The decision was taken at a meeting held at Communications Ministry with Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda in the chair.

Deputy commissioners, officers-in-charge of thanas and thana nirbahi officers have to report regularly on the withdrawal of these vehicles from the highways.

The meeting also decided to

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LDC causes lost in lack of expertise, leadership



Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana

WTO deputy director general tells *The Daily Star*

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

Technical expertise and visionary leadership can help the least developed countries (LDCs) to expand their share in global trade, said the deputy director general of the World Trade Organisation.

He said most of the LDCs went to WTO negotiating table with little understanding of the implications of the rules that they were endorsing.

"But things have changed now. The LDCs have a clearer understanding of issues that they will face

in the next round of talks," Deputy Director General Kipkorir Aly Azad Rana said in an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star* on Saturday.

He said the Dhaka meeting of the trade ministers of the LDCs reflects their interest and awareness about the core issues, ahead of the fifth WTO ministerial meeting to be held in September this year at Cancun, Mexico.

Rana said Singapore, Malaysia and many other countries have

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Three robbed of Tk 90,000 in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three persons were robbed of Tk 90,000 and a cell phone at Bangabazar and Tikatuli yesterday.

A gang of four halted Jahid, a salesman of Nim Garments at Bangabazaar, 50 yards from his shop and snatched Tk 80,000 from him after beating at about 2:30pm. He was on errands to buy clothes from Islampur for his shop.

Jahid was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with injuries.

Another gang of muggers took away Tk 10,000 from a crockery trader and a mobile phone from his friend at Tikatuli. One of the muggers stabbed Hanif, owner of a crockery shop at Swamibagh, when he put up resistance. His friend Jahirul escaped unhurt.

Hanif filed a case with the Sutrapur Police Station.

Trouble doubles as MLOs worldwide refuse goods bound for Bangladesh

STAR REPORT

The export and import sector received another blow when the main line operators (MLO) yesterday stopped loading of Bangladesh-bound goods at various ports across the world protesting the new government rule.

Much to the miseries of exporters, containers piled up further at the Chittagong Port yesterday as major foreign feeder vessel operators declined to resume operation for the second day demanding cancellation of the new rule for getting waiver certificate before

loading and unloading of goods.

About 10,000 TEUS (twenty equivalent units) of containers loaded with one lakh tonnes of imported cargoes remained stuck up at different ports of Singapore, Colombo and Klang and Tanjuma Palapus in Malaysia, sources said.

To make matters worse, a government-sponsored meeting with the representatives of the MLO and the Singapore-based Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC) yesterday failed to make headway towards resolving the stalemate.

Representatives of the foreign feeder vessel operators have told

the government that they would not start operation unless and until the rule is evoked.

Commodore Zulfiquer Ali, chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), chaired the fruitless two-hour meeting, sources said.

Representatives of the foreign operators also threatened the port authorities that the six foreign feeder vessels, which are to reach Chittagong very soon, would not come over at all. They even asked the

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Ledger to graft cartel

BAC files case against duty exemption inspector

STAR REPORT

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) yesterday filed a case against Inspector of the Duty Drawback and Exemption Department Mohammad Sohrab Hossain for allegedly running a bribe cartel.

BAC has charged him with taking 10 to 12 per cent of the amount of tax exemption in bribes from at least 50 companies. In exchange, he used to provide these firms illegal benefits in terms of extra tax exemption.

BAC filed the case on the basis of a ledger it seized on May 21 from

Sohrab Hossain. The ledger contained names of the representatives of 50 companies that used to bribe him for the illegal benefits.

During interrogation, Sohrab confessed to taking bribes from and giving illegal benefits to these companies.

BAC Inspector Rafiquzzaman filed the case with the Kafrul Police Station yesterday.

BAC will now probe the corruption and file the charge sheet. It would also try to find out if any other officials of the Duty Drawback and Exemption Department were involved in the cartel.

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New crime crack force in offing

Rapid Action Battalion to have members from armed forces, BDR, police and ansars

REZAUL KARIM

The government will form an elite law-enforcement force to combat the rising tide of crimes, drawing skilled members from the armed forces and law-enforcement agencies.

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is likely to be constituted as a "striking arm" of the battalion police putting together the serving members of the armed forces, police, BDR and ansars.

A fresh proposal seeking to form the force was sent yesterday to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia along with recommendations of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order for approval, official sources said.

As per the proposal, the RAB with sophisticated weapons and well-trained personnel drawn on a maximum of two years deputation will function under the supervision of the inspector general of police.

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