

Malaysian workers stage nationwide protest for minimum wage

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Thousands of Malaysian workers on Wednesday staged a nationwide protest demanding the government set a compulsory monthly minimum wage of 900 ringgit (260 dollars).

The Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC), the country's largest labour group, said about 30,000 of its members joined the protest across the country.

A few thousand picketed the Employees Provident Fund centre near central Kuala Lumpur, the MTUC said.

Police said the protest was largely peaceful and there were no immediate reports of violence.

The nationwide protest was the second since June spearheaded by the trade unions, and was meant to push government to accede to the minimum wage demand to protect workers from a large pool of foreign workers competing for jobs.

"We have to show the government that we are serious in our intentions and they must comply with our demands," said MTUC secretary general G. Rajasekaran.

He said that after the first protest, the government invited them for talks but only to advise unions to set up wage councils for different industries.

tries.

The government response, he said, was unacceptable.

"We need a law for (a) minimum wage to ensure a better future for us and the country," Rajasekaran said.

One of Malaysia's leading opposition groups, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), supported Wednesday's protest, saying local workers needed to be protected from the influx of foreigners cornering a major chunk of the labour market.

Malaysia's construction and plantation sectors rely heavily on the services of cheap labour from an estimated pool of nearly half a million illegal workers from neighbouring countries.

The Malaysian Institute of Economic Research earlier estimated that by 2010, there will be an estimated five million foreign workers in Malaysia.

CHINESE MALAYSIANS UNHAPPY WITH ECONOMIC POLICY

Another report adds: Many of Malaysia's ethnic Chinese minority believe the government's economic policy discriminates against them in favour of the Malay majority, a survey showed Wednesday.

The Chinese, who control many businesses in this multi-racial

nation, said the government often overlooked them in favour of Malays when awarding major public projects, according to respected Merdeka Center for Opinion Research.

It said 45 percent of Chinese surveyed were "unhappy and dissatisfied" with economic policy which they believed also benefited the rich and politically connected over those who worked hard.

About 1,022 people were questioned in the survey, carried out in June, to gauge public sentiment ahead of general elections tipped for later this year or early in 2008.

Merdeka also said 75 percent of Malays believe Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's government was handling the economy well in contrast to the Chinese who gave him a "below average" approval rating.

"The majority of Chinese are less confident with the government's ability in fulfilling people's aspirations," the survey said.

It was not known how many Malays were questioned for the survey.

France sees little chance of WTO accord

AFP, Paris

WTO trade liberalisation talks stand little chance of bearing fruit given the proposals under discussion by negotiators, French Secretary of State Herve Novelli warned Wednesday.

Novelli told a press conference he saw "few chances" that the Doha round of talks aimed at reducing global trade barriers would succeed given what was "on the table."

"The proposals have to be substantially improved," he said, adding that talks "have stumbled on the questions of (trade in) agriculture and industry."

The Doha round aimed at extending the benefits of freer trade to poor countries was launched in the Qatari capital in November 2001 but has foundered ever since.

Emerging market and developing countries are demanding lower tariffs for their goods exported to industrialised nations.

Rich countries are for their part seeking greater access for industrial products in emerging and developing nations.

Negotiators, operating under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation, will open a new series of talks in Geneva September 3.



PHOTO: GRAMEENPHONE

Sabbir Rahman Tanim, chief operating officer of Windmill Advertising Ltd, and Khandaker Omar Farhan, deputy general manager (Commercial Division) of Grameenphone Ltd, pose for photographs at a corporate agreement signing ceremony recently. As per the deal, the mobile phone operator will provide complete communication facilities under its 'Business Solutions' package for Windmill. ABM Reazuddin Mosharaf, managing director of the advertising company, and senior officials of Grameenphone were also present.



PHOTO: BEMEA

The annual general meeting (AGM) of Bangladesh Embroidery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BEMEA) was held on Sunday in Dhaka. The new office bearers of the association for 2007-2009 term were introduced at the AGM.

CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (August 8, 2007) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell		Buy			
TT/OD	BC	CURRENCY	TT CLEAN	OD SIGHT DOC	OD TRANSFER
68.7500	68.7800	USD	67.7800	67.7574	67.7122
95.9681	96.0100	EUR	91.7402	91.7096	91.6485
140.5044	140.5657	GBP	135.5871	135.5419	135.4515
60.3075	60.3338	AUD	56.7115	56.6926	56.6548
0.5917	0.5920	JPY	0.5671	0.5669	0.5665
58.4907	58.5162	CHF	55.3713	55.3528	55.3159
10.8684	10.8731	SEK	9.6565	9.6533	9.6469
66.4380	66.4670	CAD	63.5596	63.5385	63.4961
8.8014	8.8052	HKD	8.6378	8.6349	8.6292
46.4715	46.4918	SGD	44.8420	44.8272	44.5974
18.8739	18.8821	AED	18.3080	18.3019	18.2897
18.4767	18.4848	SAR	17.9288	17.9229	17.9109
13.3182	13.3240	DKK	11.9761	11.9721	11.9641
240.7727	240.8800	KWD	238.6236	238.5463	238.3919

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor. kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
40.18	60.5	111.9	33.850	5.7757	0.7570	3.47

Office bearers of embroidery manufacturers association

Ekram Uddin Siddik has been elected president of Bangladesh Embroidery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BEMEA), and Abdul Aziz Dewan and Mohammad Elias senior vice presidents for 2007-2009 term.

Besides, Mohiuddin Ahmed Mintu and Moinul Islam Bhuiyan were elected vice presidents and Anwar Kadir Kamrul secretary general of the 23-member executive committee of the BEMEA, says a press release.

The new office bearers were introduced at the annual general meeting of the association held on Sunday in Dhaka.



PHOTO: CRAB

Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh (CRAB) Ltd and Padma Islami Life Insurance Company Ltd have entered into a credit rating agreement recently. Under the deal, CRAB will rate the insurance company. Md Matiul Islam, vice chairman of the rating agency, and Abdul Aziz, managing director of the insurance company, signed the deal, while ABM Zafar Ullah, chairman of Padma Islami Life Insurance, among other senior officials from both the sides, was present.

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 8/8/2007

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import Disch.
J/2	Maria	G. Slag	Viza	Saraf	2/8	11/8	1020
J/4	Banglar Umi	Oil(log)	Yang	Pml	2/8	11/8	1015
J/6	Banga Lanka	Cont	--	Baridhi	R/a	9/8	--
J/9	Csav California	Cont	Col	Psl	6/8	9/8	335
J/10	Pac Aquila	Cont	Sing	Seacon	4/8	--	257
J/11	Pac Makassar	Cont	P. Kel	Cel	6/8	9/8	50
J/12	Cape Bonavista	Cont	P. kel	Bdship	4/8	8/8	43
CCT/1	Merkur Bridge	Cont	Sing	Apl	5/8	9/8	--
CCT/3	Eagle Pride	Cont	Sing	Qcsl	4/8	9/8	--
NCT/1	OEL Singapore	Cont	P. Kel	Pssl	6/8	10/8	--

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Josco View	8/8	P. kel	Rsl	Cont	Sing
Taiyoung Rosa	8/8	Kol	Sunshine	Bunker	--
Mmm Mersey	8/8	Sing	Nyk	Vehi	--
Hansa London	8/8	Mong	Psl	Cont	Sing
Oel Freedom	9/8	P. kel	Psl	Cont	Col
Cape Henry	9/8	Col	Apl	Cont	Col
Fu Wen Shan (liner)	10/8	Krabi	Cosco	Gi	--
Asrar-a-mostafa	10/8	Kaki	Cla	Rice(p)	--
Tay Son-3	10/8	Para	Everett	Urea	K/u
Kota Ratna	11/8	Sing	Pil(bd)	Cont	Sing/mgl
Jin Cheng (liner)	10/8	Inchone	Cosco	Gi	--
Ja Vesta	10/8	P. kel	Vega	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya	11/8	Sing	Pil(bd)	Cont	Sing
Kota Rukun	11/8	Sing	Pil(bd)	Cont	Sing
An Qing Jiang(liner)	12/8	Inch	Cosco	Gi	--

Tanker due

Ska Whegan	8/8	Sing	Rainbow	Cdsolrm(3)	16500 W/t
Jo Lind	9/8	Durb	Esil	Cdso (rm/3)	--
Khadijah	10/8	Belwa	Mcl	Cpo(m/8)	--
Kunti	10/8	Indo	Escl	L. b. Oil	Doj/5
Jag Vikram	11/8	Kohsi	Usl	C. Clink	--
Jag Viraj	12/8	Sing	Mbl	Ammonia	K/a

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo call	Last port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Wira Keris	--	--	Ibsa	R/a (7/8)
Afroditi	Crude Oil	Rast	Uniglobal	19/07
Banglar Jyoti	C. Oil	--	Bsc	R/a (8/8)

Outside port limit

Wira Keris	--	--	Ibsa	R/a (7/8)
Afroditi	Crude Oil	Rast	Uniglobal	19/07
Banglar Jyoti	C. Oil	--	Bsc	R/a (8/8)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Karana Sembilan	Gi	Yang	Everett	8/8	--
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Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Dali	--	--	Seacon	R/a (19/7)
Banglar Robi	--	--	Uniglobal	R/a (4/8)
Borak	--	--	Fsa	R/a (4/8)

Vessels not entering

Discovery-II	R. phos	Kasa	Litmond	21/7
Banglar Maya	Salt	Kand	Bsc	2/8
Nirmal Bhushan	Pr. Urea	Hong	Litmond	3/8
Ks Harmony	C. Clink	Kohsi	Asil	5/8
Guo Shun	C. Clink	Lant	Saraf	5/8
Energy Falcon	C. Clink	Krabi	Litmond	6/8
Golden Star	R. Sugar	Sing	Uniglobal	6/8
Ks Hope	C. Clink	Chin	Oim	7/8
Du Man Gang	R. Sugar	Tuti	Park	7/8

The above are the shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPAs supplied by Family, Dhaka.

STOCK