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Kathmandu meet on Safta discusses non-tariff barriers

XINHUA, Kathmandu

Trade officials from South Asia gathered here Monday to discuss non-tariff barriers (NTBs) under the South Asia Free Trade Area (Safta) framework.

According to website nepalnews.com, the two-day meeting of Safta sub-group on NTBs pushed forward negotiations on the issues that still keep trade from flowing unhindered within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) region.

The total intra-regional trade amongst Saarc countries is less than 7 billion US dollars as against the combined international trade of 350 billion dollars carried out by the region, according to the report.

Under the Safta, the eight members - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and Afghanistan -- will have to liberalise and reduce their tariffs to ensure free trade within the Saarc region. Countries of the region have formed a sub-group to identify NTBs in each country to ensure level-playing field for trade.

Dollar climbs after tough start to 2008

AFP, London

The dollar staged a modest rebound on Monday after a recent hammering that was sparked by growing fears of a recession in the United States, dealers said.

In late morning European trade, the euro fell to 1.4748 dollars from 1.4765 dollars in New York late on Friday.

The dollar climbed to 109.69 yen from 108.63 yen late Friday.

On Monday, the greenback showed signs of stabilising after stumbling on Friday as a gloomy market snapshot of the US labour market raised concerns that the fallout from the subprime mortgage crisis was widening.

In the commodity markets, gold stood Monday at 859.85 dollars per ounce after striking a record high 868.89 dollars last Thursday. The precious metal benefits from a weak US unit as it makes the dollar-denominated commodity cheaper for buyers using stronger currencies.

Crude prices, meanwhile, have fallen on profit-taking since striking a record peak above 100 dollars per barrel last week.

This week, the foreign exchange market remains on red alert for fresh signs of US economic weakness, dealers said.

DSE turnover slumps to lowest in 9 months

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Turnover on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) slumped to its lowest levels for almost 9 months yesterday, with traders blaming restrictions imposed on client loans and the upcoming debuts of Jamuna and Meghna oil companies.

Turnover on the premier bourse sank to Tk 74.39 crore, the lowest since April 15 last year and well below the daily levels above Tk 300 crore that were being recorded in October.

The downturn was initially prompted by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) move in November to impose a ban on offering loans by the merchant banks to investors to purchase shares. Although the SEC later lifted the ban, it cut the amount that could be lent by half. The SEC imposed the restriction in order to cool the market.

"We are not happy with the regulator's move to clip our wings. While we were previously allowed to offer 100 percent loan to our clients, now we can provide 50

percent loan against the deposit of our clients," said a merchant banker seeking anonymity.

Traders said dissatisfaction with the SEC's policies had led some institutional investors to boycott the market. Institutional investors normally account for 60 to 70 percent of daily transactions, according to the DSE.

At present this has been reduced to around 30 percent, according to DSE Chief Executive Officer Salahuddin Ahmed Khan.

In recent days the lack of interest has been accentuated by the imminent offloading by the government shares in Jamuna and Meghna oil companies. Jamuna will start trading tomorrow with Meghna coming to the market on Monday.

Traders said there is a huge demand for new quality shares, especially government ones, and investors have been inactive ahead of the introduction of the new shares.

Jamuna will release 13.50 lakh shares worth Tk 13.50 crore, while Meghna will release 12 lakh shares worth Tk 12 crore. The face value of

each share has been fixed at Tk 10. The shares to be offloaded through direct listing rules with Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges amount to 30 percent of the two companies' paid-up capital.

The indices fell yesterday with losers dominating gainers. The DSE General Index declined by 6.46 points, or 0.22 percent, to close at 2922.86 points, while the DSE All Share Price Index fell by 5.05 points, or 0.2 percent, to finish at 2463.05 points.

Of the issues traded, 80 advanced and 126 declined with 19 unchanged. A total of 3,097,205 shares and bonds changed hands on the bourse.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) also closed lower. The CSE Selective Categories Index fell by 9.95 points, or 0.2 percent, closing at 4763.82 points, while the CSE All Share Price Index decreased by 13.37 points, 0.17 percent, ending at 7432.5 points.

A total of 656,136 shares and bonds worth Tk 10.31 crore changed hands on the bourse. Of the issues traded, 35 advanced and 58 declined with 10 unchanged.

KL may reduce dependence on foreign workers

XINHUA, Kuala Lumpur

The Malaysian government is considering ways to reduce the number of foreign labourers, especially in the construction and industrial sectors, local press reported Monday.

The government was concerned over the number of foreign workers which stands at about 2 million in the country and wanted to reduce it. The Star quoted Malaysian Human Resources Minister Fong Chan Onn as saying.

One approach is to push for a pre-fabrication building to reduce manual labourers at worksites, Fong said.

The measure would also create employment for local workers, who will build the parts in factories instead of worksites, he said.

Another approach is to push automation in the industrial sector, he added.

Job portal urges govt to post job offers online

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

JobsA1.com, an online job portal, yesterday urged the government to post job offers to online job sites in line with providing advertisements on newspapers.

"Increasing number of unemployed people are hunting for jobs through online portals. We urge the government to provide its job offers to online portals in line with advertisements on newspapers," JobsA1.com's Chief Executive Faisal Ahmed told a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, marking its 3rd anniversary.

Online job portals, which are cashing in on the rise in number of internet users, have been increasing over the last couple of years. More than 10 job and career portals are now in operation in Bangladesh, up by over 100 percent from last year, according to operators.

"This rise will help minimise monopoly and encourage competition in the sector," said Faisal, adding that a regulatory commission should be formed to bring discipline in the sector.

The job portals display private sector jobs, including those published in the print media. Many of these portals also offer various other services, such as CV posting and training for employers and job seekers.

Faisal, who claimed to have 2,67,000 CVs in its database, said the site generates 3,000 new job advertisements a month on an average.

His company is planning to expand its business to Kolkata.



Dhaka International Trade Fair

Participants fear sales drop on high prices of products

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Participating companies in the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) fear their sales will drop this year due to high prices of products following price hikes in raw materials.

"We have to import raw materials at higher costs, contributing to rise in our product prices," said Dulal Kumar Roy, sales manager of Akhtar Furnishers Ltd.

"However, we have tried to offset the price hike. We hope our products will not go beyond the purchasing capacity of people," he further said.

"High prices of goods may cast a negative impact on the sales this year," said an official of Peoples Ceramic Industries Ltd.

Visitors also complained about high prices of products in the annual fair this year. "Last year I bought a handloom-made saree at

Tk 450 from the fair, but this year I found the price is more than Tk 600," said Sanjida Akhter, a non-government college teacher.

Some visitors also said prices of all the products at the DITF are higher than those outside the fair.

The participating companies meanwhile said they are not much concerned over sales at the show since their main objective is to publicise the products.

The officials of some participating companies said price hike of locally made raw materials and high costs of transportation are also behind the soaring prices of consumer products.

"The average price of our products has gone up by at least 10 percent compared to the price a year ago," said a sales person of Asif Trading, which displays showpieces and plastic goods.

The fair will remain open from 10am to 9pm on working days and

from 10am to 10pm on holidays. Entry fee has been fixed at Tk 10 for each adult and Tk 5 for children.

On the eve of the fair, organisers expected that the participating companies would get Tk 50 crore worth spot orders from the show for local and foreign traders, with a further Tk 500 crore being generated in follow-up business. Last year local exporters received only Tk 25 crore spot orders.

DITF is a yearly programme of Bangladesh government, which mainly aims to showcase local products to foreign buyers. Commerce ministry and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) are jointly organising the fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

This year a total of 395 firms, including 15 from seven countries, are taking part in the fair.

The foreign participants include firms from India, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, USA, UK, Japan and Turkey.

Thai firm to explore for gas in Bangladesh

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's PT Exploration and Production has signed a deal to take a 30 percent stake in a project to explore for natural gas in Bangladesh, the company said in a statement Monday.

The deal with Total EP Bangladesh marks the company's first move into South Asia. It still requires approval from

Bangladesh's government as well as from other partners in the project, PTTEP President Maroot Migadat said in the statement.

The project, whose other main partner is Tullow Bangladesh Limited, will explore offshore for natural gas in two blocks off Chittagong province.

"The area is believed to have high potential because it is situated between two fields that are already

productive, the statement said.

Last year PTTEP expanded its investment in Egypt, Bahrain, New Zealand and Australia, as energy-hungry Thailand looks ever further afield to satisfy the needs of its own growing economy.

"These new partnerships will give us new connections which will in the end help us to further expand our business to new frontiers," Maroot said.



Deputy Managing Director of IFIC Bank Ltd Mohammad Abdullah inaugurates an ATM (automated teller machine) booth on the bank's Lalmatia branch premises in Dhaka recently. Senior officials were also present.

Global economic growth 'robust', inflation risks remain: ECB chief

AFP, Basel, Switzerland

Global economic growth is "robust" but inflation risks remain as markets absorb the impact of the US subprime home loan crisis and higher food prices, European Central Bank chief Jean-Claude Trichet said Monday.

"Food is a very big problem" stoking inflationary pressures, along with higher energy costs, stock market corrections and the risks of protectionist trade policies, Trichet said in his role as spokesman for the G10 group of central bankers meeting here.

He also said that "we have to look very carefully at the business model of banks" in the wake of the billions of dollars in losses incurred by some of the world's leading financial institutions due to their exposure to the US high-risk mortgage sector.

Switzerland's UBS, one of the most prestigious names in Swiss and European banking, last month announced a record write-off of about 10 billion dollars (6.8 billion euros) linked to its subprime exposure.

In Britain, mortgage lender Northern Rock suffered the first run on a bank in more than a century due to its subprime exposure,

after it was forced to apply to the Bank of England for emergency funding in September.

Despite the downside risks, "at the global level we see confirmation that growth is continuing at a pace that is quite robust," Trichet said.

The ECB head added that coordinated actions by central banks such as his own, the US Federal Reserve, the Swiss National Bank and the Bank of England to inject much-needed liquidity into the financial markets had been "efficient."

"We have seen that the measures that have been taken by central banks proved efficient, we are reassured that the year-end has passed relatively smoothly," Trichet said.

His comments came as a European Union survey showed that confidence in the European economy fell in December to the lowest level in nearly two years but not by as much as economists had expected.

The European Commission's eurozone economic sentiment indicator slipped in December to 104.7 points in the single currency bloc -- the lowest level since March 2006 -- from 104.8 points from November.

Malaysia to up quota for subsidised cooking oil

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Monday announced that Malaysia will increase the quota for subsidised cooking oil to overcome a nationwide shortage of the vital commodity.

"To overcome the problem, a meeting (to discuss the issue) decided to sharply increase the quota for the production of subsidised cooking oil with immediate effect," he said.

Supermarket shelves were stripped of cooking oil in several states last week, with retailers not able to replenish supplies fast enough.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Shafie Apdal blamed the crisis on smugglers who cash in on subsidised Malaysian oil by moving it to neighbouring countries.

Abdullah said about 800 million ringgit (244 million dollars) was spent annually on the cooking oil subsidy.

The shortage of cooking oil was caused by strong demand following recent religious celebrations and smugglers, he said.

Bakhrabad Gas Systems Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)
Comilla, Bangladesh

গ্যাসের অপচয় রোধ করুন এবং নির্ধারিত সময়ে বিল পরিশোধ করুন

International Tender Notice

Sl. No.	ICB Tender No. & date	Description of materials	Cost of tender document (non-refundable)	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
01.	BGSL/FP/CFE-10/2007 Dated: 30.12.2007	Cathodic Protection Materials	US\$ 30.00 or Tk. 2,000.00	20.02.2008 at 11.30am	20.02.2008 at 11.45am
02.	The procurement will be financed under cash foreign exchange.				
03.	Eligibility	a) Manufacturer(s)/supplier(s) must have at least 05 (five) years overseas track records/experiences of similar materials supply.			
04.	Availability of tender documents: BGSL offices at: a) Finance & Accounts Department, Head Office, Chapapur, Comilla, Bangladesh. b) Accounts Section, Revenue Department, Marketing Division, Bakhrabad Gas Systems Limited, 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholasahar, Chittagong, Bangladesh.				
05.	Selling time of tender documents	From 10.01.2008 to 19.02.2008 during office hour.			
06.	Place of tender receiving	Purchase Department, Head Office, Chapapur, Comilla, Bangladesh.			
07.	Bid bond amount	US\$ 1,900.00 or equivalent Tk. 1,35,000.00			
08.	Contacting person for further information and clarification	Deputy General Manager (Purchase), BGSL, Comilla, Bangladesh. Phone No. 880-81-68681 Fax No. 880-81-77199 & 880-81-69327 E-mail: bgslho@citechco.net			
09.	Only authorised companies/firms/representatives are eligible to purchase tender document on submission of written application and upon payment of Taka 2,000.00 or US\$ 30.00.				
10.	BGSL reserves the right to accept any tender or to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

BG-828/January, 2008 GD-112

Samsung considers cheap colour phone to fight Nokia

REUTERS, Seoul

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said on Monday it is considering a low-cost mobile phone worth \$40-50 that comes with color features to fight bigger rival Nokia.

Samsung, the world's No. 2 mobile phone maker in the third quarter of 2007, gained market share last year by offering more medium- and low-cost phones, moving away from its previous focus on premium models.

"We are considering a \$40-50 phone, if such a model can be cost-competitive," said a Samsung spokesman. "It targets Nokia in the emerging markets."

Samsung hopes to add the color feature on the proposed model but was still studying the project's feasibility, he added. "It's going to take some time to decide."

The average selling price of Samsung's mobile phones stood at \$151 in the third quarter, compared with the 2006 average of \$176. Its market share is estimated at 14 percent or higher in 2007, up from 11.4 percent in 2006.

Samsung aims to sell 200 million mobile phones in 2008, compared with about 160 million in 2007, a company executive said in November.

As growth in the global handset industry slows, it will be crucial for Samsung to expand its presence in the largely untapped emerging markets.

Nokia, which has larger economies of scale and well-established distribution channels, enjoyed a lead in emerging markets such as

India.

In advanced markets such as the United States, mobile phone makers face competition from the iPhone, Apple Inc's first phone.

Samsung seeks to take up to 25 percent of the global mobile phone market revenue by 2010, compared with about 15 percent seen for 2007, Samsung said in late November.

Shares in Samsung fell 3.53 percent to 520,000 won by 0224 GMT, compared to the wider market's 2 percent drop.

Oil below \$98

REUTERS, London

Oil prices fell on Monday, extending the previous session's decline, as the market mullied over gloomy U.S. economic data and the impact on demand should the world's top energy consumer slip into recession later this year.

U.S. light crude for February delivery eased 54 cents to \$97.37 a barrel by 4:55 a.m. EST, extending Friday's \$1.27 decline.

London Brent crude fell 12 cents to \$96.67.

Oil has eased from a record peak of \$100.09 a barrel last Thursday after a government report showed the U.S. unemployment rate up 5 percent in December, its highest in more than two years.

The bleak unemployment report was the latest signal that top energy consumer the United States could fall into a recession later this year.

চট্টগ্রাম বন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষ	
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী(বি)/সিটি এর দপ্তর	
দরপত্র আস্থান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (IFT)	
১	মহাপালায়/বিভাগ
২	এজেন্সী
৩	প্রকৌশলিং এজিটিক্স জেলা
৪	প্রকৌশলিং এজিটিক্স জেলা
৫	যে কারো জন্য দরপত্র আস্থান করা হইল
৬	দরপত্র আস্থানের সূত্র ও তারিখ
৭	প্রকৌশলিং পদ্ধতি
৮	ব্যাংক ও তহবিল উৎস
৯	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ
১০	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং
১১	দরপত্র জিওগ্রাফিক্যাল সীমা
১২	দরপত্র প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়
১৩	দরপত্র প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়
১৪	দরপত্র বিক্রি, গ্রহণ ও খোলায় স্থানসমূহের নাম ও ঠিকানা
১৫	দরপত্র দলিলাদি বিক্রি (অন্যান্য)
১৬	দরপত্র দলিলাদি গ্রহণ
১৭	দরপত্র দলিলাদি খোলা
১৮	দরপত্র দলিলাদি খোলা
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