



Loaded trucks back up at Akhaura land port in Brahmanbaria, which has long been facing problems in unloading exported goods at Agartala land port in India.

Akhaura land port in crisis

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM,
Brahmanbaria

Akhaura land port in Brahmanbaria has been facing setback for around two years in unloading exported goods at Agartala land port in India because of non-compliance with the loading and unloading time by the Indian side, customs officials said.

They said the loading and unloading time of the bordering land ports was fixed from sunrise

to sunset in a conference of Joint Group of Custom by both the countries. But the neighbouring land port hardly follows the decision, leading to a revenue loss of over Tk 30 crore a year by the local port.

They often start unloading at 9.30am and close at 3pm.

Imtiaz Ahmed, land customs officer of the Akhaura port, alleged that such indifferent activities are causing sufferings to the workers of the stranded vehicles near the

port here as some 30 to 50 trucks remain stranded at the port every day.

The Bangladeshi exporters need to count a heavy loss of more than Tk 2,000 per truck everyday.

Ahmed said they could earn more than Tk 200 crore as revenue a year if the Indian side followed the timeframe of unloading goods.

The port earned Tk 168.50 crore revenue last fiscal year.

The port officials several times

raised the issue to the local authorities concerned, but there has been no result yet.

Cement, stone chips, food products, fish, dry fish and toys are the main items that are exported to India through the busy land port of the eastern zone of the country, which is mainly known as an export-based port as Bangladesh does not import much through it.

However the Indian port has unofficially informed the Akhaura

port official that the unloading works are delayed because of some official procedures there.

The Indian side also said they have made sheds for keeping the goods imported from Bangladesh, but those are yet to open, and so the port cannot unload the goods timely. They also need to keep the imports by the roadside, which takes time.

They have to work with limited government labourers at the port, the Indian side said.

Dhaka tourism fair begins today

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day tourism fair begins at Shilpakala Academy here today.

Parjatan Bichitra in cooperation with Tourism Developers Association, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Association of Travel Agents of

Bangladesh (ATAB) and Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) is organising the Dhaka Tourism Fair 2009.

The slogan of the fair is 'Let the countrymen see the country'.

GMG Airlines, United

Airways, Foy's Lake Resort, RF Builders, Pubali Group are the cosponsors of the fair, while ATN Bangla, Radio Today and the daily Somokal are its media partners.

A total of 75 hotels, motels, resorts, airlines, tour operators, travel agencies, adventure clubs and travel shops will take part in the fair. Addressing a press conference yesterday, the organisers said sustainable growth of the tourism industry is not possible without the improvement of tourism sites across the country in line with the demand of local tourists.



Md Hashem Chowdhury, deputy managing director of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd, and Md Ahmed U Bhuyian, general manager and chief technical officer of Square Informatics Ltd, sign an agreement in Dhaka recently. Square Informatics will now establish a disaster recovery site for the bank.

New executive director of BB



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Md Ahsan Ullah, general manager of the common services department of Bangladesh Bank, has been promoted to executive director, says a press release.

Ahsan, a postgraduate in English and Economics, joined the central bank in 1981. He has also obtained an MBA from the Institute of Business Administration of Dhaka University.

He served in various capacities during his career with Bangladesh Bank, added the release.

Romania inks deal with IMF

AFP, Bucharest

Romania was given a breathing space on Monday after a deal with the IMF on a key bailout package and an agreement by European banks to keep assets in the country.

The agreement now has to be put to the IMF's executive board for a final decision.

Syngenta rolls out training project on business ethics

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Syngenta Bangladesh Limited launched a 10-year project in April to train its retailers in business ethics and ways to administer chemical pesticides.

The multinational company set aside Tk 10 crore for the project. It has established the Syngenta Learning and Development Centre in Boyradighi village in Shajahanpur upazila in Bogra at a cost of Tk 3.5 crore.

The centre has been built in an effort to train its 16,000 retailers and create awareness among eight lakh farmers about the benefits of using high-quality seeds and reducing the use of chemical pesticides.

Farmers usually use 70 percent pesticides and 30 percent seeds to produce

crops, company officials said.

"We are trying to enhance the use of good quality seeds from 30 percent to 70 percent for better yield and reduce the use of chemical pesticides from 70 percent to 30 percent to protect the environment and cut costs," said M Muzammel Hussain, regional sales manager for Syngenta.

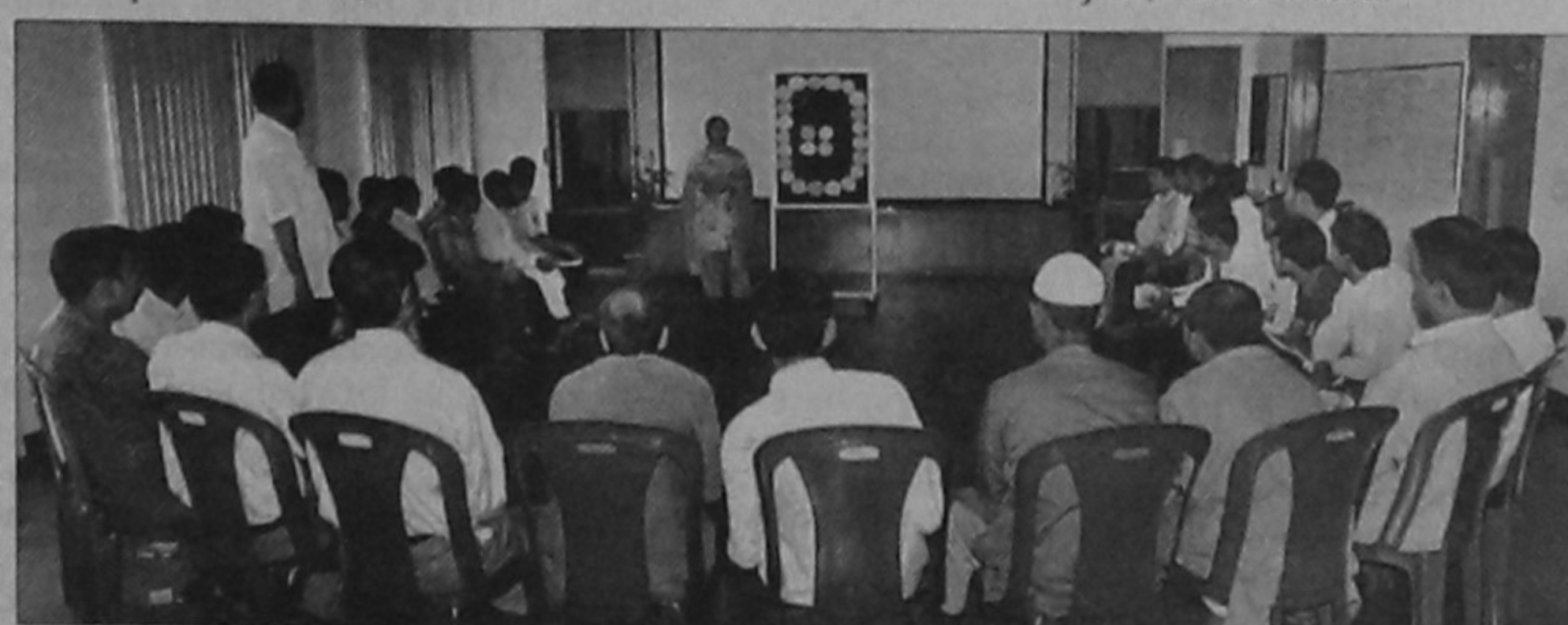
"This training programme will make me a fair businessman and change my attitude towards work," said retailer Md Azaharul Ali, 42. He has been in the pesticide business at Bhauli Bazar at Thakurgaon upazila for the last eight years.

Syngenta Training Manager Purabi Sarker said the training changed the retailers' attitude towards business in most cases.

"I have learnt business ethics, environmental issues and the right way of administering chemical pesticides, which is quite helpful to my business," said Shah Mohammad Rezaul Karim, a businessman. He began a pesticide business as a Syngenta retailer a few years ago.

Sarwar Ahmed, managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh, said the company plans to educate eight lakh farmers on the appropriate application of pesticides and use of high-quality seeds.

"The company has trained 504 retailers in business ethics and other related issues with the help of USAID, under the Poverty Reduction by Increasing the Competitiveness of Enterprises (PRICE) project," Ahmed said.



Retailers attend a training programme on business ethics and ways to administer chemical pesticides, organised by the Syngenta Learning and Development Centre in Bogra recently.

News in Brief

EBay, GM starts car-selling trial today

AP, San Francisco

Hundreds of General Motors' California dealers will let consumers haggle over the prices of new cars and trucks through the eBay online marketplace under a trial that begins Tuesday.

About 225 of California's 250 GM dealers are set to take part in the program. They will be selling Buick, Chevrolet, GMC and Pontiac vehicles on cobranded Web sites through eBay Inc.'s online auto marketplace, eBay Motors, until Sept. 8. The cars will also be searchable through eBay Motors and eBay's main site.

Although the companies previously said such a trial was in the works, details weren't released until Monday.

The trial is part of Detroit-based General Motors' turnaround plan, making more official a practice some of its dealers had already participated in on their own. It expands an existing partnership covering GM certified used vehicles sold through eBay.

It also marks a shift for San Jose, Calif.-based eBay, since most of the vehicles sold on eBay Motors, a site that sells various types of vehicles and auto parts, have traditionally been used.

Starting Tuesday, eBay visitors will be able to visit Web pages like gm.ebay.com and chevy.ebay.com, where they can browse new 2008 and 2009 vehicles, ask dealers questions and figure out financing. Select 2010 models also will be available.

Dish Network Q2 profit falls on climbing costs

AP, New York

Dish Network Corp said Monday that its second-quarter profit slid 81 percent on TiVo Inc litigation costs and rising expenses, but the nation's second-largest satellite TV provider managed to add subscribers and maintain revenue.

The Englewood, Colo.-based company earned \$63.4 million, or 14 cents per share, for the period ended June 30. That's down from \$335.9 million, or 73 cents per share, last year.

Analysts polled by Thomson Reuters, whose estimates typically exclude one-time items, forecast profit of 67 cents per share.

Revenue was nearly flat at \$2.90 billion, with prior-year revenue coming in at \$2.91 billion. Analysts expected revenue would not stray far from year-ago results, predicting \$2.91 billion for the current quarter.

Total costs and expenses rose to \$2.64 billion, which included a TiVo litigation expense of \$196.4 million. In a worst-case scenario, Dish's court battle with TiVo could force Dish to yank its digital video recorders over patent claims.

Subscriber acquisition costs increased to \$388.3 million from \$371.4 million, while general and administrative expenses grew to \$143.5 million from \$122.3 million.

Deflation raises worries for EU's ex-tigers

AFP, Vilnius

The spectre of deflation is raising new worries for the EU's ex-communist Baltic tigers, long afflicted by rampant inflation that has now been smothered by the economic crisis.

July data released on Monday in Lithuania -- which is facing the deepest recession in the 27-nation European Union this year -- showed that consumer prices had fallen for the fourth consecutive month.

Compared with June, prices dropped by 0.8 percent, figures from Lithuania's national statistics office showed, as part of a deflationary spiral that one analyst termed "a very deep hole" for the Lithuanian economy.

Prices fell 0.1 percent in April from March, 0.2 percent in May from April, and 0.3 percent in June from May.

Deflation -- a sustained drop in prices -- may delight hard-pressed consumers but it can wreak havoc on the broader economy as households put off purchases, undermining demand and in turn investment in new production.



A Japanese woman holds an umbrella as she passes a share price board in Tokyo yesterday. The benchmark Nikkei-225 index gained 112.17 points or 1.08 percent, to 10,524.26, the best finish since October 3. The broader Topix index of all first section shares advanced 12.48 points, or 1.30 percent, to 969.24.

Credit crunch eases for British businesses: CBI

AFP, London

Britain's recession-hit businesses are finding it easier to obtain credit but face higher costs of financing, according to a survey published on Monday by the Confederation of British Industry.

"The improvement in access to new credit will help many businesses struggling with the recession, and it is encouraging that its supply is expected to improve in the months ahead," CBI head Richard Lambert said.

"It is still unclear when bank lending will be flowing freely again, but for many firms credit conditions are at last moving in the right direction."

The business lobby group, which polled 73 firms in July, found that 27 percent believed that credit availability had improved in the last three months, while 10 percent said it had worsened.



COLONIAL

Peter Palesch, country director of GTZ Bangladesh, inaugurates the first showroom of Colonial, an export-oriented leather home and lifestyle product manufacturer in Bangladesh, in Dhaka recently. Tushar Kona Khandker, chief executive officer of Colonial, is also seen.