

Afghanistan starts regular flights after 23 years

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan took another step into the modern world on Wednesday with the start of the first regular, scheduled flights to and from the country since it descended into civil war 23 years ago.

from Kabul-based aid workers and diplomats wanting to escape a country where human comforts are still thin on the ground for some rest and relaxation.

reserved, creating an unseemly scramble to get on a flight. Officials at Azal said they were not concerned about flying into a country which just a few months ago was a war zone.

plan when it found that hardly anyone in Afghanistan had access to the Internet. Wednesday's inaugural flight was greeted by delighted Afghan officials when it touched down in Kabul but some of them may be expecting a little too much from the new service.

EU farm reforms won't hit markets

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Commission's bold plans to reform costly EU farm policy should increase farmers' incomes and have only a minor impact on markets, European Farm Commissioner Franz Fischler said Wednesday.

studies, four commissioned from external sources and two internal ones. "Decoupling will lead to some production adjustments but in no way will it lead to farmers abandoning their land. And the most substantial result is that farm income will be positively affected by the reform," he said.

Yahoo! turns profit, outlook seen strong

AFP, Sunnyvale, California

Internet service company Yahoo! Inc. said Wednesday it made a profit in the fourth quarter of 2002 as revenues surged, and it forecast bigger riches ahead.

US, S'pore finalise free trade agreement

REUTERS, Washington

The United States and Singapore reached a compromise on investment issues that have blocked completion of a bilateral free trade agreement since November, US officials said Wednesday.

conclusion of a bilateral free trade agreement between the United States and Chile. But those two countries reached a compromise in December that would allow US investors to seek damages for any measures taken by Chile that "substantially impede" capital flows.

seeking damages for capital controls. That includes "hot money," or speculative, investments that are most likely to be subject to capital controls. The United States will pursue the same basic investment terms in other proposed free trade agreements, such as with countries in Latin American and Africa, Quarles said.

CURRENCY

Table with columns for Selling, Currency, and Buying. Includes sub-sections for Local Interbank FX Trading, Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar, and International Market.

SHIPPING

Table showing Chittagong port berthing position and performance of vessels as on 17.01.2003 and 18.01.2003. Columns include No, Name of vessels, Cargo, L Port, Local agent, Date of arrival, and Import disc.

Table titled 'Vessels due at outer anchorage' with columns for Name of vessels, Date of arrival, L Port, Local agent, Cargo, and Loading port.

Table titled 'Tanker due' with columns for No, Name of vessels, Date of arrival, L Port, Local agent, Cargo, and Loading port.

Table titled 'Vessels at outer anchorage - Vessels ready' with columns for Name of vessels, Date of arrival, L Port, Local agent, Cargo, and Loading port.

Table titled 'Movement of vessels for 17.01.2003 and 18.01.2003' with columns for No, Name of vessels, Date of arrival, L Port, Local agent, Cargo, and Loading port.

The above are shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.

STOCK