

French firms look to EU, UN to protect interests in Iraq

AFP, Paris

French political and business leaders are pinning their hopes on a leading role for the United Nations and European Union in post-war Iraq, after the first reconstruction contracts were awarded to US firms.

As concern mounts that Washington intends to sideline non-US companies, particularly French ones, Paris's repeated calls for a UN-supervised administration in Iraq are becoming more strident.

"The UN must steer the pro-

cess," said Dominique de Villepin, France's foreign minister, in a speech to the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies on Thursday.

"More importantly, the UN must be at the heart of the reconstruction and administration of Iraq. The legitimacy of our action depends on it."

De Villepin was speaking days after Stevedoring Services of America scooped the first contract under the US Agency for International Development's 900-million-dollar (842-million-euro) budget for an opening round of

Iraq reconstruction projects.

Announcing the 4.8-million-dollar deal, USAID said the Seattle-based company would provide "assessment and management" services at Umm Qasr, the deep-water port facility seized by coalition forces in the early stages of the ground conflict.

Under a separate deal, Kellogg Brown and Root, a subsidiary of oil services giant Halliburton -- chaired by US Vice President Dick Cheney until 2000 -- won a Pentagon contract to extinguish oilfield fires.

Within 24 hours of the Umm

Qasr decision going public, it emerged that the French finance ministry had set up a working group with Medef, the main employers' group, to help French companies bid for contracts in post-war Iraq.

"We're working in close concertation with the French government," said one Medef official, on condition of anonymity.

"On reconstruction, we believe in the UN and European Union. If we organise ourselves with them, I don't see how the Americans can hold out on everything."



PHOTO: SCANCEMENT

An official speaks at a seminar on 'Versatile and multiple uses of white cement' organised by Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Company Ltd in Dhaka recently.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

| Selling | | Currency | | Buying | |
|---------|---------|----------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| TT/OD | BC | TT/Clean | OD/Sight Doc | OD/Transfer | |
| 58.8500 | 58.9000 | USD | 57.9000 | 57.7299 | 57.6608 |
| 64.4584 | 64.5132 | EUR | 61.5651 | 61.3842 | 61.3108 |
| 93.5068 | 93.5862 | GBP | 90.2603 | 89.9952 | 89.8875 |
| 36.1692 | 36.1999 | AUD | 34.0799 | 33.9798 | 33.9392 |
| 0.4955 | 0.4960 | JPY | 0.4787 | 0.4723 | 0.4762 |
| 43.3971 | 43.3439 | CHF | 41.9292 | 41.8060 | 41.7560 |
| 6.9449 | 6.9508 | SEK | 6.7062 | 6.6865 | 6.6785 |
| 40.1871 | 40.2213 | CAD | 39.1111 | 38.9952 | 38.9495 |
| 7.5529 | 7.5593 | HKD | 7.4167 | 7.3949 | 7.3861 |
| 33.3598 | 33.3881 | SGD | 32.5628 | 32.4672 | 32.4283 |
| 16.1534 | 16.1671 | AED | 15.6368 | 15.5909 | 15.5722 |
| 15.8186 | 15.8321 | SAR | 15.3179 | 15.2729 | 15.2546 |

Local Interbank FX Trading:

The local interbank foreign exchange market was subdued Sunday as the International market was closed. Dollar remained unchanged from yesterday against Bangladeshi taka.

Local Money Market:

Demand for call money was moderate yesterday. Call money rates remained almost unchanged. At the close call rates ranged unchanged from yesterday between 8.00 and 9.00 per cent.

International Market:

International market was closed on Sunday. Dollar remained on the defensive on Friday amid persistent signs that the US led war in Iraq will drag on for a while. Euro hit a two-week high of \$1.0801 before slipping back to \$1.7780, a gain of 0.80 per cent from Thursday's New York close. Against the Swiss franc, dollar fell as low as 1.3665. Market ignored a mixed batch of US economic data released on Friday. Consumer spending was unchanged but incomes posted a 0.3 per cent advance. Consumption also

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Thailand forms 3 bodies on free trade with India, China

ANN/THE NATION

In the latest push to speed up the free-trade agreement (FTA) with India and expand the product list with China, the Thai government has formed an implementation committee and two FTA country-specific trade-policy boards.

The committee, chaired by Commerce Minister Adisai Bodharamik, comes hot on the heels of two new FTA boards at

policy-making level - one for China and another for India - approved by the government last week.

The Thailand-China FTA board is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, while the Thailand-India FTA board, is headed by Deputy Prime Minister Korn Dabaransi.

"Those two boards and my committee will coordinate to support Thai trade negotiators and overcome specific issues to facili-

tate the flow of trade and investment," Adisai said in an interview over the weekend.

Thailand has reached an FTA agreement with Bahrain, while the first sector of an agreement with China has been designated to fruit and vegetables. Adisai said he expected more sectors under the FTA with China to be rolled out in due course, and that progress with India was expected to be made by the end of the year.

Citibank-Dhaka Bank workshop

Dhaka Bank Limited and Citibank NA jointly organised a workshop on branch banking operations in Dhaka on Thursday, says a press release.

Shahed Noman, acting managing director of Dhaka Bank Limited, inaugurated the workshop. Mamun Rashid, chief executive officer of Citibank NA Bangladesh, addressed the workshop.

Majedur Rahman, SEVP of Dhaka Bank Limited, and Mamdudur Rashid, SCOO and CFO of Citibank NA, were also present.

Ctg Cement holds seminar on use of white cement

Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Company Ltd (CCCGCL), a member company of HeidelbergCement Group, organised a seminar on "versatile and multiple uses of White Cement" in Dhaka recently, says a press release.

White Cement expert Dominique Mannie of HeidelbergCement Group Belgium and Denny Iskander from HC Indocement of Indonesia were the keynote speakers at the seminar.

Mark Van Kempen, managing director of HeidelbergCement Group Bangladesh and KM Zahid Uddin, general manager (Marketing & Sales), also spoke at the seminar.



PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

Shahed Noman, managing director of Dhaka Bank Limited, Mamun Rashid, chief executive officer of Citibank NA Bangladesh and participants of a Dhaka Bank-Citibank NA workshop on branch banking operations pose for a photograph in Dhaka on Thursday.

SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 30/3/2003

| Berth No | Name of vessels | Cargo | L Port call | Local agent | Date of arrival | Leaving | Import disch |
|----------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| J/2 | Nand Srishti | GI | Jaka | RSA | 29/3 | 31/3 | 2800 |
| J/3 | Taraman Bibi | Rice | Kaki | Uniship | 19/3 | 4/4 | 1441 |
| J/6 | Banglar Mookh | GI | Pipa | BSC | 28/3 | 6/4 | 1234 |
| J/7 | Feng Shun Shan | GI | Yang | BD Ship | 25/3 | 1/4 | 1883 |
| J/9 | Bosowa Delapan | Sugar(P) | Tuti | Mutual | 13/3 | 2/4 | 1058 |
| J/10 | Prospects | Rice/WT | Viza | Uniship | 18/3 | 6/4 | 355 |
| J/12 | Banga Biraj | Cont | Sing | BD Ship | 28/3 | 31/3 | 48/189 |
| J/13 | QC Lark | Cont | P Kel | QCSL | 26/3 | 31/3 | 77/X |
| CCT/1 | Banga Bortl | Cont | Pkel | BD Ship | 27/3 | 30/3 | 222/323 |
| CCT/2 | QC Dignity | Cont | P Kel | QCSL | 28/3 | 31/3 | 392/10 |
| CCT/3 | Jaami | Cont | Col | Everbest | 28/3 | 1/4/03 | 210/100 |
| RM/14 | Banglar Mamata | Repair | - | BSC | R/A | 2/4/2003 | |
| RM/15 | Banglar Moni | Repair | Sing | BSC | 27/2 | 3/4 | |
| GSJ | Banglar Maya | Repair | -- | BSC | R/A | 1/4/2003 | |

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Date: 30/3/2003

| Name of vessels | Date of arrival | L Port call | Local agent | Cargo | Loading port |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Banga Birol | 30/3 | Col | Baridhi | | Cont Col |
| Banga Barta | 30/3 | Hald | Baridhi | | Cont Col |
| Banga Bonik | 30/3 | -- | BD Ship | | Cont Sing |
| Taxidits | 30/3 | Tanj | BSL | | Clink |
| Heng Shun | 30/3 | Kaki | USL | | Rice |
| QC Honour | 31/3 | P Kel | QCSL | | Cont Sing |
| Banga Bodor | 3/4 | PKL | BD Ship | | Cont Sing |
| Dawei (liner) | 1/4/2003 | -- | Everett | | GI |
| Kota Cahaya | 1/4/2003 | Sing | Pil (BD) | | Mong |
| Asimont | 1/4/2003 | P Kel | Seabome | | Cont Sing |
| Ruhunupura | 2/4 | -- | PSSL | | Cont Yang |
| Ana | 2/4/2003 | P Kel | PSSL | | Cont Sing |
| Apollo Lima | 2/4 | Yang | H&SL | | GI |

Tanker due

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------|-------|------------|
| Filma | 1/4/2003 | Saha | USL | CPO (RM/4) |
| Gaz Master | 3/4/2003 | Viza | MBL | Ammonka |
| Vishwadol | 31/3/2003 | Viz | EOSL | Naphtha |
| Ocean Guarnard | 1/4/2003 | Sing | MSTPL | HSD/JP-1 |

Vessels at Kurtubdia

Outside Port Limit:

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-----|---------|------|
| Barge: S-657 | P Cargo | Kol | Sakhi | 21/2 |
| Dea Captain | - | - | Arafeen | R/A |

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------|----------|------|
| MSTRA | Rice(P) | Kaki | SSTL | 28/3 |
| Zeng San | WT/Rice(P) | Kaki | SSTL | 29/3 |
| Kota Berjaya | Cont | Sing | Pil (BD) | 29/3 |
| Star Dream | CPOL/B.Oil | Dumai | Seacom | 30/3 |

Vessels not ready

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|------|---------|------|
| Banga Borat | Repair | Pkel | BD Ship | R/A |
| Banga Lanka | Repair | Col | Baridhi | R/A |
| Eagle Aries | MS/SKO/JP-1 | Sing | MSTPL | 29/3 |

Movement of vessels for 31/03/2003

| Outgoing | Incoming | Shifting |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| J/2 N Srishti | J/11 Xp. Manaslu | DOJ: S. Dream |
| J/4 C. Express | J/10 K Naga | J/10 Prospects |
| J/11 QC Lark | J/4 B. Birol | |
| CCT/1 B. Biraj | RM/5 E. Aries | |

The above are yesterday's shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Family, Dhaka.

STOCK