

Japan to see mild recovery with 1.0pc GDP in 2003: OECD

AFP, Paris 2003 may prompt a mild recovery," it said in its half-yearly economic report.

Japan should expect stronger growth as the global economy improves but the government and central bank must work harder to end deflation and fix the banking system to ensure a sustained rebound, the OECD said Thursday.

Gross domestic product was forecast to expand 1.0 per cent in 2003, up 0.2 percentage points from a projection made last November, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"Although the outlook for domestic demand remains weak, a rebound in world trade growth in the second half of 2003 may prompt a mild recovery," it said in its half-yearly economic report.

The world's second largest economy would grow 1.1 per cent in 2004, up from 0.9 per cent seen previously, the OECD predicted.

But this anaemic revival would fail to reduce near-record high unemployment levels or fight persistent deflation, which has curbed corporate profits and consumer demand.

"Indeed, a possible strengthening of deflationary pressures poses a downside risk to the projection, as do continued financial sector fragility and the strains associated with a further rise in public debt," the Paris-based grouping of developed countries warned.

Measures have been implemented in the past six months to help the economy -- such as a move by the Bank of Japan to buy shares from banks and the establishment of a government-run body to purchase some bad loans -- but they do not go far enough.

"More aggressive liquidity provision (by the BoJ) combined with a decisive restructuring of the financial sector is advisable," OECD chief economist Jean-Philippe Cotis said in the report.

A clean-up of Japanese banks, buried under billions of dollars in non-performing loans, was a top priority, the OECD said.

The government should be ready to boost banks' capital with public funds as they offload bad loans and struggle against a plunge in stock prices, which has eroded the value of their shareholdings.

Japan's financial authorities have instructed major banks to halve the ratio of NPLs to total loans by March 2005.

At the same time, Japan, which has the highest national debt of all industrialised nations, needs to control extra budgetary spending.

US economy starting to feel effect of SARS

AFP, Washington holding back an ailing US economy by cutting into tourism in some regions of the country.

"San Francisco noted that international travel had weakened, due in part to the SARS outbreak in Asia. Dallas observed a decline in air travel due to the onset of the war and the SARS outbreak," the Beige Book said.

The staggering airline industry is especially hard hit by the outbreak.

The Air Transport Association said that SARS was a factor in the decline in airline traffic in the Easter and Passover week, with declines especially pronounced to Asian destinations.

Revenue passenger miles (RPMs) for the week ended April 20 were down 10.5 percent compared with the same period in 2002, the association said.

Amid heightened concerns about SARS, the US economy is starting to feel the effects of the deadly new strain of pneumonia, according to new industry and government reports.

The US Federal Reserve, in its Beige Book survey released Wednesday, cited SARS as a factor

Shebaworld Baishakhi package launched

Sheba Telecom (Pvt) Ltd launched Shebaworld Baishakhi package with SHEBA customised handset on Wednesday, says a press release.

Abu Sadat M Sayem, head of Marketing of Sheba Telecom (Pvt) Ltd, announced the introduction of SHEBA customised handset during the launching event.

Zainal Abiddin Isma Yatim, chief technical officer, and AFM Safiul Alam, general manager of Network Planning, also attended the programme.

This is the first time in Bangladesh that an operator introduced mobile connection with customised handset.

Two different types of package are available at very attractive price with SHEBA customised handset. The Shebaworld Standard package, which has both way BTB connectivity and mobile-to-mobile facility, will cost Tk 9,300 only with SHEBA handset.

Another package is Shebaworld M2M Gold, which has Mobile to Mobile with BTB incoming facility, will cost Tk 8,800 only with SHEBA handset.

Unlike other operators, most of the Sheba Telecom customers are enjoying BTB connectivity.



PHOTO: SHEBA TELECOM
Head of Marketing of Sheba Telecom (Pvt) Ltd Abu Sadat M Sayem announces the introduction of SHEBA customised handset at a launching event in Dhaka on Wednesday. Chief Technical Officer Zainal Abiddin Isma Yatim and General Manager of Network Planning AFM Safiul Alam were present.



PHOTO: SHAMIL BANK
Sarfraz Sheikh, country general manager of Shamil Bank of Bahrain E.C., speaks at a workshop on prevention of money laundering at the bank's head office in Dhaka on Sunday. Md Hurunur Rashid Chowdhury general manager of Anti Money Laundering Department of Bangladesh Bank was present.

CURRENCY

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

Selling	Currency	Buying
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean
58.9500	59.0000	58.0000
65.1692	65.2245	62.9300
94.1667	94.2466	91.2282
37.0619	37.0933	35.2756
0.4938	0.4942	0.4780
43.1678	43.2045	41.8742
7.0973	7.1033	6.9628
40.7958	40.8304	39.6175
7.5655	7.5719	7.4291
33.2750	33.3032	32.4548
16.1803	16.1946	15.6638
15.8451	15.8585	15.3439
		15.2988
		15.2805

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak. Rupee	Lankan Rupee	Thai Baht	Norwegian Kroner	NZ Dollar	Malaysian Ringit
47.345	57.8	96.97	42.815	7.1605	0.6033	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading: The local interbank foreign exchange market was active Thursday. Dollar remained steady and ended almost unchanged against the Bangladeshi taka on Thursday.

Local Money Market: Demand for call money was moderate. The call money rates remained almost unchanged. At the close, call rates ranged between 7.75 and 8.00 per cent compared with 7.00-8.00 per cent previously.

International Market: Euro pushed to a six week high against a flagging dollar and hit a new four-year high against the yen on Thursday. The single currency leapt more than half a per cent to \$1.1035 in early European trade. It also extended gains to 132.29 yen against the Japanese currency, its highest since May 1999. Demand for higher yielding euro-dominated bonds was attributed as the main reason for the rise. With Japanese interest rates near zero and US short-term rates at four-decade low of 1.25 per cent, returns on euro-zone government bonds looks attractive. Dealers were also bearish on the dollar ahead of US week weekly jobless claims and durable goods data, both of which are expected to make dismal reading.

At 1430 hours on Thursday, euro was at 1.1015/18. GBP at 1.5921/25 and yen at 119.82/87 against the dollar.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 24/4/2003.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/2	NST Challenge	Cano/RS	Sing	Mutual	8/4	25/4	2234
J/3	AL Monsoor	Rice	Chan	Total	17/4	27/4	1045
J/4	Tuking	Slat	Vizh	Move	21/4	30/4	1614
J/5	Pinya	Gl	Yang	Total	16/4	28/4	952
J/6	Myeik	Wheat (P)	Viza	Mutual	13/4	25/4	725
J/7	An Kang Jiang	Gl	Huang	Bdship	23/4	29/4	800
J/8	Pho Thae	Rice	Kand	Mutual	15/4	29/4	1211
J/9	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	23/4	-	-
J/10	Kwan Mo Bong	Rice	Kaki	SSTL	9/4	24/4	837
J/11	Banglar Shikha	Cont	Sing	BSC	23/4	26/4	182/410
J/12	Eagle Strength	Cont	Sing	Nol	21/4	25/4	462/16
J/13	Banga Bodor	Cont	P Kel	Bdship	21/4	24/4	130/X
CCT/1	New Sea Star	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	23/4	26/4	200/437
CCT/2	Ana	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	21/4	24/4	263/X
CCT/3	Mardios	Cont	P Kel	RSL	19/4	24/4	283/692
RM/14	Ocean Pride	Idle	Kang	PSAL	10/4	27/4	-
RM/15	Banglar Moni	Repair	Sing	BSC	27/2	27/4	-
GSJ	Commander Express	Idle	Hazi	RSA	29/3	30/4	-
TSP	Jat Na Mu	Wheat	Viza	Uniship	2/4	25/4	-
RM/4	Vanessa	Cdso	Durb	Seacom	20/4	27/4	-
DD	Banga Barta	Repair	-	Baridhi	R/A	2/5	-

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Oh San Tok	24/4	Zhan	TOSL	Fert In Bag	C Clink
Pearl of Baharain	24/4	Kohsi	Uniship	Rice	Clink
Nantor	24/4	Kohsi	Litmond	Rice	Clink
Taraman Bibi	24/4	Kaki	OQSL	Rice	Clink
Tug Wenstar Rellance	24/4	Mala	OTBL	D/VL	Tara
Tara	24/4	Mala	OTBL	For Scraping	D/VL
Bambu Kuning	24/4	Indo	OTBL	For Demolition	D/VL
Tug Green Ville-ix	25/4	Jaka	OTBL	D/VL	K Lestari-II
Karunia Lestari-II	25/4	Jaka	OTBL	For Scraping	Clink
Baha Karahasan	27/4	Guj	PSAL	Clink	Dia/East
Sittwe	25/4	Yang	Everett	Gl	Gl
Mongia	25/4	Tuti	Able	Rice	Gl
White Toba	25/4	--	Everett	Gl	Gl
Continent-4	25/4	Bdi	CLA	Rice	Gl
Kota Singa	25/4	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
Jaami	25/4	Col	Everebest	Cont	Col
QC Lark	25/4	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	P Kel

Movement of vessels for 25/4/2003 & 26/4/2003

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
25/4/2003		
J/2 Nst Challenge	J/6 W Toba	RM/4 Vanessa
J/10 Kwan Mo Bong	J/12 Sittwe	J/6 Myeik
J/12 E Strength	DOJ High Land	
TSP Jat Na Mu	CCT/2 B Borak	
RM/8 Bonvoy-II		
26/4/2003		
J/6 Myeik	CCT/1 Jaami	
J/11 B Shikha	J/12 QC Lark	
CCT/1 New Sea Star	J/11 K Singa	
CCT/3 B Lanka	J/1 Heng Fu	
	J/10 ZSS CN Ho	
	JM/4 Shina	
	Chem Bothania	

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

STOCK