

G8 finance ministers rally around growth potential

AFP, Deauville, France

The finance ministers of the Group of Eight (G8) richest nations on Saturday declared confidence in the potential for stronger economic growth despite deepening signs of weakness and terrorism.

Following their meeting in this fashionable Normandy seaside resort, the finance ministers said in a communique they had agreed individual strategies that ultimately would power global growth.

"While major downside risks have receded, our economies continue to face many challenges," the ministers of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States said in their final statement.

"We are nonetheless confident in the potential for stronger growth," they said.

The ministers, meeting for the first time since the Iraq war, were preparing for a G8 leaders' summit June 1-3 in Evian, France.

In the communique, the ministers pledged "to continue to cooperate to achieve higher growth in all

of our economies, while ensuring domestic and external sustainability, and thereby to contribute to economic growth.

Meeting amid tight security since Friday night, the ministers declared: "We are strengthening our commitments to structural reforms and sound macroeconomic policies."

British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown called it "the strongest statement yet about the need for reform."

Among the individual steps pledged to be taken to boost growth, the United States will act to create jobs and encourage savings and investment in the private sector, according to the statement.

Japan will continue its structural reforms, including in its financial and corporate sectors, and intensify its efforts to combat deflation.

Europe will speed up labour, product and capital market reforms aimed at achieving a more flexible economy.

And Canada will invest in productivity, while Russia, "which has

greatly improved its performance," will pursue structural reforms, particularly in the financial sector, the ministers said.

As signaled earlier by G8 officials, the communique did not mention the situation on currency markets, where the dollar has sharply weakened.

The dollar hit a four-year low against the euro this week, undermining hopes for modest recovery of European countries facing rising unemployment and, for some, recession.

US Treasury Secretary John Snow, asked whether the dollar/euro exchange rate had been discussed, said: "It was not a topic of any major discussion today."

For European exporters, whose businesses have benefited for several years from the strength of the dollar, the euro's current level around 1.15 dollars is beginning to become critical.

The dollar's fall affects the conditions for global recovery by penalizing exports from the euro zone and Japan, while boosting the attractiveness of US exports.

The recovery in the US has been modest, while Japan and the euro zone stagnated in the first quarter and Germany, Europe's biggest economy, and the Netherlands are in recession.

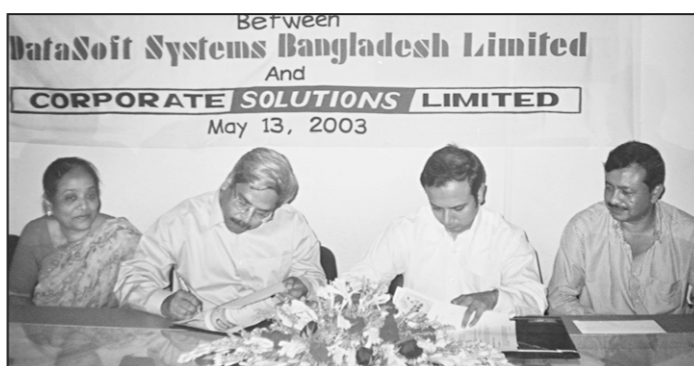
Regarding postwar Iraq, Snow said the ministers had recognized the country's current inability to repay debt, estimated at 127 billion dollars (110.5 billion euros), before 2005.

"There was recognition that we cannot expect Iraq to make any service payments on that debt at least through the end of 2004," he said.

"We formally asked the IMF (International Monetary Fund) to assess the debt situation for countries outside the Paris Club."

So far only the Paris Club has been looking at the question of Iraqi debts.

Development and poverty featured prominently in the opening working dinner Friday night dedicated to Africa, which was attended by IMF Director General Horst Koehler and World Bank President James Wolfensohn.



Mahabub Zaman, managing director of DataSoft Systems Bangladesh Limited, and Bayazid Md Fayaz, managing director of Corporate Solutions Limited, sign a memorandum of understanding on marketing of two software in Dhaka on Tuesday.



The sixth annual general meeting of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) was held at Narayanganj Club Community Centre on Thursday. Manzurul Haq, president of the association, Habibur Rahman, first vice-president, Abu Ahmed Siddiq, second vice-president, Mohammad Hatem, third vice-president, and Shamim Ahmed, vice-president (Finance), were present at the meeting.



Officials of Standard Chartered Bank and House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) pose for a photograph after signing an agreement in Dhaka on Wednesday. Under the accord, customers of the bank will be able to pay their loan installments directly through their accounts with the bank. CEO of Standard Chartered Bank in Bangladesh David Fletcher and Managing Director of HBFC Jadav Chandra Shaha were present at the signing ceremony.

Standard Chartered, HBFC sign agreement

Standard Chartered Bank and House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) signed an agreement on Wednesday on payment of housing loan installments, says a press release.

David Fletcher, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank in Bangladesh, Jadav Chandra Shaha, managing director of HBFC, and other officials of both organisations were present at the signing.

Under the agreement, the customers of Standard Chartered Bank, who have taken loans from HBFC, will be able to pay their loan installments directly through their accounts with the bank.

CURRENCY

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

Selling	Currency	Buying		
		TT Clean	OD Sight/Doc	OD Transfer
58.8800	BC	57.9500	57.7798	57.7106
69.2193	EUR	66.2716	66.0770	65.4265
96.3924	GBP	93.1314	92.8579	91.7945
39.2612	AUD	37.1344	37.0253	36.5366
0.5128	JPY	0.4952	0.4937	0.4874
45.4531	CHF	43.9882	43.8590	43.5420
7.5160	SEK	7.2492	7.2279	7.1482
43.4058	CAD	42.2222	42.0982	41.1191
7.5565	HKD	7.4224	7.4005	7.3923
34.2385	SGD	33.4256	33.3274	33.0625
16.1621	AED	15.6507	15.6048	15.5869
15.8258	SAR	15.3303	15.2853	15.2678

Local Interbank FX Trading
The local interbank foreign exchange market was subdued Sunday. US dollar remained almost unchanged against the Bangladesh taka.

Local Money Market
Demand for call money rate was moderate. Call money rates remained almost unchanged. At the end, call money rates ranged between 12.00 and 13.00 per cent compared with 12.00-14.00 per cent previously.

International Market
The dollar weakened broadly on Friday, supported in part by speculation that Japan may be selling its currency but still hampered by the market's concerns about slowing US economic growth. The dollar bought around 116 yen, down about 0.45 per cent on the day and not far from Thursday two year low at 115.33. The euro jumped nearly 1 per cent against the Japanese currency, trading near 133.81 yen. At the closing of New York on Friday, euro was at 1.1586/92, GBP at 1.6211/17 and yen at 115.83/89 against the dollar.

SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 18/5/2003

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	Ambika	Rice	Kaki	Abahoni	1/5	19/5	584
J/2	Antalina	GI(Colis)	Darb	Psi	11/5	18/5	2845
J/3	Dae Gak Bong	Wheat	Tuti	Uniship	29/4	21/5	636
J/4	Viscount(Liner)	GI	Sing	Prog	12/5	18/5	1004
J/5	Weddel Sea	C. Clink	Kohsi	Move	2/5	22/5	3059
J/6	Pavonis	GI	Yang	Royal	10/5		
J/7	Taraman Bibi	Rice	Kaki	QWSL	24/5	22/5	1358
J/8	Captain Michalie	GI	Sing	Litmond	12/5	26/5	1560
J/9	Yong Jiang	GI	S Haid	Bdship	11/5	19/5	2200
J/10	Zang San	Sug/Wheat	Kaki	SSTL	30/4	19/5	1070
J/11	Banga Borti	Cont	Sing	Bdship	13/5	18/5	182X
J/12	Asimont	Cont	P. Kel	Seabone	15/5	20/5	292/114
J/13	Budi Teguh	Cont	Sing	Pij(BD)	16/5	20/5	316/347
CCT/1	QC Dignity	Cont	P. Kel	QCBL	15/5	19/5	313/1
CCT/2	Xpress Resolve	Cont	Col	RSL	16/5	20/5	333/131
CCJ	Gati-2	Idle	Kaki	Able	2/5	19/5	
RM/4	Aries Erre	CDSO	Kaki	Pol	16/5	19/5	
Doj	Banglar Shourabh	C. Oil	K. Dia	BSC	R/A	16/5	
RM/4	Andhika Adhisatya	CPO	Belwa	MTCL	16/5	18/5	
RM/5	Banglar Gourab	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	20/5	
SM/10	Dredger Gemini	-	Chand	Kama	-	30/6	
	(Re. Export Cargo: 499)						
Cufu	Commander Express	Idle	Hazi	Rsa	29/3	30/5	
CAFCO(U)	Maritime Chiangmai	Urea	Tarj	MBL	4/5	22/5	

Vessels due at outer anchorage Date: 18/5/2003

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Segi Tiga Biru	18/5	P.Bind	Rainbow	GI	
Sonali	18/5	Kand	Owsl	Rice(P)+S. Ash	
Banga Birol	19/5	Hald	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Assets Victory	19/5	Viza	Uniship	Rice/WT	
Eagle Strength	18/5	-	Nol	Cont	Sing
Kota Naga	18/5	Sing	Pij(BD)	Cont	Sing
Pho Thae	19/5	-	Able	Rice	
Pioneer Runner	20/5	Sing	JF	Vehi	-
Bosowa Delapan	24/5	-	Psal	C. Link	-
Pyong Yang-813	20/5	Kand	Able	Sug+Rice	-
Ana	20/5	-	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Banga Lanka	23/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Sing
Feng Shun Shan (Liner)	20/5	-	Bdship	GI	-

Vessels at outer anchorage Vessels ready

Mu Du Bong	Rice	KAND	ABLE	6/5
INWA	Rice	Yang	Total	7/5
Al Monsoor	Rice	Kaki	Total	8/5
Eltanin	Rice	Kand	Total	8/5
Pearl	Rice	Kaki	Mutual	2/5
Banga Biraj	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	16/5
Banglar Jyoti	Cont	K. Dia	BSC	R/A(17/1)
Banga Bonik	Cont	P.Kel	Bdship	17/5
Bador	Phos Acid	Tuti	USS	17/5
Banglar Moni	Cont	Sing	BSC	17/5
Mardios	Cont	P. Kel	RSL	17/5
Orient Freedom	Cont	P. Kel	RSSL	18/5
Eagle Aries	SKO/JP-1	Sing	FSTPL	16/5
Banglar Kakoli	Wheat(G)	-	Lams	R/A(14/5)

Movement of vessels for 19/5/2003

	Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
J/7	Ambika	CCT/1 O. Freedom	CCJ. Gati-2
J/10	Zang San	Mardios	
CCT/1	QC Dignity	E. Strength	
CCJ	GATI-2	J/9 (P) Inwa	
RM/1	A. Erre	J/1 Eltanin	
		CCJ. L. C. Ling	
		J/10 Jat Na Mu	

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

STOCK