

US House, Senate reach \$350b tax cut deal

REUTERS, Washington

Republican leaders in Congress agreed Wednesday to a tax cut that is less than half what President George W Bush wanted but meets demands by Senate moderates that it be no more than \$350 billion.

The deal was reached after a day of intense negotiations in which Vice President Dick Cheney intervened to try to resolve an argument between House and Senate Republicans over the size of the package.

In the end Bush is settling for what he once derided as a "little bitty" package. He originally proposed a \$726 billion 10-year package he said would jump-start the economy and create jobs.

Bush was expected to travel to the Capitol on Thursday to meet with Senate and House leaders on the tax package, sources said.

"We have an arrangement," Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Tennessee Republican, told reporters. He said the entire package would be worth \$350 billion, including \$20 billion in financial aid to states and about \$14 billion in child tax credit refunds.

Democrats said the proposed tax cuts will do little to rev up the economy and benefit mostly the wealthy while adding to budget deficits. Democrats note that in the same week Republicans will be voting for Bush's tax cut, they will also be voting to raise the \$6.4 trillion debt limit by a record \$984 billion.

House Republicans thought they had a deal with the Senate for a \$382.8 billion tax cut, but it fell apart when it became clear it would not pass the closely-divided Senate.

Tensions rose during one heated exchange between House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, a California Republican, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican. Thomas left the meeting in anger when Grassley told him the earlier deal would not pass the Senate, Republican aides said.

"It was a real snot-flinger of a meltdown," said one aide.

GP individual sales agent confce held

The individual sales agents of GrameenPhone have reached the sales figure to 100,000 recently, says a press release.

Addressing a conference of the GP individual sales agents at a local hotel yesterday, GrameenPhone Managing Director Ola Ree said, "I want to congratulate all of you for your great achievement. You are part of the GP family."

He pointed out that the common goal of both GP and the individual sales agents is to satisfy subscribers.

Mehboob Chowdhury, sales and marketing director of GrameenPhone, noted that four years ago GrameenPhone started to appoint the individual sales agents to represent the company's sales team to the individual subscribers.

Abu Mamun Hashmi, manager of the Individual Sales Agent Section, and Mahboob Hossain, additional general manager of the GP Distribution Department, also hailed the achievement of the agents.

GrameenPhone presently has about 50 individual sales agents. The day-long conference concluded with the presentation of crests to the agents.

Greenspan on deflation alert

AFP, Washington

US Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said Wednesday he was on heightened alert for deflation, a minor but potentially devastating menace to the sluggish postwar economy.

"We at the Federal Reserve recognize that deflation is a possibility," Greenspan told Congress' joint economic committee.

Deflation, or falling prices, delivers a double economic punch by pressuring people to postpone buying until prices fall further and by raising real interest rates.

Financial markets appeared to have little fear of imminent deflation, Greenspan said.

"Nevertheless, even though we perceive the risks as minor, the potential consequences are very substantial and could be quite negative," the powerful Federal Reserve boss told lawmakers.

"It does require very close scrutiny and maybe -- maybe -- action on the part of the central bank," he said.

Underlying US inflation plunged to a 37-year low in April, according to government figures.

Core US consumer prices, stripping away volatile food and energy prices, rose just 1.5 per cent when compared to April 2002 -- the smallest annual increase since March 1966.

The Federal Reserve, in a surprise shift of focus, acknowledged the threat of downward pressure on prices at a meeting May 6, although it carefully avoided using the word "deflation."

SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 22/5/2003.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	Eltanin	Rice	Kand	Total	8/5	2/6	731
J/2	Pearl	Rice	Kaki	Mutual	2/5	29/5	1032
J/3	Inwa	Rice	Yang	Total	7/5	25/5	813
J/4	Pavonis	Gl	Yang	Royal	10/5	25/5	755
J/5	Weddel Sea	C Clink (Royal)	Kohsi	Move	2/5	25/5	1178
J/6	Mu Du Bong	Rice	Kand	Able	6/5	26/5	678
J/7	Taraman Bibi	Rice	Kaki	QWSL	24/5	25/5	394
J/8	Captain Michalle	Gl	Sing	Limond	12/5	29/5	1316
J/9	Pyong Yang-813	Sug/Rice	Kand	Able	20/5	1/6	296
J/10	Jat Na Mu	Wheat	Viza	Uniship	-	3/6	483
J/11	Banga Birol	Cont	Hald	Baridhi	20/5	22/5	136/50
J/12	Kota Naga	Cont	Sing	Pij(BD)	18/5	25/5	180/461
J/13	Eagle Strength	Cont	Sing	Nol	18/5	25/5	206/531
CCT/1	Orient Freedom	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	18/5	23/5	276/X
CCT/2	Mardios	Cont	P. Kel	RSL	17/5	23/5	305/X
CCT/3	Banga Bonik	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	17/5	23/5	139/70
CCJ	Le Ghang Sing	Clink	Sing	BSL	18/5	27/5	
RM/5	Al Deerah	HSD	Shuy	Mstpl	18/5	24/5	
RM/9	Banglar Gourab	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	25/5	

Vessels due at outer anchorage Date: 22/5/2003

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
New Sea Star	22/5	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya	22/5	Sing	Pij (BD)	Cont	Sing
QC Teal	23/5	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Asian Prime	22/5	Naga	ANCL	Clink	Sing
Oranda	23/5	KRABI	ASLL	Clink	Sing
Al Muztuba	23/5	Kaki	CLA	Rice/WT	Sing
Ruhunupura	26/5	Hal	PSSL	Cont	Yang
Jaami	23/5	Cbo	Everbest	Cont	Col
Banga Bodor	24/5	P. Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shikha	24/5	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Bosowa Semblian	28/5	-	PSAL	Clink	Sing
Hua Tuo	24/5	Novor	RSA	Gl	Sing
Seabo	25/5	Hald	Sunshine	Gl	Sing
Al	25/5	PHIL	OTBL	For Demolition	Sing
Ocean Trader	27/5	Sing	OTBL	For Demolition	Sing
Ocean Pride	25/5	Yang	PSAL	Gl	Sing
QC Honour	26/5	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Banglar Doot	25/5	Mumb	Royal	Gl	Sing
Kota Benjaya	25/5	Sing	Pij (BD)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijo	26/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Xpress Manaslu	26/5	P. Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Arctic Blue	26/5	-	JF	For Scraping	Sing
Skopelos	27/5	-	JF	For Scraping	Sing
Bangla Lanka	27/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Sing
Banga Borak	27/5	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
QC Lark	27/5	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	P. Kel

Movement of vessels for 23/5/2003 & 24/5/2003

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
23/5/2003		
J/11 B/Birol	CCT/1 K. Cahaya	J/12 K. Naga
CCT/1 O. Freedom	CCT/2 New Sea Star	DDJ: K. Naga
CCT/2 Mardios	CCT/3 QC Teal	
CCT/3 B. Bonik	RM/3 Suppavan	
24/5/2003		
RM/4 A. Aryandhi	J/11 B. Borat	J/10 Jat Na Mu
RM/5 Al Deerah	J/12 B. Shikha	
RM/6 O. Manta	RM/10 MMM Houston	
J/12 K. Naga	J/10 Hua Tuo	
J/10 Jat Na Mu	DDJ: Dea Captain	

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



Managing Director of GrameenPhone Ola Ree, other high officials and individual sales agents of GP pose for a photograph at the agents' conference in Dhaka yesterday.



Ataul Haq, managing director of IFIC Bank Limited, speaks at a seminar on "the Artha Rin Adalat Ain-2003" at IFIC Bank Academy in Dhaka on Sunday.

IFIC bank seminar held

A seminar on the Artha Rin Adalat Ain-2003 was held at the IFIC Bank Academy in Dhaka on Sunday, says a press release.

Ataul Haq, managing director of the IFIC Bank Ltd, inaugurated the seminar.

A total of 65 senior executives and officers from head office, Dhaka city and Narayanganj Branches of the bank attended the seminar.

The key note paper on "The Artha Rin Adalat Act-2003" was presented by Md Atiar Rahman Mallah, faculty member of Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM).

The Deputy Managing Director of the bank Mashiur Rahman, Senior Executive Vice-President (SEVP) Dr R M Debnath, SEVP, Mokhesur Rahman Sharif, SEVP, Md Buzruch Meher, SVP Delwar Hossain, SVP Md Ziaul Bari and others participated in the discussion session.

It may be mentioned that this was the 11th programme of IFIC Bank Academy in the year 2003.

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	
58.7300	58.7800	USD	57.8000	57.6302	57.5612
69.0606	69.1194	EUR	66.5509	66.3554	66.2760
96.6813	96.7636	GBP	93.7343	93.4589	93.3471
38.9908	39.0240	AUD	37.1885	37.0793	37.0349
0.5045	0.5049	JPY	0.4883	0.4869	0.4863
45.5625	45.6012	CHF	44.1727	44.0430	43.9903
7.4720	7.4784	SEK	7.3313	7.3098	7.3010
43.5360	43.5730	CAD	42.2360	42.1120	42.0616
7.5381	7.5445	HKD	7.4038	7.3821	7.3732
34.1752	34.2042	SGD	33.3429	33.2450	33.2052
16.1213	16.1351	AED	15.6107	15.5648	15.5462
15.7859	15.7994	SAR	15.2910	15.2461	15.2278

Exchange Rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringit
46.86	57.8	97.22	42.105	6.7578	0.6304	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading:
The local interbank foreign exchange market was active Thursday. US dollar weakened slightly against Bangladeshi taka due to fall in import-related demand for the US currency.

Local Money Market:
Demand for call money was moderate. Liquidity condition remained stable in the market. Call money rates eased slightly and ranged between 10.00 and 12.50 per cent compared with 11.00-13.00 per cent Wednesday.

International Market:
The dollar held steady above recent lows on the yen and the euro on Thursday, aided by modest optimism from the US Federal Reserve, suspicion of Japanese yen selling intervention and jitters over euro zone rates. The European Central Bank holds its regular mid-month policy meeting on Thursday and while no interest rate decision is expected, traders said there was some last-minute nervousness in the market that it could cut rates. Caution over possible Japanese intervention also kept the speculators from selling dollars for yen, keeping the greenback confined within a tight range.

At 1510 hours on Thursday, euro was at 1.1664/69, GBP at 1.6348/54 and yen at 117.44/50 against the dollar.

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