

WTO asks US to comply with anti-dumping law

AFP, Geneva

The United States was told Friday to comply by the end of December with a World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruling against a fiercely-contested provision in its anti-dumping laws.

An arbitrator in the dispute brought against the US by 11 other WTO members said in a report that Washington should have 11 months to implement the finding against the so-called Byrd Amendment.

WTO experts upheld in January an earlier ruling against the US law, enacted in October 2000, which allows US industries to be paid anti-dumping duties levied on foreign

competitors.

They said the payments were "a non-permissible specific action against dumping or a subsidy" and recommended that Washington bring the measure into conformity with its obligations under WTO rules.

But the US and the complainants -- Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the European Communities, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Mexico and Thailand -- failed to agree on a "reasonable period of time" for implementation of the WTO finding.

Washington proposed 15 months, arguing that legislation

would be needed to bring the 'Continued Dumping and Subsidy Offset Act' into conformity, trade sources said.

But the complaining countries argued that six months was enough, saying the offending law had to be repealed.

An arbitrator was appointed to decide, and he said in his report released Friday that 11 months from the adoption of the appellate body report on January 27 was a "reasonable" period.

The finding should therefore be implemented by December 27, 2003.

HK, China free trade pact this month

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong and China will complete their first bilateral free-trade agreement by the end of this month, an official in the territory confirmed Friday.

Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Trade, Henry Tang, told a briefing the closer economic partnership agreement (CEPA) between the two sides would be a "good first step" but warned against over-optimism.

Tang refused to divulge details as to whether the agreement would include nationality provisions which could restrict non-Hong Kong firms from benefiting from CEPA.



PHOTO: AQUA PAINTS

Public Works and Housing Minister Mirza Abbas visits Aqua Paints stall after inaugurating a building material fair organised by the Department of Architecture of BUET on Wednesday at a local hotel. Executive Director and other officers of the company were present. Aqua Paints introduced two new products -- Aqua Silk Premium Emulsion and Aqua Wood Varnish -- at the three-day exhibition that concludes yesterday.



PHOTO: JANATA BANK

A 'loan fair' was held at Janata Bank regional office in Sirajganj recently. Syed Abdul Hamid, general manager-Rajshahi, was the chief guest at the fair. M Zeldar Rahman, DGM, Rajshahi divisional office, HK Farid, DGM, area office-Pabna, and Md Shamsul Hoque Miah, AGM, regional office-Sirajganj, were also present.

Indian commerce minister gives no hint of WTO progress

REUTERS, Washington

Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Arun Jaitley gave no hint on Thursday of any breakthrough in stalled World Trade Organization talks after meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick.

In a speech to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Jaitley said he and Zoellick have a "much greater understanding" of each country's position after meeting at least three times in the past four months. But he said there were many areas where their views "are not fully convergent."

Top trade officials from the 146 WTO member countries will meet this September in Cancun, Mexico. The United States hopes the meeting will propel the negotiations to a successful end by the current goal of January 2005.

However, talks have been stalled on a number of issues, including agriculture and how to guarantee that poor countries have access to cheap versions of patented life-saving drugs.

Jaitley said it was "extremely important" to resolve the medicine issue before the Cancun meeting. India, which has a large generic

drug industry, "reluctantly agreed" last December to a compromise supported by most WTO members only to see it blocked by the United States, he said.

Any agriculture agreement must incorporate India's need to protect its 650 million farmers from import surges, especially as long as rich countries like the United States and the European Union maintain generous subsidies, he said.

Jaitley said Zoellick agreed with him on that point.

Weekly Currency Roundup

June 8 - June 13, 2003

SLocal FX Market

US dollar was stable against BDT at the beginning of the week. But late the greenback was under pressure and became weaker against BDT. Lack of import demand ahead of budget for fiscal year 2003/04 suppressed the demand for dollar.

Money Market:

Bangladesh Bank borrowed BDT 1,247 million by the Treasury bill auction held on Sunday, compared with BDT 3,050 million in the previous bid. The rates remained almost unchanged.

The call money rate was in the range of 12-16 per cent in the week. The rate was high in the beginning, but eased to some extent later in the week as liquidity of the market was improved due to injection of funds through repo.

International FX Market

In the beginning of the week, euro gained a little against USD and mostly against sterling backed by UK Treasury announcement that GBP would have to lose ground against euro before Britain can join euro. Earlier on Monday, euro came under pressure by OPEC President's comment that dollar-denominated sales would not be converted into euro despite dollar's fall in the recent days.

In the middle of the week, the interest rate was playing a major role in determining the exchange rates of the major currencies in the international foreign exchange market. Pound sterling gained against US dollar on back of higher interest rate of Pound than the US dollar. The dollar also lost ground against the euro due to talk of further US dollar interest rate cut.

Interest rate continued to play a major role in determining the exchange rates of the major currencies later in the week. Dollar remained steady against euro as the investors awaited for US retail sales data for signs about the magnitude of an expected US interest rate cut later this month.

At 1615 hours on Thursday, euro was at 1.1745/50, GBP at 1.6726/28 and yen at 117.65/70 against the dollar.

-- Standard Chartered Bank



PHOTO: BATA

B Rhoads, managing director of Bata Shoe Co (Bangladesh) Ltd, introduces Marie Claire brand shoes and sandals at a briefing session at the company's Tongi factory on Wednesday. Senior marketing executives were present.



PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

Southeast Bank Limited president and managing director, deputy managing director and additional secretary of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs are seen at a workshop on Artha Rin Adalat Ain 2003 recently.

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