

Star BUSINESS

E-mail: business@thedailystar.net

Indian economy grows faster than expected

AFP, New Delhi

India's economy grew a faster-than-expected 9.2 percent in the second quarter to September, official data showed Thursday, prompting concerns that overheating will require higher interest rates.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram hailed the figures and said "the fact that the economy recorded the highest growth of 9.1 percent in the first half of any fiscal (year) since economic reforms began in 1991-92 makes us doubly happy."

He cautioned that the rapid growth has stoked inflation but argued that the government would bring it under control through "supply side management" in an effort to avoid a hike in interest rates.

To that end, the government cut fuel costs Wednesday for gasoline (petrol) by just over four percent and diesel by slightly above three per-

cent to reflect falling global oil prices, aiming to control rising prices for food hit by higher transport bills.

Wholesale price inflation, which has stayed above the government's aim of around four percent and hit 5.29 percent in the second week of November, has led to expectations of an interest rate increase by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its next policy review in January.

"This trend may sustain for a quarter ahead. Looking at this strong growth, the RBI may have to tighten interest rates in the coming quarters," said Nikhil Thacker, head of research with brokerage UTI Securities.

The faster growth and the prospect of higher interest rates helped the Mumbai stock exchange where the benchmark Sensex index closed up 79.58 points or 0.58 percent to 13,696.31 trade as

analysts considered raising full-year growth forecasts.

India's roughly 780 billion dollar economy has now posted growth rates above eight percent for nearly the past two years, placing it second to China among the major economies. China's two trillion dollar economy expanded 10.4 percent in the quarter ended September.

The gains were led by services, including real estate and communications, which grew 13.9 percent, followed by manufacturing at 11.9 percent year-on-year.

Experts had expected fiscal second-quarter growth figures ranging from 8.0 to 8.7 percent after the economy picked up speed to 8.9 percent in the three months to June.

"These GDP numbers beat expectations, led by strong manufacturing and services growth," said Rajeev Malik, economist with J P Morgan Chase in Singapore.

Indian left parties oppose tie-up of Bharti, Wal-Mart

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A day after leading Indian conglomerate Bharti Enterprises announced a joint venture with US retail giant Wal-Mart in India, the Left parties, which provide crucial outside support to the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, opposed the tie-up and sought government intervention to stop "back door" entry of the multinational corporation.

Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath said the government would examine if the joint venture between the Wal-Mart and Bharti Group adheres to permissible limits of FDI in retail sector.

The politburo of CPI (M) said in a statement here on Wednesday that FDI in retail was not allowed under the existing policy and the Wal-Mart's agreement with Bharti was an attempt to "circumvent" the policy regulations and gain a foothold in Indian market.



PHOTO: SOCIAL INVESTMENT BANK

Bashunthara Group and Social Investment Bank Ltd organised a programme in Mahabubur Rahman Memorial Hospital at Banchharampur in Brahmanbaria recently to offer free treatment to the patients suffering from cataract and low vision, cleft lip, cleft palate and acid burning. Chairman of the bank Rezaul Haque and Chairman of the hospital Mujibur Rahman, among others, were present on the occasion.

CURRENCY

Following is Thursday's (November 30, 2006) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Major currency exchange rates		Exchange rate of some currencies	
BC Sell	TT Buy	Per USD	BDT per Currency
US dollar	69.00	Indian rupee	44.75
Euro	92.22	Pak rupee	60.78
Pound	135.93	Lankan rupee	108.05
Australian dollar	55.54	Thai baht	36.06
Japanese yen	0.61	Malaysian ringgit	3.62
Swiss franc	58.03		
Swedish kroner	10.46		
Canadian dollar	61.73		
Hong Kong dollar	8.89		
Singapore dollar	45.72		
UAE dirham	18.94		
Saudi riyal	18.55		
Danish kroner	12.74		
Kuwaiti dinar	235.28		

* All currencies are quoted against BDT. * The forward rates are indicative only and fixed dated.

USD forward rate against BDT		Bangladeshi taka.	
Buy	Sell	Money Market	
1M	67.79	Money market was active on Thursday.	
2M	67.91	Call money rate remained unchanged	
3M	68.06	and ranged between 6.50 and 7.00 percent.	
6M	68.50		

Local Market: FX: Local inter-bank FX market was active on Thursday. The demand for USD remained stable and there was a steady volume of cross currency transactions. The USD rose slightly against



PHOTO: QATAR AIRWAYS

Qatar Airways, which manages and operates Doha International Airport, opened a dedicated passenger terminal for First and Business class passengers on Sunday in Doha. Chairman of Qatar's Civil Aviation Authority Abdul Aziz Al Nuaimi and Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker, among others, were present at the inauguration.

Sri Lanka inflation hits 10-year high

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's annual inflation rate struck 19.8 percent in November, the highest in a decade, official figures showed Thursday.

The rise over the year to November was the biggest since October 1996 when point-to-point inflation reached 19.9 percent, the department of census and statistics said.

The higher-than-expected numbers were released after the government this month announced an increase in defence spending of 45 percent to 1.28 billion dollars for next year amid fears of further fighting with Tamil Tiger rebels.

SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 30/11/2006.

Berth no.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch.
J/1	Liban Car	Vehi	Sing	Nyk	28/11	1/12	--
J/2	Long An	Rice(G)	Sing	Ancl	25/11	2/12	1207
J/3	Layar Sentosa	Sugar	Chenn	Mutual	27/11	3/12	1709
J/4	Eco Progress	TSP(Badc)	Sfax	Ssst	19/11	5/12	682
J/5	Yaad-E-Mohammed	GI(S.Ash)	Okha	Intraport	19/11	5/12	704
J/6	Banga Borak	Cont	Sing	Bdship	22/11	2/12	369
J/7	Chanda Naree	GI	Mong	Tmm1	25/11	2/12	--
J/8	Orionis	Urea(Baic)	Damm	PSAL	20/11	5/12	876

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Banglar Shikha	30/11	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Qc Pintail	30/11	Col	QCSSL	Cont	Col
Caraka Jaya Naga-81321/12	30/11	Kol	Mutual	--	--
Bounty-7	30/11	Yang	Mvsl	--	--
Maritime Songkhla	1/12	Tarj	BSL	C. Clink	--
Qing Jiang	30/11	--	Cosco	GI	--
Qil Freedom	2/12	Sing	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Phu Tan	1/12	Col	PSSL	Cont	Col
Dolphin-II	4/12	Viza	Sunshine	GI(Sl. Bl)	--
Cap York	1/12	Sing	Jf	Scraping	--
Prikonissos	1/12	--	Intaport	Scraping	--
Ken Ryu	2/12	Russ	Angelic	Mop(P)	--
Noor-E-Mostafa	2/12	Viza	SSA	G. Slag	--

Tanker due

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo
Borak	1/12	Hald	FSA	Bitumen(RM/4)
Top-6	1/12	Indo	SNCL	CPO(RM/4)
Noma	1/12	Durb	ESL	CDSO(RM/3/4)
Al Kuwailiah	3/12	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD(JP-1)
Elli	4/12	Rast	DSL	Crude Oil
Bw Havsol	6/12	Viza	MBL	Ammonia

Vessels at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo
Precious River	Cont	Sing	Vega	10/11
Rio Lawrence	Cont	Sing	QCSSL	12/11
Ja Vesta	Cont	P. Kel	Vega	15/11
Esham	Cont	Pasi	CEL	15/11
Yong Xing	Cont	Col	PSSL	17/11
Josco View	Cont	P. Kel	EOL	22/11
Amer	Cont	Mala	CEL	23/11
Zhe Hai-315	Cont	Sing	Vega	23/11
Gao Cheng	Cont	Sing	PML	24/11
Banga Bodor	Cont	P. Kel	Baridhi	26/11

Vessels not ready:

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo
Al Sabiyah	HSD/Sko	Kuwa	MSTPL	24/11
Helai-1	Wheat	Ukra	Able	25/11
Sarim	Sugar	Kohsi	Litmond	25/11
Bao Xing	Sugar	Kand	Mutual	26/11
Bao Xing	Sugar	Kand	Mutual	26/11

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

STOCK