

France rejects US offer to open telecom market before '98

US blamed for failure to stem dollar's slide

PARIS, Mar 5: The French government on Wednesday rejected a US request to open France's telecommunications market to foreign competition within three years, reports AP.

The United States on Saturday offered to allow foreign investors to acquire American telecommunications companies if European countries such as France open their market to full competition before 1998.

Currently, foreigners can't acquire more than 20 per cent of a US communications company, while European Union rules call for a liberalisation of each country's market by 1998.

Budget minister Nicolas Sarkozy said Wednesday the US offer amounted to a plan to take over both culture and the communication of culture.

"We can see the US strategy clearly," Sarkozy said during a press conference. "They are attempting to win not only the content but also the technological supremacy."

Sarkozy's response appeared tuned to appeal to the Gaullist ideal of national independence as conservative Prime Minister Edouard Balladur campaigns for the April presidential election.

TOKYO, Mar 5: The United States came under mounting criticism in Japan Saturday for its failure to stem the dollar's slide to a series of post war lows against the yen, says AFP.

It is critical that the United States is averting its eyes from the fact that the dollar is in a serious crisis, the Asahi Shinbun, a major daily, said in a commentary.

The United States has failed to take appropriate economic measures to maintain the value of its currency, the paper said nothing that US administrations had contrived to opt for policies that were "swept" to voters but did little to stop fiscal and trade deficits from expanding.

The dollar has chronic fatigue syndrome and has been weakening every time it catches a cold. This time it caught a Mexican cold, the Asahi said, attacking Washington's inefficient handling of the Mexican financial crisis caused by the peso's plunge.

A lack of solid US backing for Japan's efforts to stop the dollar's depreciation is believed to have been behind the US currency's slide to a new global low of 93.70 yen on the overnight New York market.

Japanese Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura alarmed by the dollar's renewed downturn since Thursday, hastily arranged an unusual midnight press conference to give verbal support to the US while Friday's trading was still going on in New York.

Takemura stressed that the world's major economic powers had agreed on cooperative action to support the dollar against speculative moves.

We have deep concerns that foreign exchange rates do not properly reflect. Economic fundamentals but show speculative moves. It is feared that these will undermine sound development of the world economy, he told the news conference that started around 0:30 am Saturday (1530 GMT Friday).

Under such circumstances, authorities in major countries have decided to cooperate in the market, Takemura said.

But the Finance Minister's attempt to bolster the dollar on the New York market proved unsuccessful as US President Bill Clinton failed to follow it up at a news conference.

While acknowledging the treasury's action to support the dollar, Clinton said he would rather not comment on the exchange rate levels.

This was taken by currency market participants as a sign that the US administration was not serious about halting the dollar's slide, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun a leading business daily, said.

The dollar, which was quoted at 95.27-29 yen in Tokyo late Friday plunged past 94 yen to the new global low

in New York later in the day, despite a series of dollar buying interventions by US Japanese and European central banks it was quoted at 94-15-25 there in late Friday trading.

'94 US economic growth a record

WASHINGTON, Mar 5: The economy expanded at a rapid annual rate of 4.6 per cent in the last three months of last year to help make 1994 the strongest year of growth in a decade, says AP.

The Commerce Department on Wednesday reported the advance was slightly more robust in the fourth quarter than its month-old estimate of 4.5 per cent.

While the overall revision, was tiny, the factors that drove the surge were adjusted dramatically and suggest that it may take longer than previously anticipated to rein in the economy's galloping pace.

The Commerce Department said business inventories accumulated at a much slower rate in the fourth quarter than in the previous three months. Analysts said ahead of the report that smaller stockpiles could help sustain growth early this year since it would be easier for consumers to deplete them and spur production to replenish supplies.

The economy increased 3.1 per cent in 1993.

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong Port. Table with columns: Berth No, Name of Vessels, Cargo, L Port, Local Agent, Date of Leaving, Date of Arrival.

Vessels due at Outer Anchorage. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Date of Last Port Arrival, Local Agent, Cargo, Loading Port.

Tanker Due. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Date of Last Port Arrival, Local Agent, Cargo.

Vessels at Kutubdia. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Agent, Date of Arrival.

Vessels at Outer Anchorage. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Agent, Date of Arrival.

Vessels Not Ready. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Agent, Date of Arrival.

Vessels Awaiting Instruction. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Agent, Date of Arrival.

Vessels Not Entering. Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port, Local Agent, Date of Arrival.

Movement of Vessels for 6.3.95. Table with columns: Outgoing, Incoming, Shifting.

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

Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on March 5, 1995

Bullish trend

The Dhaka Stock Exchange experienced a bullish trend on Sunday, the opening day after a three-day Eid vacation.

The DSE All Share Price Index registered a sharp rise of 4.43 points, or 0.54 per cent, increasing to 832.60843 from Wednesday's 828.16879.

Total market capital rose from Taka 42.52 billion to Taka 42.75 billion.

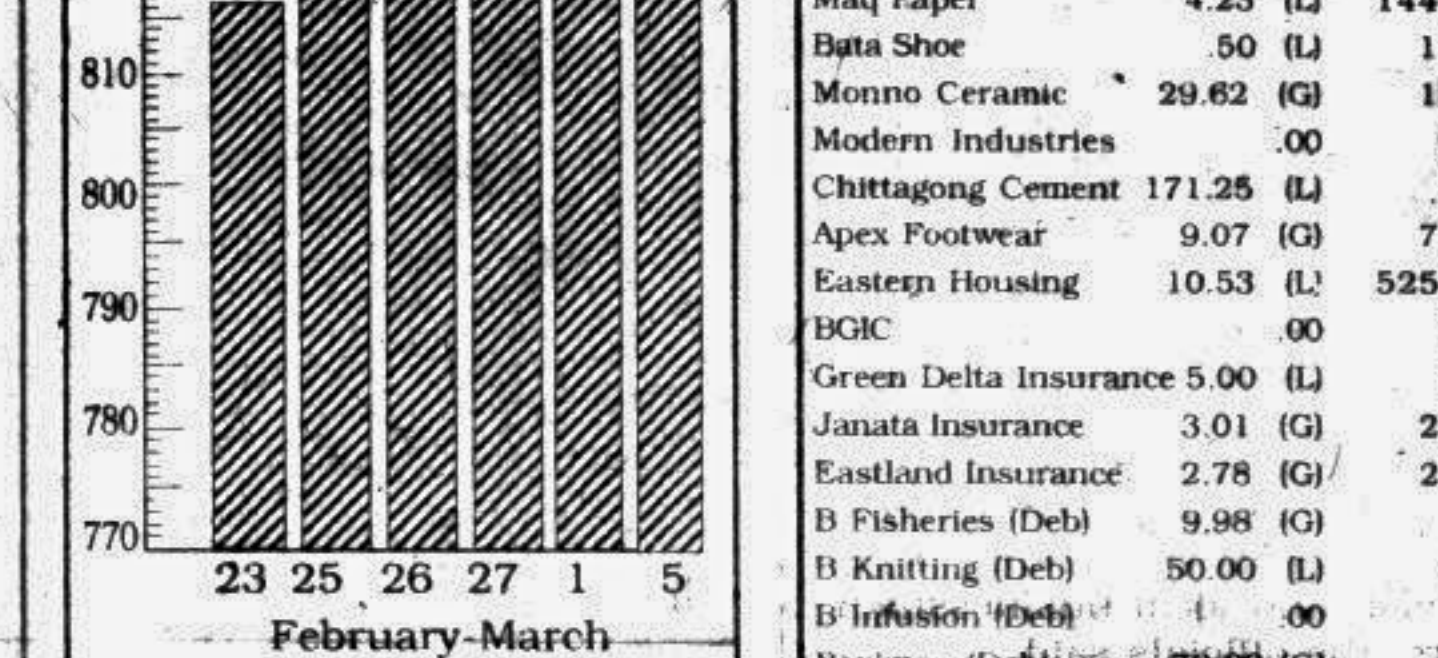
The turnovers on the DSE surged. A total of 88649.00 shares worth Taka 15714273.00 changed hands as against 45693.25 shares valued at Taka 7207278.25.

The changes meant 94.00 per cent and 118.03 per cent increases in the turnovers in volume and value respectively.

The number of issues traded fell from 54 to 47, in which 21 gained, 17 suffered losses and the share prices of nine issues remained unchanged.

Singer Bangladesh enjoyed a gain of Taka 116.05 per share, leading the gainers in terms of value. On the other hand, Aziz Pipes led the losers, incurring a loss of Taka 625.00 per share.

Eastern Housing became the top volume leader of the day, its 52580 shares were traded.



DSE Shares and Debentures

Table listing various companies and their share prices, including dynamic, static, and other financial metrics.

Lehman Brothers settles dispute with Chinese client

HONG KONG, Mar 5: Lehman Brothers, a US investment bank, said Wednesday it has amicably settled a dispute with a Chinese state-owned company over outstanding debts, says AP.

Citic Shanghai, a subsidiary of Citic International Trust and Investment Corp, owed money for losses incurred trading metals in London, Lehman said in a statement.

The losses reportedly totalled 42 million US dollars. Lehman did not announce the value of the settlement.

Lehman also is involved in separate high-profile disputes with two other Chinese state-controlled companies over 100 million US dollars in debts.

The disputes, and a decision by Beijing authorities to evict McDonald's from its biggest restaurant in the capital, chilled foreign investors' confidence about doing business in China.

"But the firm's Hong Kong manager, Jarrett Wait, praised Citic Shanghai for dealing with the dispute quickly and in a 'highly professional manner,'" the statement said.



A young girl plays with a balloon, as she walks past a giant electronic poster with text displaying the number of births in the world at the humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) summit held in Copenhagen on Saturday, two days before the opening of the UN-sponsored world summit for social development.

Prices of cotton, coffee jump, tea higher, sugar, oil lower

LONDON, Mar 5: Never in dealers' memory have cotton prices jumped as high as they did this week, soaring on particularly poor harvests in India, China and Pakistan, and as speculators swarmed into the market, reports AFP.

Cotton appeared to be one of the few commodities to resist the general depressive trend, which saw silver slump to its lowest level for 15 months at 4.4 dollars per ounce. Gold and platinum were also neglected by investors.

Oil followed a similar pattern as patrol prices fell in New York, while sugar was also lower.

On more positive note, coffee and cocoa prices lifted on fears of a cut in production, and after two weeks of lower prices, rubber rebounded as Chinese buyers returned to the market.

LME stocks continued to slump, dropping a weekly 10,000 tonnes to 273,700. A strike at the Australian producer Mount Isa also helped prices firm.

But dealers at GNI predicted that once the tightening of supply - perceived as temporary - had passed, the market prices would quickly move lower, with any falls accentuated by investment funds withdrawing from the market.

LEAD: Stable. Lead eased some 12 dollars before lifting towards the end of the week to end with prices stable at around 600 dollars per tonne, helped by continued down-draws in LME stocks.

Weekly stocks fell by 2,375 tonnes to 311,450.

ZINC: Slightly higher. Zinc prices lifted some 10 dollars during the week, despite a weak start, ending at 1,160 dollars per tonne, again helped by stock's fall.

speculative funds, particularly US, withdrew from the market.

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PLATINUM: Weak. Platinum dropped around 10 dollars during the week, hit by slumping gold and silver prices, to end at 404 dollars per ounce.

COPPER: Active. Copper perked up this week on the London Metal Exchange, recovering after several weeks of decline, rising some 50 dollars to 2,880 dollars per tonne on a tightening supply.

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ALUMINIUM: Stable. After a weak beginning, prices rose after a sharp drop in weekly stocks on the London Metal Exchange, down 57,300 tonnes to 1,365,125 and a surge in the price of nickel.

The market was not significantly affected by announcements of a rise in production in several countries.

The Norwegian Company Sor-Norge Aluminium, the US Group Kaiser and the Ghanaian Company Valco all increased their production or indicated they were ready to do it.

The production increases effectively break an International Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cut production, signed in February 1994, which succeeded in significantly raising aluminium prices.

Produces now appear to want to increase sales at the higher prices, analysts said.

NICKEL: Fluctuating. Nickel prices slumped at the beginning of the week, hit by prospects of higher production in the west, but then recovered significantly hit by a fall in stocks.

Weekly stocks dropped by 1,590 tonnes to 131,392 tonnes.

DEALERS: Stable. Lead eased some 12 dollars before lifting towards the end of the week to end with prices stable at around 600 dollars per tonne, helped by continued down-draws in LME stocks.

Weekly stocks fell by 2,375 tonnes to 311,450.

COFFEE: Jump. Prices soared to their highest level since November at almost 3,200 dollars per tonne on Wednesday before declining to around 3,150 dollars per tonne.

Fears of a cut in the Colombian harvest after a severe drought since early December were the main cause of the rise in prices.

Sales in the South American countries were limited this week because of the carnival celebrations in several countries.

At the end of the week, statements from Bogota that exports would remain at some 11 million bags for the 1994-1995 (October to September) season, despite the drought, calmed prices.

SUGAR: Lower. Prices fell around 12 dollars during the week to 380 dollars per tonne, hit by investment fund liquidation.

After prices slumped in listless trading at the beginning of the week, they rose on buying by a European trade house which was attracted by the particularly low prices.

One London dealers said prices should remain around these levels in the coming weeks. In the longer term, the market could fall at a more marked rate, dealers said.

VEGETABLE OILS: Stable.

Prices of the vegetable oils were generally stable during the week on the Rotterdam market, despite a drop in the price of soya oil on the Chicago market after improved harvests in Brazil.

The price of palm, soya, sunflower and rapeseed oil remained little changed, although the oil world review predicted a cut in prices, which it described as "artificially high," on a coming increase in supply.

The review predicted an exceptional soya harvest for the 1994-1995 season (October to September) and an increase in the production of palm oil.

OIL: Lower. The price of Brent Crude North Sea Oil fell by around 40 cents to end at 16.6 dollars a barrel on a slump in petrol prices on the New York market.

Several large scale investors withdrew from the US market, believing that petrol stocks were too high compared to consumption, said Brendan Wilders, an analyst with Hoare Govett.

Wilders also explained that the end of winter had contributed to a fall in prices, as demand and consumption are normally stronger during colder weather.

Stocks figures from the American petroleum institute had little influence on prices.

RUBBER: Higher. Rubber prices bounced up to around 1,200 pounds per tonne after two weeks at lower levels, as Chinese buyers returned to the market.

Chinese industrial buyers purchased a lot of rubber, particularly from Malaysia, explained Richard Smeethers, a dealer for Lewis and Peat.

The US market was particularly nervous after a drop in demand which then suddenly increased on fears that the next harvest could be hit by frost in the plains in the centre of the country.

TEA: Higher. The average price on the Lifford auction market rose by one penny to 107 pence per kilo on firm demand for African teas.

COTTON: Highest ever. The cotton outlook reference price soared to its highest ever price at 110 cents per pound on growing world demand and weaker harvest from the main producer countries, except the United States.

Pests have infected the harvests from key producers Pakistan, India and China for the past two years, provoking a cut in the volume harvested.

The jump in prices was not even halted by higher world production estimates for 1995-1996 (July to June) from the International Cotton Advisory Committee from 18.47 million tonnes to 19.52 million tonnes.

But many uncertainties still surround the Chinese harvest. If, as specialists predict, it is weak, Chinese imports will continue to be strong and prices will remain firm for another year.

WOOL: Stable. The Bradford reference price remained stable at around 532 pence per kilo on the continued effect of strong Chinese demand on the Australian market.