

# Jyoti Basu blames reforms for economic woes

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: India's best-known Communist leader Jyoti Basu yesterday said the country's economic woes were a result of the market reforms of 1991 which opened protected sectors to foreign investment, reports AFP.

Basu, Chief Minister of the state of West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh, said liberalisation had not yielded the "desired results" and warned of a "serious crisis" if corrective steps were not taken.

"We have been repeatedly proposing an alternative approach to tackle the economic problems," the Press Trust of India quoted him as saying in the state capital Calcutta.

"Foreign capital can be allowed in some specific areas for mutual benefit, but indiscrimi-

nate opening up will have disastrous consequences," he said. Basu's Communist Party of India (Marxist), the main leftist grouping, blames spiralling inflation and a sharp annual decline in economic growth to the 1991 measures, which ended four decades of socialist policies.

Prices of vital staples nearly doubled during the year while onions, a favourite vegetable across the country, shot up to nearly 70 rupees (6 dollars) a kilogramme from 10 rupees due to a shortage before climbing down.

"Even the presidents of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have said that there is a need for inspection," Basu said.

He claimed "nearly 80 per cent" of India's 975 million

people, mainly the working class and the poor, had been badly hit by inflation.

India's economy grew 5.1 per cent in the year to March 1998, down from 7.5 per cent the previous year.

The government has targeted growth of six per cent in the current fiscal year but analysts say it is not likely to be met.

India's economic slowdown began in October 1996, about the time when political instability hit New Delhi. The country has been ruled by weak coalitions since then.

The fiscal deficit is about six per cent or 20 billion dollars of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the government is aiming to limit it to 5.6 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal year to March 1999.



The opening ceremony of the 38th sales and service centre of Rang Electronics Ltd at Hamaed Uddin Road in Barisal Friday.

— Rang photo

## Exchange Rates

American Express Bank Ltd foreign exchange rates (indicative) against the Taka to clients.					
Currency	Selling TT & OD	Buying TT Clean	Selling BC	Buying OD Sight Exp Bill	Buying OD Transfer
USD	48.7050	48.7450	48.3100	48.1570	48.0850
GBP	82.2774	80.8651	82.3449	80.6293	80.5067
DEM	29.4201	28.9195	29.4443	28.8270	28.7618
GFR	36.3416	35.6479	36.3714	35.5350	35.4818
JPY	0.4222	0.4134	0.4226	0.4121	0.4115
NLG	26.1321	25.6314	26.1536	25.5502	25.5120
DKK	7.7642	7.5745	7.7706	7.5506	7.5392
AUD	30.6793	29.4401	30.7045	29.3469	29.3030
BEF	1.4198	1.4040	1.4207	1.3995	1.3974
CAD	31.8542	30.9679	31.8803	30.8699	30.8237
FRF	8.8298	8.5671	8.8370	8.5400	8.5272
HKD	6.3010	6.2250	6.3062	6.2052	6.1960
ITL	0.0315	0.0276	0.0317	0.0275	0.0275
SGD	29.9539	28.9628	29.9785	28.8711	28.8279
SAR	13.0123	12.8313	13.0230	12.7907	12.7716
AED	13.2972	13.1167	13.3081	13.0751	13.0556
SEK	6.0748	5.9960	6.0798	5.9770	5.9681
QAR	13.4229	13.2302	13.4339	13.1883	13.1686
KWD	167.0840	154.9639	167.2213	154.4731	154.2422
THB	1.3277	1.3122	1.3287	1.3081	1.3061
ECU	58.2853	56.3150	58.3331	56.1366	56.0527

Bill Buying Rates:					
TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
48.2112	47.9074	47.5048	47.1023	46.6997	46.2971

US dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) as of December 20, 1998					
Buying	Selling	Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months
Cash	48.0850	USD	5.98	6.58	6.98
T/C	48.0850	GBP	6.98	6.98	6.98

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollars					
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won
49.5042	52.2552	36.8036	3.79773	775/785	1206.5/1216.00

**Amex notes on Sunday's market**  
USD/BDT market was moderately active on Sunday as most of the international centers remained closed due to weekend. Most of the USD/BDT transactions were done at 48.6500-48.6510 level in the interbank market.

The call money market was active with rates ranging between 7.00-7.50 per cent. The Government accepted Treasury bills worth Tk 4.5955 billion on Sunday. Treasury bills worth Tk 4.33 billion were accepted for 28 days with 8.23 per cent highest yield and 7.98 per cent lowest yield. Treasury bills worth Tk 265.5 million were accepted for 91 days with 8.96 per cent highest yield and 8.95 per cent lowest yield.

In the international market on Friday the US dollar rebounded from overnight lows to post modest US gains. The dollar's rise was boosted by investors seeking safety from any potential global economic fallout from the on-going US-British bombing in Iraq. Market players who sold greenbacks early, squared up and bought dollars back ahead of a weekend that could produce market moving news on the US impeachment debate and the latest Middle East conflict.

In New York on Friday, the majors closed against USD at 1.6625/6635 DEM, 116.05/116.15 JPY, 5.5760/5790 FRF, 1.3472/3482 CHF, and GBP at 1.6813/6823 USD.

## Shipping Intelligence

### Chittagong port

#### Berth position and performance of vessels as on 17.12.98

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Dalmajia Prigo	Onion	Turk	MSA	12/12	21/12
J/2	Royal Pescadores	R Seed/Gl	Sing	Litmond	29/11	23/12
J/3	Yasmina	Gl	Yang	SMSL	7/12	20/12
J/4	Ellisbeth Boye	Gl	Mada	Litmond	12/12	20/12
J/5	Yanglin	Gl	Xing	Prog	22/11	19/12
J/6	Hai Nan No 1	C Clink	Sing	MSL	9/12	22/12
J/7	Ken Pan	Wheat(G)	Nor	OWSL	9/12	22/12
J/8	Kimdong	Rice(G)	Hald	MSL	11/12	18/12
J/9	Al Muztuba	Rice(P)	Kchi	CLA	10/12	18/12
J/10	QC Pintail	Cont	Sing	QCSL	13/12	17/12
J/11	Golden D	Wheat(G)	KDIA	Frank	R/A	23/12
J/12	AB-3	Cont	Tam	QCSL	16/12	17/12
J/13	Lassa	Wheat(P)	P Land	Leas	25/11	18/12
CCT/1	QC Teal	Cong	Sing	QCSL	14/12	18/12
CCT/2	Budi Aman	Cont	Sing	RSL	12/12	20/12
CCT/3	Bunga Mas Enam	C Clink	P Kel	EOSL	10/12	18/12
RM/14	Al Swamuz	C Clink	CKA	ASLL	30/11	21/12
CSJ	ABU Anand	C Clink	Tam	Leas	18/12	18/12
GSI	Sea Bird	Wheat(G)	K Dia	Frank	R/A	17/12
TSP	Southathip Naree	Repair	Ham	Move	10/12	25/12
RM/5	Nidia	HSD	Sing	MSSTPL	13/12	17/12
DOJ/1	Tanary star	Idle	Para	PSAL	14/12	30/12
DOJ/2	Banglar Asha	Repair	Mong	RSL	14/12	18/12
RM/3	Penguin	Repair	Yang	BSC	11/12	18/12
RM/9	Banglar Mamata	Repair	Yang	BSC	R/A	21/12
KAF						
CO(U)	Jiang Yang	PSSP	Sing	TMIL	1/12	20/12

#### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Midwest Angela (24)	17/12	Yang	AML	Gl	-
Ocean-1	18/12	Yang	SMSL	Gl	-
Martina	18/12	-	USTC	Cement	-
Seodilake	17/12	-	AASS	Gl	-
Ivan Korotkov	17/12	-	-	-	-
Banglar Robi(Cont)	18/12	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Yick Hua	19/12	-	Ancient	Wheat(G)	-
Marine Union (48)	18/12	Sing	RML	Gl	-
Asian Leader (Roro/24)	18/12	Cal	JF	Vehi	-
Prochit(Cont)	18/12	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Adventure	19/12	-	Seagory	Wheat(P)	-
Rangmit	18/12	Sing	IPL	Cont	Sing
Jorung Balsam (Cont)	20/12	Sing	Noi	Cont	Sing
Kota Singa (Cont)	18/12	Sing	Phil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Dong Long-1	23/12	Cal	MSL	Rice(P)	-
Juan	23/12	Cal	Royal	Rice(G)	-
Xing Ye	22/12	-	-	-	-
Manashul(Cont)14/12	21/12	-	RSL	Gl	Sing
Min Jiang	20/12	-	Bdship	Cont	-
AK Venture	20/12	-	CLA	Rice(P)/Gl	-
Kota Berjaya (Cont)	20/12	Sing	Phil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Richmond(Cont)	20/12	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Diligence (Cont)Cont	21/12	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Bunga Mas Lapan (Cont)	22/12	Sing	EOSL	Cont	Sing
Acan Jumbo	22/12	-	Oil	Gl	-
Banglar Shikha (Cont)	24/12	Sing	Phil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Sea Gallant (Cont)	24/12	Sing	Phil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Maple Aries (48)	25/12	-	-	-	-
Vishva Kaumudi	25/12	-	SSSL	Rice(G)	-
Kota Naga (Cont)	25/12	Sing	Phil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Xpress Padma (Cont)	25/12	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Bang Birl (Cont)10/12	25/12	Sing	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Mary bay	26/12	-	Lamps	Wheat(G)	-
Ortange Moon (Roro/24)	27/12	-	BBA	Vehi	-
Sin Hai (Cont)	27/12	Sing	RSL	Cont	-
Osea Venture (Roro/24)	4/01/99	-	BBA	Vehi	-

#### Tanker due

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Zee Brugce	17/12	Para	ANCL	-	-
Pranetya Dwitya	18/12	Sing	CTPL	F Oil	-
Uznadze	20/12	-	Malt	Lube Oil	-

#### Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Seabulk Command	-	-	IBS	R/A30/11
SS Juneau	Wheat(G)	USA	SSST	(2/12)
Makmur Perkasa	Wheat(G)	Mong	Frank	R/A14/12
Sea Phoenix	Wheat(G)	Vanc	AASS	8/12

#### Vessels at outer anchorage:

Ready on:	Gl	Col	Bdship	12/12
Yong Jiang	Gl	Sang	Bdship	11/12
Xia Men	C Clink	Taje	PSAL	12/12
Al Quamar	Gl	Tiang	Bdship	11/12
Jiang Chuan	Wheat(G)	Leha	OWSL	13/12
Aghia Sophi	Cont	Col	Baridhi	14/12
Makassar Express (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Phil(Bd)	14/12
Kota Chaya (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Phil(Bd)	13/12
Acacia (Cont)	Cont	Sing	ANCL	15/12
Viva Ocean	Urea	Sing	Seacom	13/12
Mingzhou-3	Wheat(G)	Col	BSC	R/A11/12
Banglar Maya	Cont	Col	QCSL	14/12
Hibiscus(Cont)	-	-	-	-

#### Vessels awaiting instruction

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Karya Sentosa	Rice(G)	Kaki	OWSL	R/A18/9
Rongliang	Rice(P)	Kaki	Cross	R/A9/9
Delta Star	-	-	RSA	R/A7/9
Surabaya Express	-	-	BSC	R/A6/9
Banglar Shourab	-	-	BSC	R/A10/9
Banglar Jyoti	-	-	BSC	R/A15/9
Sea World	-	-	BSC	R/A15/12
Cosmic	-	-	Mong	13/12
Darin Naree	-	-	Total	R/A1/12
Barge Wombat/LcMacaroux	-	-	Karna	R/A30/10

#### Vessels not entering

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Izmail	-	Col	USTC	3/07
Al Salamas	-	-	ASLL	R/A18/11
Morretes	Scraping	Baha	AHZ	2/12
Saudi Glory	-	Peng	H&H	13/12
Atolikos	Scraping	Rayo	AHZ	14/12
Namreen-1	Repair	Darb	AHZ	11/12

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

## Uncertainty about US economy Yen surges while other Asian units end mixed against dollar

HONG KONG, Dec 20: The yen rose against the US dollar over the past week amid US-led air strikes against Iraq, with dealers no longer treating the greenback as a "safe haven" currency in times of crisis, reports AFP.

Uncertainty about the prospects for the US economy and the threat of impeachment against President Clinton depressed the dollar.

Other Asian currencies ended mixed against the dollar but the Iraqi situation was not seen as a major market moving factor.

**JAPANESE YEN:** The yen rallied against the dollar in the week on mounting concern about the US economic outlook and caution over the Iraqi crisis and impeachment moves against President Clinton, dealers said.

Uncertainty about the US economy pushed the yen to a five-week high Monday but it fell back to the 117 level Tuesday as investors followed up on the previous day's dollar buying in New York.

"There are ongoing concerns over the prospects for the US economy and thus it is hard for the dollar to bounce back to 120 yen level," an Asahi Bank dealer said.

The yen rose to 115 Wednesday with investors looking to the looming impeachment debate, it is traded at around 116.00 in the later part of the week.

**AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR:** The Australian dollar's fate will be determined in the week ahead by commodity prices after losing almost half a US cent over

the week, dealer said. The Australian dollar closed on Friday at 62.000 US cents from 62.40 the week before.

"The dollar is weathering the bearish commodity story but analysts question how long this can last," said colonial state bank chief economist Craig James.

"We believe the local currency will drift towards 60 US cents in coming weeks."

Commonwealth Bank economists said the Christmas week would be quiet with more attention focused on the launch of the euro in January which could destabilise currency markets.

"We think the dollar will edge higher, although still-low commodity prices and apprehension of slower international economic growth will limit the extent of Australian dollar appreciation," said Commonwealth Bank economist David Moore.

On the reserve banks trade weighted index, the currency ended the week at 53.9 from 54.1, the week before.

**NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR:** The New Zealand dollar closed on Friday worth 52.25 US cents, barely changed from the 52.36 of a week earlier.

Dealer said it had barely moved all week and by Friday was moving on low volumes, "I guess you could say it's a typical seasonal market," said one.

**SINGAPORE DOLLAR:** The Singapore dollar ended higher at the end of the week against the US dollar at 1.6480 from 1.6485 the previous week.

**HONG KONG DOLLAR:** The Hong Kong unit closed on Fri-

day at 7.746-7.747, to the greenback, unchanged from the previous week.

**INDONESIAN RUPIAH:** The rupiah weakened to close the week at 7.800 to the dollar compared to the previous weeks close of 7.480.

Bank Indonesia Governor Sjahril Sabirin attributed the drop partly to a seasonal increase in corporate and individual demand for foreign currency, "one may say the rupiah has weekend but I don't think it is significant," he said.

**PHILIPPINE PESO:** The peso fell 0.4 per cent against the dollar week-on-week, closing at 39.20 pesos on Friday from 39.04 the previous Friday.

**TAIWAN DOLLAR:** The Taiwan dollar rose 0.1 per cent against the greenback over the week to settle at 32.265 Saturday, dealer said.

They expected it to rise further amid increasing local demand before the end of the year.

**THAI BAHT:** The baht fell against the dollar over the week, closing Friday at 36.65-75 compared to the previous weeks close of 35.79-80.

The depreciation was due to the failure of the financial sector restructuring authority auction at which loans seized from closed finance firms were put up for sale, dealers said.

On Monday, before the auction, the baht registered its highest level of the year at 35.59.

The US-led air strikes on Iraq also hit the value of the baht as investors headed for the safe haven of the dollar.

## 38th Rang sales centre opens in Barisal

Rang Electronics Ltd opened its 38th sales and service centre at Hamaed Uddin Road, Barisal, on Friday as part of its expansion and better customer services programme, says a press release issued yesterday.

The centre was inaugurated by Aktar Hossen, Managing Director of