

India's forex earnings from textile sector up by 14 pc

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Foreign exchange earnings through export of textile/clothing reached 442.98 billion rupees (10.30 billion US dollars) in 1998-99, an increase of 14.45 per cent over the previous fiscal year, reports Xinhua.

According to the Southern India Mills Association (SIMA), the percentage of these items in the total export of all commodities also registered an increase of 31.25 per cent from 29.62 per cent in 1997-98.

Meanwhile, exports of cotton textiles (millmade, power-loomed and handloomed) rose by 10 per cent from 149.72 billion rupees (3.48 billion US dollars) to 164.48 billion rupees (3.83 billion US dollars.)

The country's cotton yarn exports recorded a modest increase of 1.61 million kilos to reach 485.17 million kilos.

ROK hails lifting of US sanctions against DPRK

SEOUL, Sept 18: South Korea today welcomed the United States' partial lifting of its economic sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), reports Xinhua.

In a statement, South Korean Foreign Ministry said the partial lifting of sanctions is in line with the comprehensive engagement policy pursued by the Kim Dae-jung government and has fostered an atmosphere favorable to the policy.

It said Seoul will continue the engagement policy and urged the DPRK to respond to the US measure to clear suspicions over the DPRK missile development programme.

US President Bill Clinton has announced to ease trade and economic sanctions against Pyongyang.

The measure, the first since the end of the Korean War in 1953, will allow the export of US consumer goods to the DPRK and will permit the import of the DPRK's commodities.

However, Washington said it will reimpose the sanctions if Pyongyang resumes testing missiles of any kind as both sides move towards normal relations.

FAO sees fall in world's cereal output

ROME, Sept 18: World cereal output will fall 0.7 per cent year-on-year in 1999-2000, pushing stocks back below the minimum necessary to safeguard global food security, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said yesterday, reports Reuters.

The FAO forecast cereal production would slip to 1,870 million tonnes in the 1999-2000 growing seasons against 1,884 million last year and 1,905 million tonnes in 1997-98.

The Rome-based agency said in its latest quarterly food outlook that its forecast was 12 million tonnes higher than its previous estimate in June.

"However, at this level output would still be below consumption requirements and cereal crops accumulated over the past three seasons would have to be drawn down by four per cent to 323 million tonnes," the report said.

"As a result, the ratio of global cereal stocks in 1999-2000 to trend utilisation in the following year would fall to 16.9 per cent," it said.

The FAO Secretariat considers a ratio of 17.8 per cent the minimum necessary to guarantee world food security.

The FAO's ratio stood at an all-time low of 13.6 per cent in 1995-96 but has been climbing steadily since and reached 17.8 per cent last year.

The agency revised its forecast for world cereal imports up to 218 million tonnes — two per cent higher than last season.

"The increase ... is based on expectations of larger imports by the developed countries, especially by the Russian Federation," FAO said.

"Cereal utilisation is forecast to exceed production and, hence, would require some drawdown of carryover stocks."

Global wheat production was seen falling 2.7 per cent year on year to 579 million tonnes, unchanged from its June report.

FAO raised its forecast for global wheat imports in 1999-2000 to 101.5 million tonnes, 1.5 million tonnes higher than in June and three million tonnes more than last year.

"This is mainly attributed to higher import demand in Asia," it said, noting a recent rally in international wheat prices.

Videocon to make TV sets in Bahrain

MANAMA, Sept 18: The Indian electronics firm Videocon is to manufacture television sets in Bahrain for the Gulf region, in a new joint venture costing 30 million dollars, a newspaper said today, reports AFP.

The Bahrain Tribune said Videocon would own 49 per cent of the new factory with Bahrain's United Commercial Agencies (UCA) holding the other 51 per cent. The first TV set will be manufactured in October 2000.

The plant will also build refrigerators, washing machines and air-conditioners. Bahrain's will account for up to 40 per cent of its workforce.

TMF should go back to basics'

Experts urge int'l lenders to shun massive rescue deals

WASHINGTON, Sept 18: An expert group yesterday urged international lenders to shun the massive rescue deals of recent years, and said countries should discourage the sort of "hot money" that brought Asia's economies to their knees, says Reuters.

The bankers and economists in a report for New York's influential Council for Foreign Affairs, said some country borrowers should get International Monetary Fund cash at lower interest rates than others and the IMF should rank countries according to their ability to meet international standards.

The fund should go "back to basics" concentrating on monetary and currency issues rather than on the structural reforms that have grown fashionable in recent years, it said.

"I am pretty confident that within two years, most of the recommendations of our report will be being met," said Morris Goldstein, a former IMF official who chaired the task force of 29 which drew up the report. "In most cases they are already moving in that direction."

The report aimed to create incentives to borrowers to strengthen crisis prevention, and to ensure the private sector shared the cost of resolving crises when they do occur.

Some of the recommendations are likely to upset the bankers in groups such as the Institute for International Finance, which said on Thursday that burden-sharing was a flawed notion that could backfire.

The document made seven

key suggestions. Other ideas, including suggestions for target ranges for the world's three major currency groups, failed to win full support from the experts and were included as a "dissenting view."

The main recommendations were as follows:

— The IMF should lend on more favourable terms to countries adopting sound policies which appear less likely to face financial crises. The IMF should publish a "standards report" for each country, effectively joining the ratings game.

— Countries should impose "transparent and nondiscriminatory" taxes on volatile short-term capital to discourage hot money and encourage long-term investment.

— Borrowing countries should meet to set priorities on how to strengthen national financial systems.

— Lenders should not provide money to countries trying to maintain "unsustainable" currency pegs holding their currencies within tight ranges against the dollar or another currency.

— The IMF should abandon the large rescue packages which distinguished the Asian crisis from previous financial problems and stick to its normal lending limits.

— The IMF should focus on monetary and exchange rate policies, and the World Bank should concentrate on structural reforms.

— Finance ministers should meet to set priorities on how to strengthen national financial systems.

Yen recoils on jt BOJ-Fed intervention threat

LONDON, Sept 18: The yen recoiled further yesterday amid a threat of concerted market intervention by the Bank of Japan and the US Federal Reserve to reverse its heady appreciation of recent weeks, says AFP.

The dollar pushed up to 106.92 yen from 105.06 on Thursday evening here. The euro bobbed back above the 110 yen level to 111.15 yen from 109.50 on Thursday evening.

The single European currency eased gently against the greenback, marginally to 1.0396 drs from 1.0422 drs on Thursday evening.

The yen has soared 15 per cent in the past two months, before peaking near 103 to the dollar this week and then falling back amid fears of more significant market intervention not just by the Bank of Japan, but by a clutch of leading central banks.

Discussion on joint intervention is now underway among the G7 nations,

Japanese Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa warned on Friday in a comment that immediately took some of the steam out of the yen.

Japanese Vice Finance Minister Haruhiko Kuroda met his US counterpart Timothy Geithner on Thursday to discuss the problem, which is also due to be broached during next weekend's G7 meeting in Washington.

Analysts however were sceptical on the prospects of a multinational mission to stop the yen from steamrolling over Japan's fragile economic recovery.

"Japan is probably making a lot of smoke without fire," said BakBostom strategist Jeffrey Woodruff. The United States thinks the strong yen is a Japanese problem, he said.

The analyst added that if the Japanese warnings come to nothing, the yen would start rising again, possibly even testing the 100-to-the-dollar threshold.

Sterling meanwhile redid its form to push back above 1.62 dollars amid a climate of increasing conviction over the likelihood of more interest rate rises.

Woodruff said the market was looking for the pound to profit from expectations of further interest rate hikes to follow last week's monetary tightening, as the Bank of England never does anything in one step.

The euro was being traded at 1.0396 dollars (1.0422), 111.15 yen (105.50), 0.6402 pounds (0.6417), 1.6052 Swiss francs (1.6028).

The dollar was being traded at 106.92 yen (105.06) and 1.5445 Swiss francs (1.5380).

Sterling was being traded at 1.6235 dollars (1.6252), 173.60 yen (170.65) and 2.5075 Swiss francs (2.4990).

The gold spot price fell further on the London Bullion Market to 254.90 dollars an ounce from 256.25 dollars.

Philippine trade data confirm strong recovery

MANILA, Sept 18: Philippine imports rose in July to their highest level since the beginning of last year, confirming a string of strong economic indicators, reports AP.

The National Statistics Office said Thursday that imports in June rose 13.2 per cent from a year earlier to \$2,791 billion, the highest level since the \$2,838 billion recorded for January 1998.

Imports of electronics and components, accounting for close to a quarter of total imports, rose 40.1 per cent to \$655.37 million in July from the year-earlier month. The components are used to manufacture electronic products that are the backbone of the Philippines' exports and have sustained the country's strong economic recovery this year.

In the seven months to July, the Philippines posted a trade surplus of \$755 million, compared with a deficit of \$1,438 billion last year. For July alone, a surplus of \$60 million was recorded, compared with a surplus of \$35 million a year earlier.

Economists said they were heartened by the rise for a second straight month in imports of capital goods, such as office and telecommunications equipment.



Japan's video game maker Konami's employee Shinobu Miura, clad in costume of game character Cutie Honey, shows off a portable video game machine Bemani-Pocket at the world's largest video game exhibition Tokyo Game Show at Makuhari, suburban Tokyo on Saturday. Some 150,000 people are expected to visit a three-day event.

— AFP photo

Brazil, Argentina stumped on shoe trade dispute

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 18: Brazilian and Argentine trade negotiators remained stumped yesterday on how to find a common footing in their shoe trade dispute but said talks resumed between industry leaders of their nations, according to private news agency Dyn, says Reuters.

Trade between the two countries, members of the \$1 trillion Mercosur trade bloc with Uruguay and Paraguay, was tripped up two months ago when Argentina threatened to impose quotas on Brazilian shoe imports to mute the impact of Brazil's 30 per cent currency devaluation in January.

"In the first eight months of this year Brazilian shoe imports have increased 70 per cent. August alone was 100 per cent higher than August of 1998," said Carlos Bueno, president of the Argentine Shoe Manufacturers' Association.

The row forced an emergency meeting in Uruguay last month that ended inconclusively and two days later Argentina's Industry Department imposed a new labeling requirement on all shoes sold in this market, erecting a new hurdle to Brazilian imports. Trade officials in Buenos Aires to address that.

Serving girls raise litre jugs on a floral-decorated stage at the start of the annual Munich October Beer Festival Saturday. The festival, which lasts until October 3, is expected to attract this year some 6 million visitors from all parts of the globe.

— AFP photo

Metal: Weekly Roundup

Gold falls victim to market caution, silver follows

hit further by technical sales, dealers said.

On the London Bullion Market, silver prices lost a modest four cents to 5.14 dollars an ounce.

Dealers predicted that prices could dip below five dollars an ounce in the near future, but if they did fall that low, then buying on the physical market would lead to a speedy recovery.

The gold spot price on the London Bullion Market fell by 1.2 dollars to 255.20 dollars an ounce.

Trading on the New York futures market was subdued as dealers took shelter from Hurricane Floyd to the detriment of market activity.

Trading volume here was extremely light ahead of the second auction by the central bank, which plans to sell more than half of its gold reserves to hold instead high-return currency assets.

The gold price slumped to the lowest points for more than 20 years after the last auction in July.

Dealers said that while they did not predict such a dramatic decline after next week's sale, they were unwilling to take up fresh positions ahead of the auction.

Gold prices have been under severe selling pressure since May, when the Bank of England announced its intention to sell 415 tonnes of its 715-tonne stockpile over the next four years.

In spite of the immediate market concern, some dealers said that the medium-term outlook for the metal was far more promising, with considerable gains expected in the coming weeks.

Silver: Silver prices followed gold lower and were

decreased to lock out its workforce.

The giant Canadian producer, Inco, decided on Thursday to impose a lock-out of the 1,050 workers at its Thompson complex in Manitoba, central Canada, which produces six per cent of Western nickel output.

The move came after unions overwhelmingly rejected a pay deal put forward by management.

While nickel prices were the main beneficiary of the announcement, copper also rose because the red metal is also mined there, although in smaller quantities.

Aluminum and zinc followed their sisters higher and gained further from a fall in market reserves.

Tin, meanwhile, fell back from the highs seen during the previous week.

And lead fell victim to a surge in LME stocks.

Three-month copper prices gained 18.5 dollars to 1,807.5 dollars per tonne after a fall of 4,150 tonnes in LME reserves to 776,225 tonnes.

Nickel gained 40 dollars to 7,225 dollars per tonne.

Aluminum prices rose by 29 dollars to 1,546.5 dollars per tonne after a fall of 1,325 tonnes in market stocks to 793,950 tonnes.

Zinc prices rose by 6.5 dollars an ounce to 1,226 dollars per tonne. LME stocks fell by 1,225 tonnes to 279,700 tonnes.

Lead lost 17 dollars to 513 dollars per tonne after market stocks rose by 6,275 tonnes to 141,325 tonnes.

Tin lost 25 dollars to 5,460 dollars per tonne.

We believe the next two months will be very chaotic and take those perpetual grins off those who think the bull market is still alive," Hays said.

McCabe said the market sell-off could take place in October.

COURSE TITLE AND RELEVANT INFORMATION	COURSE CONTENT
38. Course No: CE-U106 Colorimetric Methods of Analysis Participants: Lab-Analysts/Technicians Duration: 25-30 September, 1999 Course fee: Tk. 3000 per person	Basic theory, classification of colorimetric methods; Instrumentation of photometer & UV-visible spectrophotometer; application in various fields. Calibration & practices.
39. Course No: PT-U304 Heat Transfer and Operation of Heat Exchangers Participants: Junior & mid-level officers Duration: 03-14 October, 1999 Course fee: Tk. 5000 per person	Heat transfer process & heat transfer calculations. Factors influencing heat transfer. Construction, working principle & uses of