

US to press for  
Middle East  
trade reform

WASHINGTON, Oct 8: US Commerce Secretary William Daley said yesterday he would press leaders in the Middle East to lower tariffs and other barriers to boost economic ties and investment in the region, reports Reuters.

Daley, who will lead a delegation of US government officials and business executives to Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from Oct 9-18, said progress in peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians should increase investor confidence in the Middle East.

"I am going to the region more optimistic than I ever have been," Daley said in speech at Georgetown University in Washington. "While we do not know the ultimate outcome, we know this for sure: for the first time in several years the character of the peace process has changed."

The parties are making commitments to each other, negotiating with each other. I am convinced this new chapter in peace can bring new opportunities for American businesses, and at the same time help the people of the Middle East get jobs," Daley added in prepared remarks.

Daley said he would urge government officials during the trade mission to put reforms in place that would lower tariffs, improve market access, and protect intellectual property rights.

Daley said he would urge Jordan to speed the pace of privatisation and to implement commercial reforms that should clear the way for Amman to join the World Trade Organisation.

Daley said he hoped to expand trade ties with Israel, and help Palestinians President Yasser Arafat attract foreign investment.

Turkish forex  
reserves up

ANKARA, Oct 8: The Turkish central bank's foreign currency reserves rose slightly to \$23.587 billion in the week ended on October 1, from \$23.583 billion on September 24, the bank said in its weekly bulletin, reports Reuters.

Its gold reserves were unchanged at \$1.012 billion.

The bank's foreign currency reserves were \$19.721 billion and gold reserves \$1.012 billion at the end of 1998.

The bank said Turkey's gross international foreign exchange reserves fell \$550 million to \$36.187 billion in the week ended September 17, according to the latest data available. Some \$11.647 billion of it belonged to commercial banks and \$23.529 billion to the central bank.

13-point action plan submitted  
Indian industry urges Vajpayee  
to give economy top priority

NEW DELHI, Oct 8: India's top industrialists wasted no time today in lobbying Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to make the economy the main priority of his new government.

Political instability had subsided after the ruling alliance led by Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist BJP party won an overall majority in parliament.

Vajpayee's clear victory in the polls will impart the much-needed political stability in the country and allow the focus to shift back to the economy, said Bajaj.

Bajaj said Vajpayee must take a lead in downsizing government as India's four million strong civil service was "too large, too flabby and too costly."

He also felt it was not fair to overburden industry with high corporate taxes, which might be imposed to offset the high costs of the recent Kashmir conflict.

"If it comes to a pinch, industry is willing to pay a one-time war tax ... but before killing the golden goose by imposing high taxes the government should cut costs," said Bajaj.

This will only happen if the government is trimmed. Misdirected subsidies must also be stopped," said Bajaj.

Bajaj also said there was a need to build strong regulatory institutions in the financial, insurance and telecoms sectors since India was moving towards

a market economy. "Liberalisation means less government control but more regulations," said Bajaj.

Improved view not due  
to economy: Moody's

According to a Reuters report from New York, Moody's Investors Service said it was the promise of increased political stability and economic reform that prompted it to raise its credit outlook for India, not the strength of the Indian economy as a government minister claimed.

The ratings agency on Wednesday upped its outlook on India from stable to positive. Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha said Thursday the change recognised the "inherent strength of the Indian economy."

But later in the day Moody's lead India analyst Kristin Lindow said the improvement in outlook had nothing to do with the economy, but with the likelihood that the next government will stay in power long enough to implement needed reforms.

It's important to understand what the change is not linked to," Lindow said. "The economy minister seized on the turnaround in the economy as having been important for our decision. It was not."

The turnaround in the economy is partly due to underlying reforms, but mainly it is cyclical. Business cycles really don't have anything to do with sovereign ratings," Lindow said.

Moody's rates India's foreign and domestic currency debt Ba2.

"This will give them more time to formulate new economic and political reform legislation and get it passed," she said. "This was an important consideration in the outlook change."

Standard & Poor's rates India's foreign currency debt BB and its local currency debt BB, both with stable outlook.

But the proof of economic reform will be in the shrinking of the country's budget deficit, he said.

Gazprom sale  
failure to  
pressure Russia

LONDON, Oct 8: The apparent failure to find a buyer for a stake in Russian gas monopoly Gazprom GAZP. MO GAZPQ. L will put further pressure on the Russian government as it struggles to increase budget revenues and re-negotiate Soviet-era debt owed to the London Club of creditors, Merrill Lynch said today, reports Reuters.

This pressure is made worse by the apparent impasse between the IMF and Russia, which is delaying the release of a \$640 million loan tranche, Merrill said in a report on Friday.

Gazprom Chairman Rem Vyakhirev said on Thursday he could not find buyer for the 2.5-3.37 per cent of Gazprom shares on offer because of the \$11.50 per American Depository Share price being imposed.

"But I said: 'Nobody's going to buy at that price, that's all I could recommend,'" Vyakhirev told a gas industry summit in Paris on Thursday.

China's growth  
to reach 7.6pc  
in '99: Experts

BEIJING, Oct 8: China's economic growth is likely to reach 7.6 per cent for 1999 compared with an initial forecast of just seven per cent, an official think-tank predicted today, reports AFP.

The growth rate of China's economy is projected to surpass the seven per cent target set early this year, with gross domestic product (GDP) rising by about 7.6 per cent for the year, the official Xinhua news agency said, quoting a report by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

The economy was also expected to maintain a growth rate between 7.5 and eight per cent in 2000, the report said.

It forecast 10 per cent growth in flagging retail sales. China's retail prices fell by 3.2 per cent in the first half of the year compared with the same period the year before.

Industrial growth would hit nine per cent, agriculture would grow by 3.5 per cent, and the service sector record a seven per cent growth rate, it said.

A massive government spending programme on major infrastructure projects aimed at boosting flagging growth would taper off gradually next year however.

Total fixed-asset investment was projected to reach 3,130 billion yuan (378 billion dollars) this year and 3,410 billion yuan (411 billion dollars) next year, growing by 10.3 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively.

## Weekly Currency Roundup

October 3-October 7, 1999

## Local Market

The local foreign exchange market last week made a subdued start as the opposition called a strike on Sunday. The market was still extremely long in dollars and the demand for the greenback was moderate throughout the week. The dollar accumulation has occurred mainly due to remittances sent by the overseas Bangladeshis and donor agencies. Although imports have increased a little it was not enough to boost the demand of dollar. As a result, in the interbank market last week dollar traded in a range of BDT 49.480 to BDT 49.500. Cash US dollar traded in the higher range of BDT 51.50 and BDT 51.75 during the week.

The demand for call money was steady and the call rate fluctuated between 5.5 to 6.5 per cent. Last week Bangladesh Bank accepted Treasury Bills worth of BDT 8473 million of which BDT 7789 million was for 28 days at an average rate of 6.97 per cent, BDT 300 million for 91 days at 7.17 per cent, BDT 130 million for 182 days at 6.80 per cent and BDT 260 million for 364 days at 8.26 per cent.

## International Market

In the international markets, the early parts of the week saw US dollars edging higher against yen amid growing expectation that US interest rates will remain unchanged in the FOMC meeting on Tuesday. Anticipation of a less hawkish Fed stance spurred a 1.25 per cent rally in the Dow Jones Industrial Average and a rally in the US Treasury bonds on Monday taking pressure off US dollar.

Euro was also caught to a tight range after it posted a two-month high on Monday. However, euro remained bullish due to positive data about euro zone. In the middle of the week, dollar was within half yen of two-week highs on Wednesday, and the market saw the potential for gains against the Japanese currency.

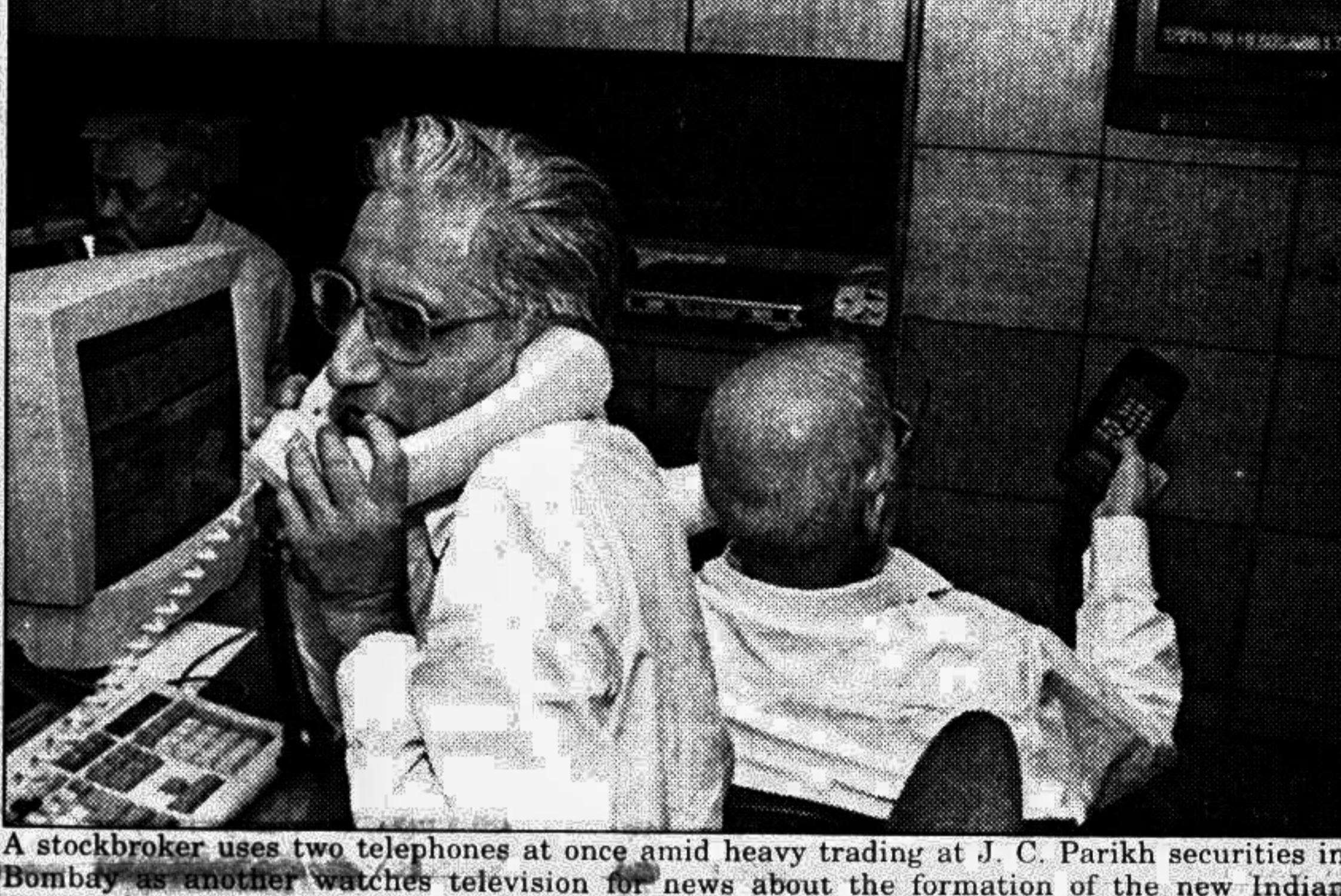
The marketplayers commented that the dollar held up well despite volatility in the US stocks following the Federal Open Market Committee's decision on Tuesday to keep the interest rate unchanged, but to move to tightening bias. In the middle of the week, yen also became weaker against euro. However, in the last part of the week, euro's attempt to make gains against dollar was hampered despite an improved outlook for the single European economy. At the end of the week, a higher close in the Dow Jones helped dollar in the short-term but the marketplayers commented that the improved German economic data was likely to help euro in the long run.

Earlier, the German Finance Minister Hans Eichel commented that the German industrial orders data released on Wednesday showed strong economic recovery. Both the Bank of England and European Central Bank kept their interest rates unchanged at the end of the week. — Standard Chartered Bank

US, Japan sign anti-trust  
cooperation agreement

Representative, in a 45-page report submitted to the Japanese government, called in particular for an aggressive, pro-competitive policy targeting illegal market-entry restrictions imposed by trade associations.

The cooperation agreement was unveiled here a day after the United States presented Japan with a renewed request for more aggressive deregulation and competition-enhancing moves.



—AFP photo

## Office of the Executive Engineer

Faridpur O&M Division  
BWDB, Faridpur

## IFB No. 9 of 1999-2000

Sl. No.	Name of Project and Description of works	Package No.	Estimated Cost Taka	Cost of Tender Documents Per Set Tk.	Time Allowed for Works	Class of Contractor/Firm who Eligible to Submit the Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Financed by IDA Credit No. 2197-BD during 2000 river bank protection project (1998 Post Flood Rehabilitation Project).						
Construction of Halancha Regulator (2-1.50x1.80) of Alfordanga-Boalmari system ID No. 299.						
1. Tender documents will be available 2. The office where Tender will be received 3. Last date of selling Tender documents 4. Date and time and receiving Tender 5. Date and time of Tender Opening 6. Name and Address of the Advertiser						
The Manager, Sonali Bank, Goalchamal Branch, Faridpur. Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur. During office and Banking hours on 21.11.99. On 22.11.99 up to 12.00 hours. Md. Shamsuddin, Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur.						



## Office of the Executive Engineer

Faridpur O&M Division  
BWDB, Faridpur

## IFB No. 7 of 1999-2000

Sl. No.	Name of Project and Description of works	Package No.	Estimated Cost Taka	Cost of Tender Documents Per Set Tk.	Time Allowed for Works	Class of Contractor/Firm who Eligible to Submit the Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Financed by IDA Credit No. 2197-BD during 1999-2000 River Bank Protection Project (1998 Post Flood Rehabilitation Project).						
Construction of Jakarsura Regulator (2-1.50x1.80) of Faridpur-Barisal Project (Faridpur Unit) ID No. 298.						
1. Tender documents will be available 2. The office where Tender will be received 3. Last date of selling Tender documents 4. Date and time and receiving Tender 5. Date and time of Tender opening 6. Name and address of the advertiser						
The Manager, Sonali Bank, Goalchamal Branch, Faridpur. Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur. During office and Banking hours on 21.11.99. On 22.11.99 up to 12.30 hours. Md. Shamsuddin, Executive Engineer, Faridpur O&M Division, BWDB, Faridpur.						

Md. Shamsuddin  
Executive Engineer  
Faridpur O&M Division  
BWDB, Faridpur.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate of Health  
Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Dated: 30-9-99

## NOTICE

Sub : Regarding admission to BDS Course at Dental College/Units during 1998-99 academic year

From the merit basis waiting list of 250 (two hundred fifty) persons earlier published for admission to 1st year of BDS Course at Dhaka Dental College/Chittagong & Rajshahi Medical College Dental Units during 1998-99 academic year, 13 (thirteen) persons are provisionally selected for admission. They have been distributed College/Unit on the basis of their merit & likings and subject to vacant seats. The students (male/female) getting the opportunity are instructed to complete the admission formalities by contacting the Principal of respective Dental College/Dental Unit within 20th October, 1999. Other terms & conditions of admission published in the notice of the Directorate vide memo No. Health Dir/ME/BDS/98/135 dt. 15-3-99 will remain unchanged. Candidates selected from waiting list after 3rd Auto Migration.

Chittagong Medical College Dental Unit  
CD 0297 DD 0292  
DD 5478 6075 5011  
Rajshahi Medical College Dental Unit  
DD 0257 DD 0406 6778  
DD 0380 1527 0714  
DD 5549

## Principal Shah Monir Hossain

Director

Medical Education & Health Manpower Development  
Directorate of Health, Mohakhali, Dhaka.

DDP-22188-5/10  
G-1821