

Rich world to talk further trade liberalisation in Paris this week

Leaders may eye ways to launch new global round

PARIS, June 25: Trade ministers from almost 30 industrial countries will discuss prospects for further world trade liberalisation here this week, their first meeting since failing to launch a new trade round in November, says AFP.

US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy will be among ministers in Paris for the 29-member Organisation for Economic and Development's annual meeting on Monday and Tuesday, along with World Trade Organisation director general Mike Moore.

Barshefsky and Lamy were key players in the WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle, and Washington is hoping that the final communiqué from the OECD talks will include a

feet here.

The fact that the OECD is not a negotiating body — that is the WTO's role, can be an advantage, offering a more relaxed atmosphere for discussion that can provide "momentum" for future talks, Bondurant said.

Asked what progress the OECD could make on the issue, given that developing countries, key players in the WTO talks, are not OECD members, OECD secretary Donald Johnston noted that one problem at Seattle was the "enormous differences of views within the OECD".

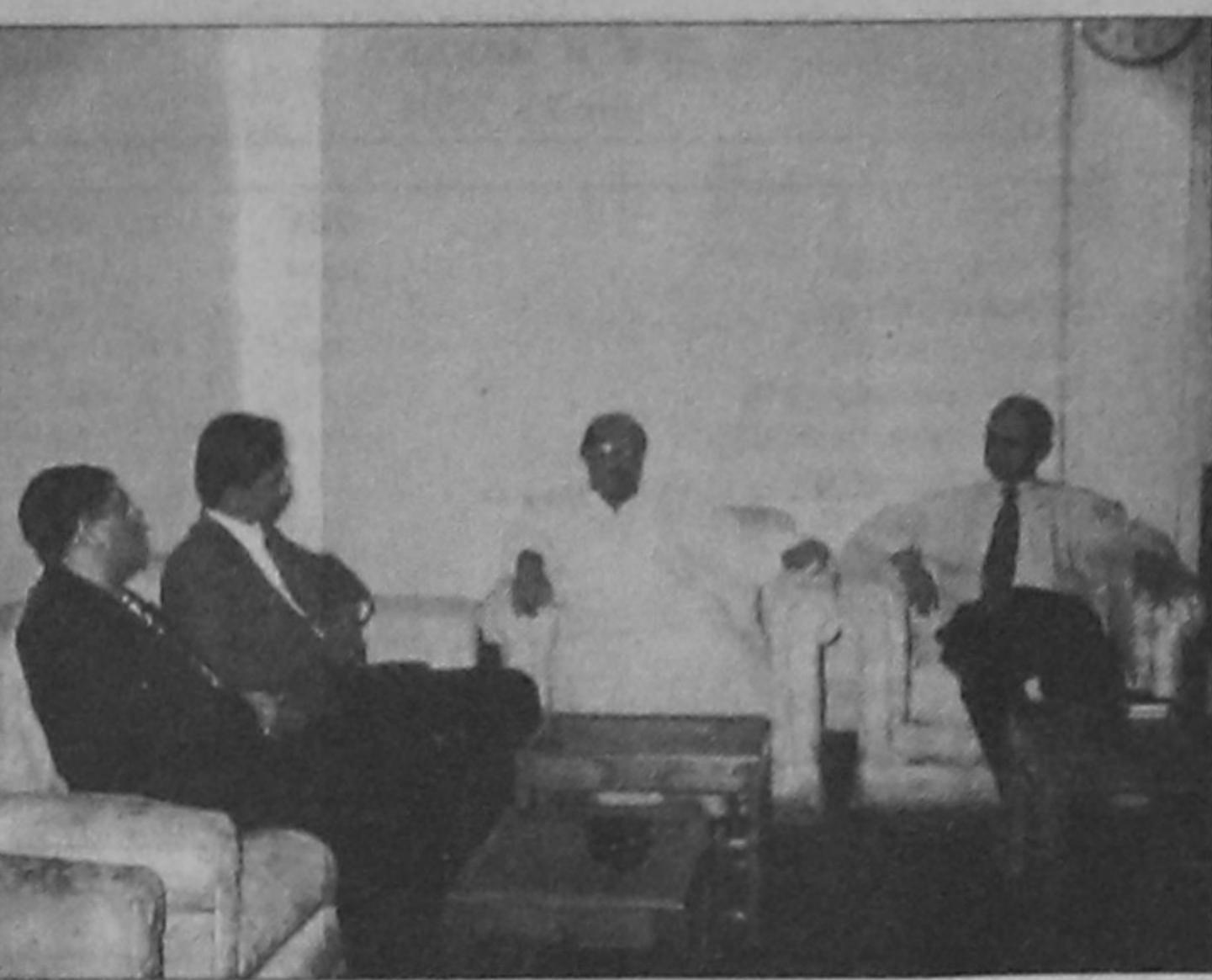
Such comments may help explain why anti-globalisation groups are planning to demonstrate outside a two-day forum being organised by the ministerial, on the challenges of an "increasingly global, knowledge-based economy" which is to be addressed by Moore.

And Washington is hoping that the final communiqué from the OECD talks will include a

"strong statement" supporting a new round and pledging to ensure that developing countries reap the full benefit of further global trade liberalisation, she said.

OECD deputy secretary general Herwig Schloegl told reporters that the OECD ministers could "successfully prepare the ground for the launch of a new round as soon as possible."

Officials are insisting that the OECD meeting is not a negotiating forum, but the ministers will devote part of their two-day meeting to trade issues and that is enough to ensure that anti-WTO protesters, who managed to shut down the Seattle meeting at one point, will also be making their presence



Dato' Ezanee Ab Aziz (2nd-L), Managing Director of TM International (BD) Ltd, AKTEL service provider, paid a courtesy call to Mohammad Nasim, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications and Home Affairs, at the Secretariat on Saturday. Also seen in the picture are Badruddin Mansoor (L), GM Technical, and Nazmul Ahsan Chowdhury, Secretary, Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications (extreme right).



The 6th annual general meeting of Safko Spinning Mills Ltd was held at a city hotel on Thursday. Managing Director Syed Md Faisal and the directors are seen at the meeting.

— Safko Spinning photo

Safko Spinning declares 8pc dividend

Safko Spinning Mills Ltd has declared an 8 per cent dividend for the shareholders of the company for the year ended on December 31, 1999, says a press release.

The Board of Directors of the company announced the dividend at the 6th annual general meeting held on Thursday at a city hotel with Managing Director Syed Md Faisal in the chair.

Addressing the shareholders, Syed Md Faisal said power failure, political unrest and deteriorating law and order situation in the country seriously interrupted production and distribution programme. Besides, frequent devaluation of taka and increase in unit price of gas and electricity sharply raised the cost of production. In spite of these unfavourable situation, the company earned a gross profit of Tk 6,30,70,348.00.

The Vajpayee government, which came into power last year, has had a string to legislative successes in parliament that four governments in the past four years couldn't achieve.

The government has opened up the insurance sector to pri-

ve companies, allowing upto 26 per cent foreign investment, put in place a budget that reduced subsidies on food and fertiliser and introduced a new information technology law paving the way for e-commerce.

The Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment at its meeting Friday is expected to announce a schedule for selling some of 240 state-run companies, ranging from condom to car making.

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The state-run commission prepares the government's five-year development plans and deals with financial allocations to state governments from the federal pool.

Cash-strapped Lankan govt battles prices as war budget bites

Forex reserves still low despite Indian godsend

COLOMBO, June 25: Sri Lanka's surging military spending has made it even more difficult for the besieged government to balance the books and keep prices affordable, despite a 100 million dollar cushion from India, says AFP.

The cash-strapped government raised taxes and prices to finance imports of urgently-needed military hardware, but yet the foreign exchange reserves were low, analysts here said.

They said a 100 million dollar credit line for "humanitarian assistance" from India could be a godsend to cushion the impact on external reserves which dropped by an alarming 14.5 per cent drop at the end of April compared to its position in

December.

After a round of price increases across the board earlier in the month, the central bank made a surprise depreciation of the rupee last week mounting further inflationary pressures.

"For a government to resort to a devaluation of its currency with a general election round the corner, it must be in dire economic straits," the privately-run The Island newspaper said.

The main opposition United National Party (UNP) has accused the government of mismanaging the economy, but the root of the crisis appears in the sudden surge in defence spending last month.

The weapons shopping spree was aimed at resisting the most ferocious Tamil Tiger rebel offensive aimed at taking the peninsula of Jaffna in the north of the island.

However, with the deploy-

ment of new armaments such as multibarrel rocket launchers, the military has been able to halt the "rolling offensive" of the Tigers by the end of May.

The economic shocks were to follow. Electricity rates were increased by six per cent with a 25 per cent surcharge added onto consumers who fail to reduce their consumption by a fifth from this month.

DCCI course on sub-sector analysis held

Star Business Report

A 5-day training course on 'Sub-sector analysis for new business creation' ended in the city on Thursday.

Organised by the Business Advisory Service (BAS) of DCCI with GTZ technical support, the course began on June 18, says a press release.

The purpose of the course was to provide functional knowledge about the methodology of sub-sector analysis by which one will be able to take prudent decision about new business.

The course incorporated topics like sub-sector and its characteristics, selection of sub-sector for study, introduction of participants to sub-sector, drawing preliminary sub-sector map, explore opportunities for leveraged interventions and analysis to action, preparation of project, estimation of equity and debt, earning forecast, cash flow statement, loan repayment schedule, discounted cash flow and estimation of break-even point.

Aftab ul Islam, President of DCCI distributed certificates among the participants as chief guest.

In all 14 participants from NGOs, private organisations and universities attended the course.



Picture shows DCCI President Aftab ul Islam, Vice President Muhammad Golam Mustafa, Convenor of DCCI Business Institute and Project Development Standing Committee-2000 Fazle R M Hasan, and other officials and participants at the certificate-awarding ceremony of the training course on 'sub-sector analysis for new business creation' held in the city on Thursday.

— DCCI photo

Dhaka WASA Tender Notice

(পানি ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয় হউন)

Tenders are invited from Dhaka WASA enlisted 1st, 2nd & 3rd class civil contractors for the undermentioned work.

Name of work	Amount of estimated cost	Date & time of receiving tender
1) Installation of 150 & 100 mm dia water line near holding No 153/1 at Bara Magbazar and West Malibagh area.	Taka 1,99,656/-	10/07/2000 up to 12:00 Noon.
2) Installation of 100 mm dia water line at Meerbagh area (from holding No 15/4 to 13c)	Taka 1,26,412/-	do-

Tender will be opened at 2:30 PM on the date of receiving tender in presence of the tenderers or their representatives (if any).

Tenders schedule will be available at the office of the Chief Accounts Officer of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhaban, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka and all MODS Zone Offices of Dhaka WASA. Other details will be available at the office of the undersigned.

Address: WASA Bhaban, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka WASA-PI-212/2000 DFP-15624-20/6 G-1229

AKM Zafarullah
Project Director
Interim Project-4
Dhaka WASA.

Weekly Currency Roundup

Yen gains amid speculation of zero rate policy end

HONG KONG, June 25: The yen gained ground during the week amid heightened speculation over an end to Japan's zero-interest rate policy as other currencies in the Asia-Pacific region had mixed fortunes, reports AFP.

Japanese yen: The yen gained ground during the week amid heightened speculation over an end to Japan's zero-interest rate policy, dealers said.

The Japanese unit was quoted at 104.25 against the dollar, compared with 106.21 a week earlier.

The yen had been strengthening in recent sessions on speculation that Japan's central bank may soon end its "zero-rate" monetary policy, dealers said. A Bank of Japan deputy governor, Sakuya Fuji-

wa, added to the zero-rate speculation by saying Thursday that internal discussions over ending the 16-month-old policy were reaching "boiling point."

Japan has kept the call rate, at which banks lend to each other, close to zero per cent since February last year and the official discount rate at a record low 0.5 per cent since September 1995.

But the gain was limited as fears grew that the Bank of Japan could intervene to rein in the currency's advance, dealers said.

Australian dollar: The obstacle stopping the forward progress of the Australian dollar remains US interest rate settings which will come under scrutiny when the US Federal Reserve meets on Tuesday, deal-

ers said.

At the close of trading Friday the local currency was at 59.66 US cents, from 60.71 US cents a week before.

Hong Kong dollar: The Hong Kong dollar was trading at 7.7902-7.7912 to the greenback Friday, marginally up from the previous week's 7.793-7.794.

Singapore dollar: The Singapore dollar depreciated to 1.2023 against the US dollar on Friday, from 1.2250 a week ago.

Taiwan dollar: The Taiwan dollar rose 0.2 per cent against the greenback over the week to close at 30.767 on Friday in line with the strengthening of the Japanese yen, dealers said. The currency stood at 30.843 Monday, a rising to 30.817 Wednesday and gained more ground Thursday.

Exchange Rates

Currency	American Express Bank Ltd foreign exchange rates (indicative) against the Taka to major currencies				
	Selling TT & OD	Selling BC	Buying TT Clean	Buying OD Sight Export Bill	Buying OD Transfer
US Dollar	51.2500	51.2800	50.8500	50.6970	50.6250
Pound Stg	77.4798	77.5251	75.8224	75.5943	75.4869
Deuts mark	24.9302	24.9448	23.9427	23.8076	23.8367
Swiss Franc	31.1418	31.1600	30.5094	30.4176	30.3744
Japanese Yen	0.4941	0.4944	0.4805	0.4791	0.4784
Dutch Guilder	22.1260	22.1389	21.2495	21.1856	21.1555
Danish Krone	6.4783	6.4821	6.3436	6.3245	6.3156
Australian \$	31.0216	31.0398	29.7371	29.6476	29.6055
Belgian Franc	1.2087	1.2094	1.1608	1.1573	1.1557
Canadian \$	34.9281	34.9485	33.9385	33.7883	33.7883
French Franc	7.4333	7.4377	7.1388	7.1074	7.1074
Hong Kong \$	6.5912	6.5951	6.5138	6.4942	6.4850
Italian Lira	0.0252	0.0252	0.0242	0.0241	0.0241
Singapore \$	29.9357	29.9533	29.0074	28.9201	28.8791
Euro	48.7593	48.7878	46.8278	46.6869	46.6206
Saudi Riyal	13.7017	13.7098	13.5214	13.4807	13.4616

Bill buying rates

TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
50.7512	50.4263	50.0025	49.5788	49.1550	48.3075

US dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR)

Buying	Selling	Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months</
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