

# WB-IMF meetings begin with protesters taking to street

PRAGUE, Sept 26: Protected by metal barriers and hundreds of security police, global finance leaders opened their annual meeting Tuesday with the head of the World Bank saying he shared the "passion" of the demonstrators fighting poverty, reports AP.

With protesters taking to the streets to gripe about what they called economic terrorism, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank summit opened without incident.

Delegates had to pass hundreds of white-helmeted police guarding the perimeter of the conference centre, which is connected to downtown by a single bridge. The police blocked the bridge with water cannons and bus loads of security reinforcements as those on guards watched from the cliffs surrounding the site.

In his opening remarks, World Bank President James Wolfensohn took note of the thousands of protesters parading through Prague's cobblestone streets.

"Outside these walls, young

people are demonstrating against globalization," he told delegates. "I believe deeply that many of them are asking legitimate questions, and I embrace the commitment of a new generation to fight poverty. I share their passion and their questioning."

Wolfensohn conceded that the IMF and World Bank had a "lot to learn" in how to improve their efforts to combat poverty and indicated the two giant multinational lending agencies, headquartered in Washington, were ready to listen.

"I believe that we can move forward only if we deal with each other constructively and with mutual respect," Wolfensohn said.

Both Wolfensohn and IMF Managing Director Horst Koehler called for greater action to lift the living standards of the world's poor, focusing on better education and health care.

Koehler called on rich countries to lower their trade barriers on exports of farm goods and other products from poor countries, saying this could mean US

\$100 billion annually in extra sales by poor nations.

"Greater access to industrialised country markets is key in the fight against poverty," Koehler said, praising recent decisions by the United States and the European Union to lower their trade barriers to poor nations.

US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers told delegates the reforms being undertaken by the IMF and World Bank to streamline their lending practices and provide greater openness on their decision-making processes.

In a reference to the forces of anti-globalisation, Summers said moving in that direction would be a setback for efforts to lift billions of people out of poverty.

"There can be no single development today with greater potential to set back the prospects of the world's poorest than a rejection of the goal of successful global economic integration," Summers said.

Wolfensohn said that the processes that were tying the world more closely together economi-

cally cannot be stopped.

"We cannot turn globalisation back. Our challenge is to make globalisation an instrument of opportunity and inclusion not of fear and insecurity," Wolfensohn said. "Time to realize that we live together in one world, not two worlds in one community, wherever we live. It is our responsibility."

While protesters had managed only a few hundred people at most of their preliminary demonstrations over the weekend and Monday, police said 5,000 had turned for the opening of the three-day annual meetings, chanting "Stop the economic terror now" and waving banners that proclaimed, "Make love not trade."

Deviating from the strategy protesters employed in Seattle in December and Washington in April, the activists did not try to stop delegates from getting into the meetings. Instead, they have vowed to form human chains outside to block delegates from leaving the giant conference center.

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Orvel Ray Wilson, President, The Guerrilla Group, USA (second from right) came to Bangladesh as a guest speaker for 'Business Without Borders' seminars organised by the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka, in association with FICCI and other co-sponsors. Wilson handed over a cheque for Tk 500,000 to the General Manager of the Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Hans G. Winsnes, at a Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) monthly meeting recently. Wali Bhuiyan, President of FICCI, is also seen in the picture. The money will be donated to the 'Friendship Foundation', the floating hospital of Bangladesh.

-Sonargaon photo

## China completes WTO deal with Switzerland

GENEVA, Sept 26: China has completed a vital trading deal with Switzerland which it needed to sign before it could join the World Trade Organisation, officials announced, reports AP.

The two sides are due to sign the deal at a ceremony at WTO headquarters in Geneva later Tuesday, said an announcement from the Swiss government transmitted by the WTO.

Details of the deal were not given. It had been widely reported that the agreement had been held up by negotiations on access to China for Swiss financial services institutions.

China has now completed bilateral deals with 37 members of the WTO. It still has to sign with Mexico. It also has to complete work within the WTO as a whole to show that it will abide by the agreements which regulate trade for all 138 WTO members.

## Exim Bank earns Tk 2m operating profit in 5 months

Export Import Bank of Bangladesh Limited (Exim Bank) has earned an operating profit of Tk 2.06 million from its five months' operation in the year 1999.

This was disclosed in the 1st annual general meeting of the bank held at a city hotel on Thursday, says a press release.

Md Nazrul Islam Mazumder, Chairman of the Bank, presided over the meeting.

In the meeting, the annual accounts of the bank for the year ending December 31, 1999 were unanimously adopted. The bank also procured a deposit of Tk 1344.24 million.

Alamgir Kabir, FCA, Advisor of the bank, apprised the shareholders of its policies. Mohammed Lakhtullah, Managing Director of the bank, highlighted the bank's operational performance with the optimism that it would cut a good figure in the year 2000.

## Danish aid for Bangladesh agri sector to continue

Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Finn Thilsted has assured Bangladesh of his country's continuous contribution to the development of agriculture sector in Bangladesh, says BSS.

During a meeting with Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury in the city yesterday, Thilsted discussed all bilateral issues between the two countries and gave special emphasis on the agriculture sector and coordinated food production to meet the demands of ever-increasing population in Bangladesh.

Denmark has been financing different technical cooperation projects by Tk 370 crore with policy and planning support for Land Fertility Development, Land Resources Management, Integrated Pest Management and Seed Development in Bangladesh, an official handout said.

Motia Chowdhury told the Danish Envoy that the present government under the able and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had achieved self-reliance in food production in Bangladesh by ensuring efficient management applying modern technology and making available all necessary agri-inputs for the farmers.

"Despite limitation in arable lands, we have been able to set a positive trend for meeting the food demand of our increased population," she said with an appeal to the Danish government to provide help towards Bangladesh's efforts to ensure navigability, preservation of irrigation water and river dredging for flood control.

## Iraq to stop trading with US dollar

BAGHDAD, Sept 26: Iraq has decided to stop trading with the US dollar and replace it with the euro or another currency because of "hostile American policy," the finance minister said, reports Reuters.

The cabinet has decided to stop trading with the American currency, the dollar, and replace it with other currencies such as the euro, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Hikmat Mazban Ibrahim said in a statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency on Tuesday.

Ibrahim said the decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by President Saddam Hussein on Monday.

Earlier this month a cabinet meeting decided to set up a committee of economists to study the possibility of using the euro or another currency instead of the dollar in the transaction of Iraq's foreign trade.

A statement after the September 14 meeting said the move was to confront the "daily American-Zionist aggression."

Ibrahim said the decision that

suspended trading with the dollar was taken after the committee "recommended to stop trading with the American currency."

The United States, along with Britain, is enforcing no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq to protect a Kurdish enclave in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south from possible attacks by government forces.

An Iraqi newspaper said the decision would boost Iraq's volatile currency, which has plummeted in value under UN trade sanctions imposed after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Al-Juhad weekly, Iraq's economic newspaper, on Tuesday said it expected the Iraqi dinar to gain against the dollar which was trading at around 1,950 dinars on Tuesday from 2,060 two weeks ago.

Baghdad's trade with the rest of the world is governed by an oil-for-food deal with the United Nations. The deal allows Iraq to sell unlimited quantities of oil to buy food, medicine and other goods for humanitarian needs.

## PORT IMPORT BANK OF BANGLADESH LTD FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



A view of the 1st Annual General Meeting of Exim Bank.

--Exim Bank photo

## Taiwan, Philippines sign new air agreement

TAIPEI, Sept 26: Taiwan and the Philippines signed a new aviation agreement Tuesday, ending a yearlong dispute that cut air links between the two neighbours who once enjoyed cordial relations, says AP.

The new agreement effectively gives Taiwanese airlines what they wanted: A total 9,600 passenger seats a week and the right to transport people and cargo from Manila to third countries via Taipei.

The Philippines had accused Taiwan of poaching passengers and demanded that Taiwanese carriers China Airlines and EVA Airways reduce their weekly quota of seats. When Taiwan refused, Manila unilaterally scrapped a 1996 air agreement with Taipei in October and both sides severed air links.

But on Tuesday, Philippine officials appeared to have caved into Taiwanese demands because of the mounting economic toll on their country.

"I supposed you can say we yielded to their conditions," said Rodolfo Reyes, executive director of the de facto embassy in Taipei. "We had no choice."

Chang Yu-hern, director general of Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration, said the most contentious issue was Taiwan's right to take passengers to third destinations, known in the aviation industry as the "sixth freedom right."

"This was a very important aspect. Now the sixth freedom right is clearly stipulated in the new agreement," Chang told reporters after the signing ceremony.

Under the new deal, the carriers of both countries will each be allowed to fly 4,800 passengers weekly between Taipei and Manila and 1,700 passengers from Taiwan's southern port city of Kaohsiung and Manila.

Both sides will also be allowed to fly 450 passengers from Taipei to any other point in the Philippines apart from Cebu and Manila, and the balance will be given to chartered flights.

The air dispute has soured relations between the two historically friendly neighbours. By cancelling the air pact, Manila ignored international procedures that call for a one-year warning before an air agreement is terminated, Taiwanese officials said.

## Exchange Rates

American Express Bank Ltd. foreign exchange rates (indicative against the Taka to clients)									
Currency	Selling TT & OD	Currency BC	Buying TT Clean	Buying OD Sight	Buying Export Bill	Buying OD Transfer			
US Dollar	54.2500	54.2800	53.8150	53.6970	53.6250	53.6250			
Pound Sig	79.0694	79.1131	77.8595	77.6888	77.5847	77.5847			
Deutsche Mark	24.6809	24.6946	23.6438	23.5919	23.5603	23.5603			
Swiss Franc	31.4220	31.4393	30.7989	30.7314	30.6902	30.6902			
Japanese Yen	0.5071	0.5074	0.4979	0.4968	0.4962	0.4962			
Dutch Guilder	21.9047	21.9168	20.9843	20.9383	20.9102	20.9102			
Danish Krona	6.4037	6.4073	6.2782	6.2645	6.2561	6.2561			
Australian \$	30.3900	30.3968	29.0332	28.9695	28.9307	28.9307			
Belgian Franc	1.1966	1.1973	1.1463	1.1438	1.1423	1.1423			
Canadian \$	36.8621	36.8825	35.8122	35.7337	35.6858	35.6858			
French Franc	7.3590	7.3630	7.0497	7.0343	7.0248	7.0248			
Hong Kong \$	6.9703	6.9742	6.8870	6.8719	6.8627	6.8627			
Italian Lira	0.0249	0.0249	0.0239	0.0238	0.0238	0.0238			
Singapore \$	31.4556	31.4740	30.4797	30.4129	30.3721	30.3721			
Euro	48.2717	48.2983	46.2432	46.1418	46.0863	46.0863			
Saudi Rial	14.5030	14.5110	14.3091	14.2777	14.2586	14.2586			

Bill buying rates:									
TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days				
53.7512	52.3665	52.9181	52.4696	52.0212	51.1243				

US dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR)									
Buying \$	Selling \$	Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months		
53.6250	54.2500	USD	6.62	6.66	6.75	6.77	6.80		
78.9708	79.0694	GBP	6.07438	6.165	6.2675	6.32852	6.385		
Cash/TC	Cash/TC	EUR	4.77	4.8863	5.0425	5.12	5.19		

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollars									
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysia Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won				
46.07	57.98	42.30	3.7998	8810	1119.17				
46.08	58.08	42.35	3.8003	8850	1119.1				

Amex notes on Tuesday's market

The interbank USD/BDT market was moderately active, liquidity of USD in the market had caused the interbank USD/BDT rate to fall to 53.90/53.92 from 53.93/53.95. The call rates moved up and ranged between 6.75 and 7.5 per cent.

Last week's Group of Seven intervention to support the euro saw the unit rack up swift gains on Tuesday but traders said no central bank action had been detected. With the single currency well supported against the dollar amid lingering wariness of a repeat of last Friday's concerted Group of Seven intervention in its support, the pound retained an upper hand against the US unit. The euro had moved between 0.8730 and 0.8800 throughout the day.

Sterling was broadly firmer on Tuesday, benefiting from the euro's strength against the dollar and expectations of capital inflow from a German firm's acquisition of a British water utility company.

Sterling also gained modestly against the euro, lifted by German power utility RWE AG's \$4.3 billion euro acquisition of Britain's Thames Water Plc. In addition the nervousness about whether the euro could sustain its post-intervention gains against the dollar was making sterling attractive to some investors, analysts said. Sterling was trading at around \$1.4550 at 0720 GMT, up about a quarter cent from Monday's North American close. The Bank of England, whose policy-setting committee meets next week, was seen keeping interest rates on hold for now, but analysts said interest rates and economic fundamentals were seen less of an influence on sterling at the moment.

The Yen was largely range-bound against the USD, moving between 107.17-107.75 throughout the day.

At GMT 11:00, the exchange rates of major currencies against USD were GBP/USD 1.4541/1.4548, USD/CHF 1.7303/1.7308, USD/JPY 107.22/107.32, EUR/USD 0.8782/0.8785.

## Shipping Intelligence

### Chittagong Port

Berth Position and Performance of Vessels as on 26.9.2000.

Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Leaving	Arrival
J/1	Xiang Jiang	GI	Busa	BDSHIP	22/09	30/9
J/2	Pavonis	GI (St C)	Pipa	BMSH	13/9	1/10
J/3	Banglar Maya	GI/S Ash	Momb	BSC	20/9	28/9
J/4	Bay Pride	Ricp (P/G)	Yang	SMSL	16/9	30/9
J/5	Glory	Sugar(G)	Sant	Fortune	16/9	26/9
J/6	Argus	R Seed	Krabi	Royal	11/9	30/9
J/7	Allegro	C Clink/GYP	RML	RML	15/9	27/9
J/8	Ervidos	Sugar(G)	Sant	Fortune	16/9	3/10
J/9	Hilda	GI	Busa	Trai	20/9	27/9
J/10	Apurimari	GI(Maze)	Duli	Seaglor	8/9	30/9
J/11	Pianga Bijoy	Cont	PKEI	BDSHIP	21/9	27/9
J/12	Jurong Balsam	Cont	Sing	Nol	24/9	28/9
J/13	Arabella	Cont	PKEI	QCSL	22/9	27/9
CCT/1	Qc Teal	Cont	Sing	QCSL	25/9	28/9
CCT/2	Qc Pintail	Cont	PKEI	QCSL	22/9	26/9
CCT/3	Kota Naga	cont	Sing	PI(BD)	21/9	29/9
RM/15	North Star-II	Cement	-	SBS	R/A	29/9
COJ	Al Shams	C Clink(Ruby)	Krabi	RML	21/9	28/9
TSP	Handy Zadi	R Phos	Xing	Seacoast	15/9	26/9
RM/6	Eagle Arics	HSD	Sing	MSTPL	20/9	8/10
DDJ	Banglar Shikha	Repair	BSC	BSC	R/A	4/10
DDJ/1	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	4/10
DDJ/2	Seabulk Command	-	K Dia	IBS	R/A	-
RM/9	Banglar Gourab	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	15/10

### Vessels due at Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	L Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Acturia (Cont) 20/9	26/9	-	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Tokyo Queen (72) 17/9	26/9	-	MGL	Everett	GI (St.Coll)
Bao Yun Shan (48) 14/9	26/9	-	Sing	RML	GI (St. Coll)
Ocean-1	27/9	-	Yang	SMSL	GI (Log
Jaam (Cont) 19/9	27/9	-	Sing	Cross	Cont
Triumph Hongkong (72) 21/9	27/9	-	Yang	RML	GI (St.Coll)
Mary Nour	27/9	-	Lank	BSL	Cement(Scan)
Eltanin	27/9	-	PSAL	Cment(Diamond)	-
Ganda Satqia	28/9	-	Indo	Delmuri	TSP
Mu Aspiration	30/9	-	-	Sunshine	Rice(P+G)
Jaya Mars (Cont) 18/9	28/9	-	-	Everest	Cont
Xpress Makalu (Cont) 18/9	28/9	-	Sing	RSL	Cont
Kota Singa (Cont) 19/9	29/9	-	Sing	PI(BD)	Cont
Osg Alpha (Cont) 18/9	29/9	-	-	RSL	Cont
Xpress Padma (Cont) 13/9	30/9	-	Sing	RSL	Cont
Asian Saifron	30/9	-	-	Everrett	GI (St.Coll)
Lucky Emblem (72) 17/09	30/9	-	-	Everett	GI (St Cargo)