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OPEC offers talks with north, but snubs price cut proposal

CARACAS, Sept 28: The OPEC oil cartel, preparing to end a landmark summit today, offered top level talks with industrialised nations but snubbed calls for concrete action to cut soaring prices, says AFP.

The summit, only the second in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s 40-year history, was set to close with a solemn declaration in the Venezuelan capital Caracas.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez proposed that OPEC heads of state and their counterparts from the G8 Group of rich countries meet on an informal basis to discuss concerns a looming oil crisis.

Chavez even telephoned French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, whose country currently holds the European Union (EU) presidency, on Wednesday to discuss a meeting, according to officials.

Chavez and Jospin discussed " the possibility of a meeting between the EU and OPEC countries," said Venezuela's foreign minister, Jose Vicente Rangel, adding: "It is hoped it will take place soon."

"We have heard signs from certain G8 countries," said Chavez in the opening session of the summit Wednesday. "We are ready to respond and we accept a dialogue at the level of heads of state," he added.

OPEC has come under heavy pressure to help bring down crude prices which have soared to 10-year highs in recent weeks, sparking consumer protests notably in Europe and warnings of a global economic slowdown.

But OPEC leaders gathered for the summit, the first such gathering in 25 years, rebuffed any immediate prospect of a new production hike, following three increases already in the last 12 months.

And they insist that industrialised nations should lower taxes on oil if they wanted to ease the burden on consumers.

"We have excess supply on the market," Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said as OPEC ministers approved a final statement to be adopted when the summit closes Thursday.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdel Aziz said Riyadh was willing to release however much oil was needed to stabilise markets but he also criticized industrialised countries for what he said were "unjust" taxes.

The assembled leaders including Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, Indonesian Abdurrahman Wahid, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Iraqi Vice-president Taha Yassin Ramadan.

India to up oil prices, cut import duties

NEW DELHI, Sept 28: India will raise the price of subsidised oil and petroleum products on Saturday and reduce the 15 per cent import duty because of the tripling of international crude oil prices in the past year and a half, Petroleum Minister Ram Naik said Thursday, reports AP.

He did not specify the amount of the price hikes. The government last raised oil product prices in March, by 35 per cent, prompting truckers to temporarily stop delivering goods to the capital, New Delhi.

Truck drivers went on a nationwide strike to October 1999 when diesel prices were raised.

"I'm glad the Finance Ministry has agreed to our proposals to reduce excise and import duties on crude, as well as issuance of oil bonds," Naik told reporter.

He said the cuts in customs and excise duty on crude oil and petroleum products was meant "to provide relief to consumers from the intending hike in prices, necessitated by the tripling of international crude oil prices in one and a half years."

Naik said the government had taken a "hard" decision to hike the prices of five products that are subsidized: gasoline or petrol, diesel, kerosene, liquid petroleum gas, and aviation turbine fuel.

"We have assured that only the least burden is passed on to the common man," Naik said.

He also said his ministry wanted to reduce the government's consumption of petroleum by 10 per cent.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (L) talks with Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid (R) of the OPEC as a summit of the oil-producing cartel opened in Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, the second such gathering in the group's 40-year history. The summit ended yesterday with a solemn declaration, stressing the group's solidarity and commitment to market stability as well as pledging to hold high-level OPEC meetings more regularly. OPEC, which has already boosted production three times last year, has come under heavy pressure from the industrialised countries to agree to a new production hike to cool soaring oil prices. --AFP photo

Oil eases on Saudi promise to pump more volume

Clinton defends US release move

LONDON, Sept 28: Oil prices eased today after assurances by Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest producer, that it would pump whatever volume needed to quell this year's relentless price rally and bring stability to the market, says Reuters.

"The kingdom is willing and ready to offer the amount necessary to stabilise the world oil market," Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah told a heads of state summit of the OPEC producers' group in Caracas, Venezuela.

London Brent crude futures slipped 24 cents to $30.30 and US light crude was off 36 cents at $31.10.

Prince Abdullah, who has day to day charge of OPEC's dominant power, called on crude importing nations to play their role in easing sky high prices by reducing taxes on fuel.

Saudi Arabia previously has said it would prefer $25 crude.

He added that he feared the world economy might be harmed if the current price spike, which has seen crude above $30 a barrel for much of the year, should be prolonged.

"We are worried today by the increase in oil prices which if continued permanently could lead to a negative impact on the world economy and the prospects for world economic growth," he told other OPEC leaders.

"We call upon consuming countries to share the sacrifice through the taxes that they impose on oil... We are unfairly blamed for all the problems of the world economy."

The organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has come under pressure from consuming nations across all continents to boost oil supplies and provide some relief to escalating energy bills.

OPEC has lifted production three times this year by a total 3.2 million barrels per day (bpd), but with little success in bringing down rocketing oil, which earlier this month hit a 10 year peak at $37.80 in the US.

Clinton has defended the oil release as the most prudent move to steer prices towards OPEC's target range of $22-$28 a barrel.

"The accumulated (OPEC output hike) decisions were not going to come near the target and there seemed to be a trend line going quite high," he said.

This year's price spike has mainly been driven by fears of fuel shortages in the United States, which consumes a fifth of world petroleum supplies. US crude and refined product inventories stand near 24-year lows.

The US initiative to tap strategic supplies has prompted the European Union to consider whether to unleash some of its own contingency stockpiles, but some member countries are opposed saying the inventories should be used for emergencies not for managing oil prices.

Pakistan to hike interest rate to meet IMF terms

KARACHI, Sept 28: Yields on government paper are expected to climb further as Pakistan tightens monetary policy to meet terms set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), banking analysts said today, reports Reuters.

The moves are to support an IMF-prescribed policy of curtailing government borrowing from the central bank and making commercial bank borrowing expensive for the cash-starved state, they said.

Financial analysts said this week the moves could trigger an interest rate hike, which would help commercial banks buying T-bills but harm earnings of industry.

"With the increase in discount rate and T-bill rates, we expect other benchmark rates in the economy to move in tandem," a research note by brokers First Capital ABN AMRO equities said.

"Rising financial costs will depress earning prospects for highly-leveraged firms in the domestic market, an increase in interest will work in favour of the banking sector at large."

Average lending rates have ranged between 11 per cent for prime corporate customers and 14 per cent for other clients over the last year as the central bank relaxed its monetary policy, bankers said.

Bankers said the next step toward tighter monetary policy would be narrowing a wide gap between the central bank's key discount rate and yields on government paper. The gap has stayed over 3.6 percentage points most of the year.

Even after last week's auction when the central bank raised the benchmark six-month T-bill yield by 1.5 percentage points to 8.9 per cent, the highest this year, the gap is still wide.

The central bank's repo rate is now at 12 per cent after it was increased by one percentage point early last week.

Bankers said repo rates could hold at the current level in the immediate future, but the central bank could boost yields on T-bill rates to narrow the difference between the two.

A delegation of ICMAB headed by its President M Abul Kalam Mazumdar, FCMA, met Commerce Minister Md Abdul Jalil at his office on Wednesday. --ICMAB photo

Picture shows presentation of the new Daewoo car, Kalos, in Paris on Wednesday, two days before the opening of the Paris Car Show. --AFP photo

ICMAB team meets Jalil

Md Abdul Jalil, Minister for Commerce, has reaffirmed the necessity of cost audit for establishing transparency and efficiency in the industrial sector.

He said this during a meeting with the ICMAB delegation led by its president Abul Kalam Mazumder in the city on Wednesday, says a press release.

The president of the Institute apprised the minister about Cost and Management Accountant's role and activities in various sectors of the national economy.

He also mentioned that Companies Act 1994 has made provision for Cost Audit in manufacturing, mining, distribution and service sectors.

If implemented, Cost Audit can help all the stakeholders of the public and private sector organisations.

Iraqi dinar soars on plan to drop dollar use

BAGHDAD, Sept 28: The Iraqi dinar rose significantly against the dollar Thursday after a government order demanding both private and state banks to gradually drop the use of the dollar in favour of other hard currencies, says AP.

In early trading Thursday, the dinar surged to 1,600 against the dollar from 1,990 the previous day. Money changers in Baghdad said Iraqis were in a rush to get rid of the greenback fearing the government may even ban its circulation.

Deputy Prime Minister Hikmat Mizban Ibrahim, also head of the influential government-run Economic Affairs Committee, issued instructions Tuesday requesting Iraqi ministries to stop use of the dollar in foreign business transactions because "it belongs to an enemy state."

Trade Ministry officials who handle Iraq's multibillion external trade under the UN-approved oil deal said they have notified Iraq's trading partners to quote their prices in hard currencies other than the dollars. Iraq trades with about 50 countries, with major partners including France, Russia, China, Jordan, Egypt and Vietnam.

Speaking on customary condition of anonymity, the officials said Iraqi banks have also been instructed to draw up plans to dispose of their dollar stashes. As part of a government economic liberalisation programme started in 1995, Iraqis were up to now allowed to open dollar accounts in local banks.

Euro gets support, awaits Danish poll results

LONDON, Sept 28: The euro was broadly supported today awaiting the result of Denmark's referendum on the euro and its potential to trigger a further round of central bank intervention in defence of the single currency, says Reuters.

The results of the referendum are expected to be a close call. Of the three final polls published before voting booths opened at 0700 GMT, one pointed to a 'no' vote, one to a 'yes' vote and a third put the two sides neck-and-neck.

A rejection of euro membership by the Danes would be interpreted as a vote of no confidence in the currency, while a vote in favour was expected to buoy euro/dollar.

Analysts said market wariness that the Group of Seven industrialised nations might repeat the joint currency intervention seen last Friday would likely to limit any losses in euro/dollar.

However, there were also fears that central banks might decide intervene to take advantage of any boost to the euro from a 'yes' vote in Denmark.

"Everyone has a feeling they will come in again, but to know at what level they will come in is the key question, and because of that liquidity has more or less dried up. There is not much trading going on," said Jesper Dannesboe, chief foreign exchange strategist at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson in London.

"If there is a 'no' vote the downside is probably limited given the fears of intervention and there is some speculation that even if there is a 'yes' vote in Denmark they might come in and push it even higher."

The euro was at $0.8836/41 EUR by 0735 GMT according to Reuters data, around two cents below Friday's post intervention peaks and more than four per cent away from last week's record lows around $0.8440.

Against the yen, the euro was at 94.81/86 EURJPY, around one yen below its highs for the week so far set on Wednesday around 95.70.

Voting stations in Denmark will close at 1800 GMT.

G7 intervention

US Treasury data on balances held with the Federal Reserve suggest total US currency intervention last Friday amounted to about $1.3 billion, above most market estimates.

Dealers had thought the US authorities sold somewhat less than $1.0 billion for euros, as in June 1998 when they joined with the Bank of Japan to sell $833 million for yen to help bolster the dollar against the Japanese currency.

Analysts said using the amount sold by the US as a guide, Japan likely sold at least as much and the ECBN perhaps twice that, which would indicate the entire G7 intervention amounted to $5.0-$6.0 billion.

"If correct, this would represent one of the largest amounts of foreign exchange intervention in one day in euro/dollar -- read dollar/mark before 1999 -- in modern times," said Michael Lewis, senior currency economist at Deutsche Bank in London.

Meanwhile, the yen was under slight pressure against the dollar JPY amid a weak performance from Japanese stock markets.

Exchange Rates

Following are yesterday's Standard Chartered Bank foreugn exchange rates of major currencies against Taka:
Central Bank buying and selling rate of USD: BDT 53.85/BDT 54.15

Selling		Currency	Buying		
TT/OD	BC		TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
54.2500	54.2800	USD	53.8150	53.6464	53.5779
48.4733	48.5602	EUR	46.6926	46.5099	46.4326
80.0197	80.0617	GBP	78.2120	77.9455	77.8909
30.9471	30.9716	AUD	27.9436	27.8511	27.7710
0.5121	0.5122	JPY	0.4939	0.4937	0.4927
31.6854	31.7099	CHF	30.9786	30.8841	30.7996
5.6369	5.6421	SEK	5.5400	5.5224	5.5064
36.5634	36.5880	CAD	35.6923	35.5987	35.5155
6.9929	6.9942	HKD	6.8694	6.8517	6.8343
31.561	31.5820	SGD	30.4152	30.3714	30.2568
14.8919	14.9095	AED	14.5023	14.5242	14.4838
14.5799	14.5983	SAR	14.2402	14.2035	14.1853

Usance export bills

TTDOC	30 Days	60Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
53.7041	53.3727	52.9304	52.4217	51.8688	50.6303

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Mal Ringit	Indo. Rupiah	NZ Dollar
46.09/ 46.14	57.80/ 57.20	42.31/ 42.34	3.7995/ 3.8005	8835/ 8865	0.4171/ 0.4178

US Dollar

	Buying	Selling
Cash note	53.6150	54.2800
TC	53.5650	54.2600

LIBOR

Months	1	2	6
USD	6.62063	6.66	6.75688
GBP	6.10422	6.17844	6.27

Local foreign exchange market has picked up a little with the slight escalation of dollar demand. Trading of dollar was still rangebound. Money market was steady and the trading of call money was rangebound. Call rate ranged between 5.75 and 6.25 per cent.

The euro was broadly supported on Thursday awaiting the result of Denmark's referendum on the euro and its potential to trigger a further round of central bank intervention in defence of the single currency. The results of the referendum are expected to be a close call. A rejection of euro membership by the Danes would be interpreted as a vote of no confidence in a currency. While a vote in favour was expected to buoy euro/dollar.

Shipping

Chittagong Port

Berth Position and Performance of Vessels as on 28.9.2000.

Berth No	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Arrival	Leaving
J/1	Xiang Jiang	GI	Busa	BDShip	22/09	29/9
J/2	Pavonis	GI	Pipa	SMSL	13/9	2/10
J/3	Banglar Maya	GI	Momb	BSC	20/9	29/9
J/4	Bay Pride	Ricp (P)/GI	Yang	SMSL	16/9	1/10
J/5	Tokyo Queen	GI	Mong	Everett	26/9	29/9
J/6	Argus	R Seed	-	Royal	11/9	2/10
J/7	World Amber	Wheat (P)/ GI	Sing	Angelic	24/9	12/10
J/8	Erodios	Sugar(G)	Sant	Fortune	16/9	3/10
J/9	Hilda	GI	Busa	Prog	20/9	28/9
J/10	Aptmariner	GI	Dali	Seaglory	8/9	1/10
J/11	Orent Independe	Continue	P Kel	BDShip	24/9	30/9
J/12	Jurong Balsam	Cont	Sing	Nol	24/9	28/9
J/13	Agtuaria	Cont	Sing	QCSL	26/9	2/10
CCT/1	Qc Teal	Cont	Sing	QCSL	25/9	28/9
CCT/2	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	24/9	1/10
CCT/3	Da Fu	Cont	P Kel	RSL	26/9	28/9
RM/15	North Star-II	Cement	-	SBS	R/A	2/10
CCJ	Al Shams	C Clink	Krabi	RML	21/9	29/9
DD	Banglar Shikha	Repair	Sing	BSC	20/9	8/10
DDJ/1	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	4/10
RM/8	Atalanta	CPO	Sing	TSL	25/9	28/9
RM/9	Banglar Gourab	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	15/10
CUFLJ	Mary Nour	Cement	Lank	BSL	27/9	10/10

Vessels due at Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	L.Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Loading Port
Racal Eastern	28/9	Sin	BBAL	-	
Westwind	28/9	Tutil	UMTL	Cont	L/Sing
Kota Singa (Cont) 19/9	29/9	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	L.Sing
OSG Alpha (Cont) 18/9	29/9	Sing	RSL	Cont	L.Sing
Pu Aspiration	2/10	Yang	Sunshine	Rice	GI
Bright Sea	30/9	Krabi	MBL	C Clink (Confd)	-
Xpress Padma (Cont) 13/9	30/9	Sing	RSL	Cont	L/Hald
Asian Saffron (48)17/9	30/9	Yang	Everett	GI (St. Coil)	-
Lucky Emblem (72) 17/9	2/10	Yang	Everett	GI (St. Cargo)	-
Alsa (48) 20/9	1/10	Hald	H&SL	GI (S.Prod)	-
Hyderabad	30/9	Kara	BSC	Rice(P)	-
Eltanin	1/10	Sing	PSAL	C Clink(Diamond)	
Sea Bulk Danah	1/10	Sing	Arrfeen	Proj. Equip	-
B Birol (Cont) 21/9	2/10	PKL	BDShip	Cont	L.Sing
Xpress Resolve (cont) 21/9	2/10	-	RSL	Cont	L.Sing
Chu Hong (Cont)24/9	2/10	Sing	QCSL	Cont	L/Sing
Ganda Satpia	3/10	Indo	Delmure	TSP(P)	-
Joy Miracle (72) 17/9	3/10	Jaka	SSLL	GI (St.Prod)	-
B Biraj (Cont) 21/9	3/10	-	BDShip	Cont	S.Sing
B. Moni (Cont) 19/9	3/10	Sing	BSC	Cont	L/Sing
B.Robi (Cont) 24/9	4/10	Sing	BSC	Cont	L Sing
Boxer C Cook (Cont) 26/9	5/10	-	BDShip	Cont	L/.Sing
Cahaya (Cont)25/9	6/10	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	L/Sing
Naga (Cont) 27/9	7/10	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	L.Sing
QC Pintail (Cont) 27/9	8/10	-	QCSL	Cont	L/Sing
Tug De Ping	8/10	S Hai	OWSL	Zhong Ren-1	-
Submersible Barge Zhong Ren-1	8/10	S Hai	OWSL	(P. CargoA/C	Paksh
Natchra Naree	30/9		Seacon	R/P	

Tanker Due

Juliana	28/9	Sing	Sealift	Cpo/FAcid/rBA/C.O
Clipper Venture	30/9	Arge	Rga	Cdso
-Daihung	29/9	Sing	MSTPL	Sko/JP
Pranedya Pratama	30/9	Sing	OTPL	F.Oil
Form Lily	3/10	Sikka	ECSL	HSD(RM/)

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of Vessels	Cargo	Last Port Call	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Energy Explorer-IV	-	-	BBAL	5/4
Ismaya	-	-	BBAL	17/8
Dea Conqeror	-	-	Arafeen	R/A(18/9
Dea Champion	-	-	Arafeen	R/(24/9)
Sea Bulk Command	-	-	IBS	R/A (27/9)

Vessels at Outer Anchorage

Vessels Ready

Ready On

Shun Cheng	GI	Lian	Concord	22/9
Topaz	GI	Sing	Prog	23/9
Anze Jiang	GI	Hnch	BDShip	23/9
Bay Fortune	GI/Rice (P)	Yang	SMSL	20/9
Bao Kun Shan (48)	GI	Yang	RML	26/9
B Bijoy (Cont)	Cont	-	BDShip	21/9
Jaami (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Cross	27/9
Jaya Mars(Cont)	Cont	Col	Everbest	27/9
Ocean-1	GI	Yang	SMSL	28/9
Xpress Makalu (cont)	Cont	Sing	RSL	28/9
Trtummph Hongkong(72)	GI	Yang	RML	28/9

Vessels Not Ready

Pacific Emerald	GI	Sing	Allseas	21/9
Pride	Salt	Kand	UML	22/9
Feng Tai	Sugar	Mumb	CCML	23/9
Hans	Salt	P Kala	Sbs	25/9
Sea Destiny	Mop	Ikol	Litmond	25/9
SL Bauraq	Gypsum	Pene	Seacom	4/9

Vessels Not Entering

Linghal-18	GI	Ying	RSI	21/9
Mallika Naree	Tsp(P)	Durb	BSL	17/9
Lesoza Vodsk	GI/R.Se	Sing	Mutual	16/9
Glory	-	Sant	Fortune	16/9
Alletgro	Scraping	-	RML	15/9
Saint Nicholas-II	Scraping	Sing	UMTL	14/9
Accord	Cement	Sing	Viking	5/4
Revenge	-	-	Sunshine	3/8/99
Xing Ye	Rice(G)	-	MBCSL	20/2/99
Karya Sentosa	RiceG)	-	USTC	10/8/98

Movement of Vessels for 29.9, 30.9 & 1.10.2000

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
J/1 Xiang Jiang J/3 B Maya J/5 T Queen CCJ Al-Shams	J/12 Jaami CCT-3. J Mars J/3 Topaz J/1 Shun Cheng J/5 Bao Yun Shan RM-8 B. Shourab	J/12 Banga Bijo To CCT/1
J/11 O Independence CCT-1, Banga Bijoy	CCT-1 S-P. Makalu J/11 K Singa Pride (NB) RM-5/4 P. Praima RM-4/5 C. Venture	NIL
J/4 Bay Pride J/10 Aptmariner CCT-2. K. Berjaya RM-3 Juliana J/5 Bao Yun Shan	J/2 Anze Jiang J/10 Bay Fortune J/10 Hyderabad CCT-2 OSG Alpha RM-6 Daihung TSP Natchra Naree	RM-14 T Hong Hong To J/5 J/2 Pavonis To J/4

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