

RBI cuts CRR by half percentage point, hints at slashing rates

AFP, New Delhi

India's central bank hinted at a possible reduction in the bank prime lending rate Monday as it cut the cash reserve ratio (CRR) for banks by half a percentage point to 5.0 percent. Unveiling its monetary policy for the year to March 2003, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also projected economic growth of between 6.0 and 6.5 percent. The central bank said in a statement it was considered desirable to leave the prime interest rate unchanged at 6.5 percent. However, if the inflation rate remains low and the credit situation warrants, "a reduction in the bank rate by up to half a

percentage point will be considered as and when necessary," it added. The cut in the CRR, which determines the ratio of cash banks must hold compared with their total deposits, is aimed at providing adequate liquidity to meet credit growth, support investment demand and maintain the RBI's overall stance of keeping interest rates soft. The RBI has a medium term objective to bring the ratio down to the statutory minimum level of three percent. The central bank, which has gradually reduced the CRR from 11.0 percent in August 1998, said the latest cut would only become effective on June 15 in view of prevailing excess liquidity in

the banking system. "In case there is unexpected change in the liquidity conditions in the market, the RBI may advance the effective date of CRR reduction before the announced date," it added. The central bank, however, left the administered interest rate on savings accounts unchanged at four percent, despite a rate cut announced by Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha on other small savings schemes. "Considering the fact that bulk of such savings deposits are held by households, including households in rural and semi-urban areas, it is not considered an opportune time to deregulate the interest rate," the

RBI said. Sinha has come under tremendous pressure for his low interest rate regime from his own BJP party which believed it has distanced the party from its traditional support amongst middle-class voters. The RBI also urged banks to introduce flexible interest rates, which are currently available only on housing loans. The bank said the 6.0-6.5 percent GDP growth projection was made on expectations of higher growth in the agricultural sector and "positive indications" of a quicker recovery in the industrial sector.

Australia threatens to challenge US farm subsidies at WTO

AFP, Sydney

Australia's government threatened Monday to take the United States to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) over new farm subsidies threatening to devastate Australian agricultural exports. Agriculture Minister Warren Truss also accused the United States of abrogating its leadership role in preaching trade liberalisation

while at the same time increasing protection for US farmers. His attack followed endorsement by a US Congressional committee of a six-year plan which will increase subsidies by 70 percent, giving an extra 4.8 billion dollars a year to the already heavily protected farm sector. Canberra believes the bulk of the new subsidies would go to some of the largest and wealthiest wheat,

corn, cotton and rice growers in 10 central and southern states of the United States. "This is an appalling signal to the world and the farm bill is very very bad news for international leadership," Truss told ABC radio. "The Americans have prided themselves on having some of the most advanced agriculture in the world.

REHAB seminar on eco-friendly housing held

BSS, Dhaka

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday called upon the architects and engineers to project the 'Architecture of Modern Bangladesh' in their creations in the new millennium. "Tradition and cultural heritage of our glorious history should be reflected in the high-rise buildings and structures", he said at a seminar on "Environment Friendly Housing Development: Roles and Responsibilities of Government and Private Sectors" here. Organised by Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), the seminar was addressed, among others, by former adviser of the caretaker government and Vice Chancellor of BRAC University Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works Syed Tanvir Hossain and REHAB President Dr. Towfic M Seraj. Prof Chowdhury said, "We must try to establish a friendly environment for living as well as putting our mark on our civilisation in the architectural views of buildings and establishment."



PHOTO: REHAB

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury speaks as chief guest at a seminar on 'Environment-Friendly Housing Development: Roles and Responsibilities of Government and Private Sectors' organised by REHAB on the occasion of the installation ceremony of new executive committee of the REHAB at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.



PHOTO: UCBL

Managing Director of United Commercial Bank Ltd Muhammad Sajid-ul Haq distributes certificates among the participants of a course on "Credit Management" at a function in the city yesterday.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank.					
Sell			Buy		
TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
58.5500	58.5800	USD	57.4000	57.2314	57.1629
53.2922	53.3195	EUR	51.2984	51.1477	51.0865
85.8460	85.8900	GBP	83.2128	82.9684	82.8691
32.3547	32.3713	AUD	30.7721	30.6818	30.6450
0.4607	0.4609	JPY	0.4461	0.4448	0.4443
36.2494	36.2680	CHF	35.2104	35.1070	35.0650
5.7663	5.7692	SEK	5.5685	5.5522	5.5455
37.6794	37.6987	CAD	36.5396	36.4322	36.3886
7.5145	7.5184	HKD	7.3537	7.3321	7.3233
32.5640	32.5806	SGD	31.6602	31.5672	31.5295
16.0724	16.0806	AED	15.5026	15.4571	15.4386
15.7376	15.7456	SAR	15.1852	15.1406	15.1225

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar					
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Lankan Rupee	Thai Baht	Nor Kroner	NZ Dollar
48.94	60.075	96.05	43.225	8.4142	0.4512
					0.54435
The local interbank foreign exchange market was active on Monday. Demand for dollar was steady. Demand for BDT for overnight borrowing at call was steady and the call rate ranged between 4.5 and 5 percent for the day.					
Dollar hit a 1-1/2 month low against yen and a four-month low against euro on Monday. Although US first quarter economic growth was unexpectedly strong, negative news on the consumer sentiment data cast doubts as to whether US economic rebound is sustainable.					
At 1530 hours on Monday, euro traded at 0.9034/36 against dollar, pound sterling at 1.4616/18 and yen traded at 127.84/88 against US dollar.					
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SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 29. 04.2002.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Imprt disc
J/3	Pinya	Rice(P)/GI	Yang	Bnsship	11/4	1/5	14701
J/11	Sinhai	Cont	Sing	BSC	27/4	30/4	188/34
J/12	Kuo Hsiung	Cont	P.Kel	QCSSL	27/4	1/5	166/33
J/13	Banglar Robi	Cont	Sing	BSC	20/4	29/4	211/28
CCT/1	Qc Honour	cont	P.Kel	QCSSL	25/4	29/4	147/X
CCT/2	Banga Biraj	Cont	P.Kel	Baridhi	25/4	30/4	147/X
CCT/3	Jaami	Cont	Hald	Everbest	28/4	30/4	317/81
GSJ	Banglar Gourab	Wheat(G)	K.Dia	Ancient	R/A	1/5	
RM/4	Pranedyia Dwitya	F.Oil	Sing	CTPL	26/4	29/4	
RM/5	Jenny	Bunker	Aqaba	Litmond	21/4	29/4	
RM/6	Bro Albert	Sko/Jp-1	Sing	MSTPL	27/4	1/5	
DD	Amanat Shah	Repair	Col	Cla	17/4	5/5	
DDJ/2	Safinza	Repair	Yang	Royal	5/4	30/4	
RM/9	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	2/5	
RM/10	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	2/5	

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Konlink (Cont) 23/4	29/4	Sing	Nol	Cont	-
Banglar Moni(Cont)16/4	29/4	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Banglar Mookh	29/4	-	BSC	R. Sulph	-
Britoli-32	28/4	Sing	Arafeen	P.Materials	-
Venture-1	28/4	Sing	Rkship	Scraping	-
Kota Berjaya(Cont)18/4	29/4	-	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
Oriental Queen	1/5	Kant	Uml	C.Clink	-
Dawei(Liner)	30/4	-	Everett	GI(St.C)	-
Mar Dios (Cont)21/4	30/4	P.Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
African Addax	1/5	-	Jf	Scraping	-
Banglar Shikha (Cont)22/4	1/5	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Kota berjaya (Cont)18/4	29/4	-	PIL(BD)	cont	Sing
QC Lark (Cont)21/4	1/5	P.Kel	QCSSL	Cont	P.ke
Triumph Mumbai	2/5	Sing	RML	GI(p.Equip)	-
Al Muztuba	2/5	Sing	RML	GI(P.Equip)	-
Orient Freedom (Cont)234	2/5	Sing	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Virginia(Liner)	3/5	-	Prog	GI (St. & pader)	-
Banga Baria(Cont) 23/4	3/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Chahaya Star	3/5	-	Uniship	GI(R.Log)	-
Kota Naga (Cont) 23/4	4/5	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
Ivory Ace (Roro)24/22/4	4/5	-	JF	Vehi	-
Banga Birol (Cont) 23/4	4/5	-	Bdship	Cont	-
Consistence (Cont) 24/4	5/5	-	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Qc Pintail (Cont) 27/4	4/5	P.Kel	QCSSL	Cont	Sing
Achiever (Cont)20/4	6/5	-	RSL	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijoy(Cont)28/4	6/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Banga Bonik (Cont) 27/4	7/5	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Banga Lanka (Cont) 27/4	9/5	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Qc Dignity (Cont) 27/04	7/5	P.Kel	QCSSL	Cont	Sing
Qc Teal (Cont) 27/04	8/5	P.Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Banga Borai(Cont)22/4	8/5	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya(Cont)28/4	9/5	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing

Tanker due

Eagle Anes	29/4	Sing	ECSL	HSD	-
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Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Dea Captain	-	-	Arafeen	R/A(28/1)
Orient Explorer	-	-	Arafeen	R/A(27/8)
Liberty Sea	Wheat(P/G)	Sing	Lams	23/4
Banglar Kallol	Wheat(G)	-	Ancient	R/A(27/4)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Ready on

BoxerCapt Cook (Cont)	Cont	P.Kel	Pssl	28/4
Jaya Mars (Cont)	Cont	Col	Everbest	29/4

SMovement of vessels for 30.04.2002

Outgoing		Incoming		Shifting	
J/10	J.Mars	J/5	B. Kallol	J/8	Konlink to CCT/2

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

PHOTO: ACI

Photo shows (sitting from left) Jahangir Hyder, Head of Training of ACI Limited, Sheema Haq, General Manager of Corporate Services, F H Ansarey, Executive Director of Agribusinesses, Gopal Sehpal, Managing Director of Oracle Management Services Pvt Ltd, and Bilkis Mansoor, Head of Creative Communication, with the participants of a training programme organised by ACI Limited recently.

STOCK