

# Tokyo pledges continued support for Kabul

AFP, Kabul

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi reiterated Tokyo's commitment to help the reconstruction of Afghanistan Wednesday, emphasizing that continued security was essential to the process.

Kawaguchi, on her first foreign trip since her appointment three months ago, held talks with interim Afghan leader Hamid Karzai, Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah and Finance Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala.

She told a joint press conference with Abdullah that Japan would provide aid to help the demobilisation of Afghanistan's massive standing army, demining work, education and a controversial programme to eradicate all opium-producing poppies.

These expenses will be covered by a contribution of up to 500 million dollars over two and a half years, which Japan pledged at an international donors' conference on Afghan reconstruction held in Tokyo in January.

"I am convinced more than ever

that Afghanistan's future lies in safe hands," said Kawaguchi, who also visited a newly reopened girls' school.

She said that Tokyo wanted to assist Afghanistan to solve its three most pressing concerns: the peace process, security and its humanitarian needs.

"We need to assist in three fields. If one is missing then reconstruction of Afghanistan will not be completed."

Abdullah thanked Kawaguchi for Japan's support, describing the Afghan donors' conference held in Tokyo in January as the start of the country's reconstruction.

He insisted that the fledgling interim administration was capable of handling the 4.5 billion dollars in aid that has been pledged by the international community, although he conceded that the government had not "established the most perfect administrative system".

"Today's situation should not be used as an excuse. Nobody is using it as an excuse," said Abdullah.

"It is a partnership between the interim authority and international

community but it (the challenge) is how to overcome those hurdlesometimes bureaucratic, sometimes technicalin the way."

Japan has so far disbursed about 50 million dollars of the pledged aid, including five million dollars to the United Nations Children's Fund's campaign to reopen school classes.

Kawaguchi said she wanted to show her support for Afghanistan ahead of next month's Loya Jirga meeting, a traditional Afghan grand assembly which is due to select a transitional government.

"The reason I chose Afghanistan (for her first overseas trip) is that it is an important moment for Afghanistan, a month prior to Loya Jirga, and I wanted to reiterate our assistance to the people of Afghanistan and show the people of Afghanistan the Japanese people's friendship," she said.

Kawaguchi was scheduled to meet Afghanistan's former king Mohammed Zahir Shah Thursday on the second and final day of her visit.

## Farm subsidies EU may lodge complaint against US

AFP, Brussels

The European Union might lodge a complaint at the WTO against the United States if legislation increasing government aid to farmers is approved, a spokesman for the EU commission suggested here Thursday.

The measure represents a "major contradiction" of trade rules agreed by members of the World Trade Organization, Gregor Kreuzhuber, spokesman for the EU agriculture commissioner, told reporters here.

The US Farm Bill, which has been endorsed by a Congressional committee and must now be presented to the full Congress, would increase subsidies to farmers by 70 per cent over six years, offering them an extra 4.8 billion dollars (5.3 billion euros) a year.

WTO ministers meeting in Doha, Qatar last November to launch a new round of trade negotiations agreed the talks would aim to eliminate market-distorting government subsidies that help farmers export their products.

## US weekly jobless claims fall 10,000

AFP, Washington

The queue of people filing new claims for US jobless benefits fell 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 418,000 in the week to April 27, erratic government data showed Thursday.

Jobless figures have been skewed in past weeks by a recent 13-week extension to the benefits program, which forced many people to make fresh claims to qualify.

In the previous week, new claims tumbled 24,000 to 428,000.

A four-week moving average of initial claims eased 18,500 to 435,750 in the week ended April 27, the Labor Department said.

In raw figures, initial claims tumbled 22,782 to 364,490. There were 353,831 claims in the comparable week of 2001.

The number of people filing unemployment claims for two weeks or more rose 84,000 to 3.78 million in the week to April 20.



PHOTO: BASIC BANK

Al-Ameen Chaudhury, Secretary of Industries and Chairman of the Board of Directors of BASIC Bank Ltd, presides over the 13th annual general meeting of the bank held at a city hotel on Tuesday.

# BASIC Bank declares 50pc cash dividend

BASIC Bank Ltd has declared a 50 per cent cash dividend for its sole shareholder-owner, the government, for 2001, says a press release.

The declaration was made at the company's 13th annual general meeting held at a city hotel on Tuesday.

The Chairman of the bank, Al-Ameen Chaudhury, Secretary of Industries, presided over the AGM.

The meeting disclosed that the bank posted a pre-tax profit of Tk 356.12 million in the year 2001 against Tk 3.04.18 million of 2000 reflecting a growth of 17.08 per cent. The bank's capital and reserve representing shareholders' equity increased by 9.11 per cent from Tk. 697.77 million of 2000 to Tk. 761.35 million in 2001.

Total assets of the bank (exclud-

ing contra) increased by 25.76 per cent to Tk 9721.93 million at the end of the year 2001. Bank's return (after tax) on assets was 3.66 per cent and on equity 46.76 per cent. The risk weighted capital adequacy ratio was 12.49 per cent which was well over the required rate of 8 per cent.

BASIC's deposit grew by 28.53 per cent and rose to Tk. 7512.62 million in the year 2001 from Tk. 5845.15 million of 2000. Outstanding balance of loans and advances was Tk. 6260.78 million as on December 31, 2001 against Tk 4618.73 million of 2000 reflecting a growth of 35.55 per cent. Yet BASIC with its size and age has a small percentage of non-performing loans which was 3.67 per cent of outstanding loans as at the end of the year 2001 compared to 3.73 per cent in the previous year.

## CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's foreign exchange rate 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	
53.6201	53.6476	EUR	51.5911	51.4396	51.3780	
58.3905	86.4348	GBP	83.7466	83.506	83.4007	
32.0620	32.0784	AUD	30.4851	30.3856	30.3592	
0.4640	0.4642	JPY	0.4493	0.4480	0.4475	
36.7223	36.7411	CHF	35.6588	35.6588	35.5541	
5.7747	5.7777	SEK	5.5788	5.5624	6.557	
37.7182	37.7376	CAD	36.5768	36.4694	36.4257	
7.5149	7.5187	HKD	7.3541	7.3826	7.3237	
32.5766	32.5933	SGD	31.6725	31.5794	31.5416	
16.0724	16.0806	AED	15.5028	15.4571	15.4386	
15.7354	15.7435	SAR	15.1852	15.1408	15.1225	
Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar						
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Lankan Rupee	Thai Baht	Nor Kroner	NZ Dollar	AUD
48.93	59.975	96.12	43.100	8.3440	0.4488	0.5335
The local interbank foreign exchange market was active Thursday. Demand for dollar was steady. Demand for BDT for overnight borrowing at call was steady and the call rate ranged between 4.25 and 4.5 per cent for the day.						
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## SHIPPING

### Chittagong Port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 2. 5.2002.

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	2/5	-
J/5	Banglar Kallol	Wheat(P)	K Dia	Lams	R/A	7/5	X
J/6	Banglar Mamata	Wheat(P)	K.Dia	USL	R/A	6/5	X
J/10	Banglar Shikha	Cont	Sing	BSC	30/4	4/5	285/22
J/11	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	29/4	5/5	221/34
J/13	Boxer Capt Cook	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	28/4	2/5	1/X
CCT/1	Banglar Moni	Cont	Sing	BSC	29/4	2/5	84/X
CCT/2	Konlink	Cont	Sing	NOL	29/4	3/5	414/X
GSJ	Banglar Gourab	Wheat(G)	KDia	Ancient	R/A	5/5	
RM/6	Bro Albert	Sko/JP-1	Sing	MSTPL	27/4	2/5	
DD	Amanat Shah	Repair	Col	CLA	17/4	7/5	
RM/9	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	6/5	
RM/10	Banglar Jyoti	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	6/5	

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Dawei (Liner)	2/5	-	Everett	GI (SLC)	-
Oriental Queen	2/5	Kant	UML	C Clink	-
Al Muztuba	2/5	Col	Cla	GI (SL Coll)	-
Macedonia Hellas	2/5	Hopi	OLM	C Clink	-
Weddell Sea	3/5	Cila	OLM	C Clink	-
Triumph Mumbai	7/5	Sing	RML	GI (P Equip)	-
Orient Freedom (Cont) 23/4	4/5	Sing	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Virginia (Liner)	3/5	Sing	Prog	GI (ST & Pader)	-
Chahaya Star	3/5	-	Uniship	GI (R Log)	-
Banga Barta (Cont) 23/4	4/5	CBO	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Kota Naga (Cont) 23/4	4/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
Kew Bridge (48) 30/4	4/5	-	Seabird	GI (Spl Cargo)	-
Ivory Ace (Roro/24)22/4	4/5	-	JF	Vehi	-
Togo Cham	4/5	Tanj	SSA	C Clink	-
Banga Birol (Cont) 23/4	5/5	P Kel	BD ship	Cont	-
QC Pintail (Cont) 27/4	5/5	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Consistence (Cont) 24/4	5/5	-	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Achiever (Cont) 20/4	6/5	PKel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijoy (Cont) 28/4	6/5	-	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Banga Bonik (Cont) 27/4	7/5	-	BD ship	Cont	Sing
Young Jiang (Liner)	7/5	-	BD Ship	GI	-
Crown Jewel-1	6/5	Sing	JF	Scraping	-
QC Dignity(Cont)27/4	7/5	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
QC Teal (Cont) 27/4	8/5	P.Kel	BD Ship	Cont	Sing
Banga Borat (Cont)22/4	8/5	-	BD Ship	Cont	Sing
Banga Lanka (Cont) 27/4	9/5	-	BD Ship	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya (Cont) 28/4	9/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
Banglar Maya	10/5	Okha	BSC	GI (S Ash)	-
Xpress Manaslu (Cont) 18/4	10/5	Pkel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Mawar (Cont) 30/4	11/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
QC Honour (Cont) 30/4	12/5	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing

### Tanker due

Ussuriysk	3/5	P.Kel	Rainbow	CPO	-
Soechi Lesmana	3/5	Pada	USL	CPO	-

### 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 (27/3)

### Vessels at outer anchorage

#### Ready on

Kota Singa (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	1/5
QC Lark (Cont)	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	2/5
Eagle Aries	HSD	Sing	ECSL	29/4

#### Vessels not ready

Banglar Mookh	R Sulp	B Abb	BSC	30/4
Mardios (Cont)	Cont	P.Kel	RSL	30/4

#### Vessels not entering

Banglar Doot	Wheat(P)	K.Dia	USL	R/A (24/4)
Blue Fortune	C Clink	Sing	PSAL	25/4

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

## STOCK