

Democrat lawmakers challenge Bush on corporate reform

AFP, Washington

Democrat lawmakers on Tuesday challenged President George W. Bush to move quickly on cracking down on white-collar crime and push for the House to pass the Senate's unanimously approved tough accounting reform bill.

"If the president wants a bill on his desk, the quickest way to get it there would be to back the Senate bill (and) for the president to come in behind that bill," said Senator Paul Sarbanes, chief architect of the Senate bill.

Late Monday, the Democrat-controlled Senate voted to establish an independent oversight board for accounting firms and increase the regulation of accountants and Wall Street securities analysts following the collapse of Enron and revela-

tions of questionable accounting practices at WorldCom.

"The easiest path is to take the bill that passed 97-0 and put it on the (House) floor today. It could be on the president's desk today," said House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt.

Normally, the Senate bill would need to be reconciled with the weaker accounting reform bill passed by the Republican-controlled House in April -- a process that could take weeks, if not months, Gephardt and Representative John LaFalce warned.

The House bill bans accounting firms from offering certain consulting services to the companies they audit, but falls short of calling for an outright split of accounting and consulting services.

Citing the depressed markets, the slide of the dollar and national as well as international investors beginning to look askance at the credibility of US companies, Sarbanes called for House lawmakers to consider the bill he had sponsored in the upper chamber.

"If we're going to quiet the turmoil," he said, lawmakers had to "get the right thing passed quickly, and we think this is the right thing."

"That would be the best thing to restore confidence in the American economy," agreed Gephardt.

Earlier Tuesday, Speaker Dennis Hastert said Republicans in the House may toughen their version of an accounting industry reform bill to match the standards of a Senate bill passed a day earlier.

"I think there are some pieces that we can put in ... I think we can

make some adjustments," Hastert, an Illinois Republican, told reporters at the White House after meeting with President George W. Bush.

Hastert said the recent revelations involving WorldCom and other scandals have made it necessary to strengthen the bill in the reconciliation process, known as the conference committee, made up of Senators and Representatives.

"It was a little different situation in April, the president asked that we pass the bill in March before we knew a lot of this," Hastert said, apparently referring to WorldCom.

A senior administration official urged congressional negotiators to move quickly to work out their differences and send Bush a bill for his signature.

Lawsuit charges Merrill Lynch with fraud

AFP, Washington

A lawsuit filed Wednesday on behalf of investors who lost money in the failed Internet firm eToys charges Wall Street giant Merrill Lynch and its former star analyst with fraud.

The law firm Finkelstein, Thompson and Loughran said it filed a securities fraud class action lawsuit against Merrill Lynch and the former head of its Internet group, Henry Blodget, on behalf of purchasers of eToys shares between June 27, 1999, and March 7, 2001.

The suit stems from allegations made in a complaint against Merrill Lynch by New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, which maintained that Blodget and others were privately trashing many dot-com firms while publicly urging investors to buy them.

Merrill Lynch paid 100 million dollars to settle the allegations with New York state authorities, but Spitzer was reported as saying that "investors should use (the published probe) to regain some of their stock losses," according to the law firm.

The suit alleges that Merrill Lynch and Blodget violated federal securities laws "by knowingly issuing false and misleading analyst reports regarding these 'new economy' companies," the statement said.

It also argues that Merrill Lynch failed to disclose a significant conflict of interest between its investment banking and research departments and that it was issuing favorable analyst reports on the companies "when they allegedly knew that the positive recommendations were unwarranted and false."

Shares of eToys rocketed to 90 dollars when the company went public in mid-1999, making eToys worth 1.5 billion dollars on paper. It went bankrupt in March 2001.

Last year, KB Toys had acquired the rights to the name and other assets of the defunct online toy retailer for 3.35 million dollars in a bankruptcy court auction.

PwC to pay \$5m to settle charges

AFP, Washington

Accounting giant PricewaterhouseCoopers agreed to pay a five million dollar fine to settle charges that its independence as an audit firm was compromised, officials said Wednesday.

The Securities and Exchange Commission said in a statement that

the fine was to settle charges of violations of auditor independence rules from 1996 to 2001.

The SEC said that PwC violated conflict-of-interest rules by providing contingent fee arrangements with some clients and by allowing two other firms to misstate costs by improperly accounting for fees they paid for PwC's consulting work.

The settlement comes amid growing unease about auditor independence in the wake of the spectacular collapse last year of Enron Corp. and the disclosure of massive misstatements at WorldCom and other firms.

The surge in corporate malfeasance cases has led to a clamor in some quarters to ban auditors from

doing consulting work and take other steps to ensure independence of outside accountants.

"An auditor's objectivity is critical to the financial reporting process," said Stephen Cutler, the SEC's enforcement director, in a statement on the PwC case.

"Impairment of an auditor's independence undermines that process and erodes public confidence in our capital markets. This case demonstrates the heightened risk of an audit failure when an accounting firm assists in and approves the accounting treatment of its own consulting fees. Faced with that situation here, PwC lacked the objectivity and impartiality required of an independent auditor."

The SEC accused PwC of independence violations with 16 clients that caused them to file improper statements with the regulator.

"The order also finds that, in connection with the improper accounting of its consulting fees, PwC caused two of those clients to violate the reporting, recordkeeping, and/or internal controls provisions of the federal securities laws," the statement said.

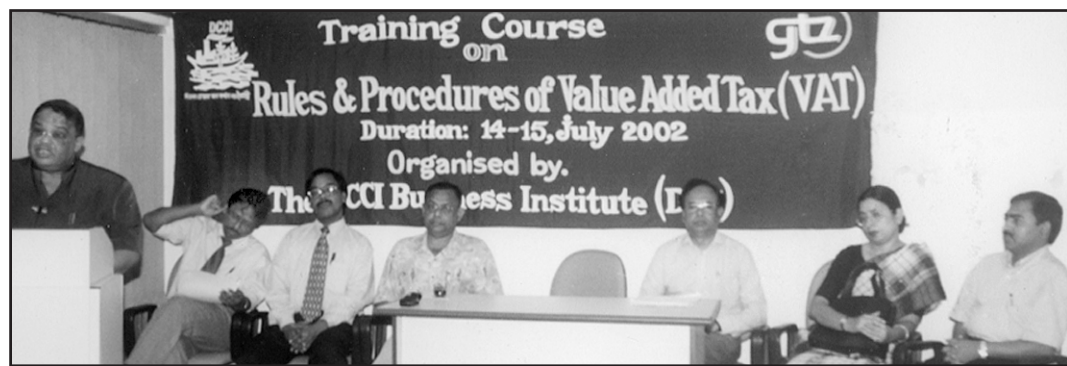


PHOTO: DCCI

DCCI Director Manzur-ur-Rahman addresses the inaugural ceremony of a training course on "Rules & Procedures of Value Added Tax (VAT)" held at DCCI Business Institute in the city on Sunday. Executive Director Dr Ahmad Neaz (3rd-R), DCCI-GTZ Project Manager Md Emdadul Haque (extreme Left), Member, Customs, VAT, Tariff & Taxation Standing Committee of DCCI Siraj Uddin Haider (3rd-L), Deputy Secretary (Training) Hasanur Rahman Chowdhury (2nd-L), resource persons from the NBR Syed Abdul Mannan Sikder (extreme right) and Shahnaj Perveen (2nd-R) were present on the occasion.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank.

Selling	Currency		Buying		
	BC	USD	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
58.5500	58.5800	USD	57.4000	57.2314	57.1629
59.8557	59.8863	EUR	56.9006	56.7335	56.6656
92.6612	92.7087	GBP	89.0618	88.8002	88.6940
32.7880	32.8048	AUD	31.1969	31.1053	31.0680
0.5058	0.5060	JPY	0.4893	0.4879	0.4873
40.6569	40.6777	CHF	39.0582	38.9435	38.8969
6.3905	6.3937	SEK	6.1638	6.1457	6.1384
38.2380	38.2576	CAD	37.0753	36.9664	36.9222
7.5139	7.5178	HKD	7.3517	7.3301	7.3213
33.8537	33.8711	SGD	32.9034	32.8068	32.7675
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	AUD
48.755	59.875	95.885	40.445	7.3367	0.4813	0.55175

The local interbank foreign exchange market was active on Thursday. Demand for dollar was steady. Demand for BDT for overnight borrowing at call was steady and the call rate ranged between 3.50 and 4.0 per cent for the day.

Dollar traded in a thin range on Thursday amid weariness over US corporate accounting scandals. Though Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) and Nasdaq composite index broke the seven-day losing streak, dollar didn't get as much support. Earlier dollar got a boost from US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's testimony where he was unusually outspoken on currency matters. Only the intervention fear by Bank of Japan (BOJ) held the dollar above its 17-month low against the yen. Euro held its strength against the dollar above the parity.

At 1645 hours on Thursday, euro traded at 1.0058/61 against dollar, pound sterling at 1.5641/46 and yen traded at 117.03/08 against US dollar.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 18.7.2002

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Imptr disc
J/1	Bo Tong Gang	Sugar(R)	Tuti	CCNL	27/6	22/7	873
J/2	Elmwood	GI/GL	Pipa	RML	11/7	19/7	1955
J/3	Jat Na Mu	Sugar(P)	Sing	USL	8/7	20/7	2049
J/4	Sara Star	GI(Coil)	Goa	Royal	7/7/1	20/7	3909
J/6	Min Jiang	GI	P. Kel	Bdship	16/7	22/7	455
J/7	Win Song	GI(BIT)	B.Abb	R.KShip	5/7	22/7	520
J/8	Nand Srishti	C. Clink	Sikka	BSL	6/7	23/7	2435
J/9	Suisen	C. Clink	Krabi	OLM	3/7	20/7	1710
J/10	Xuan Cheng	Sugar(P)	Bank	MSA	15/7	25/7	-
J/11	Phumy	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	12/7	20/7	147X
J/12	Orient Freedom	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	14/7	18/7	318/40
J/13	Kota Singa	Cont	Sing	Pil(BD)	14/7	19/7	421/19
CCT/1	QC Dignity	Cont	P. Kel	QCSSL	16/7	21/7	(383/7)
CCT/2	Banga Biraj	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	17/7	20/7	203/34
CCT/3	QC Pintail	Cont	P. Kel	QCSSL	15/7	19/7	(84/20)
RM/14	Khaleda	Idle	Sant	Ambi	18/6	22/7	-
RM/15	J. Lucky	Sugar(P)	Bang	Mutual	14/7	23/7	-
CCJ	CS Valiant	C. Clink	Tarj	Bsl	6/7	20/7	-
GSJ	Banglar Robi	Repair	Sing	BSC	14/7	21/7	-
TSP	Ja Gang	R. Phos	Col	Litmond	14/7	21/7	-
RM/6	Mikom Accord	HSD/MS	Sing	ECSL	14/7	19/7	-
DOJ	Banglar Shourabh	C. Oil	K.Dia	BSC	R/A	18/7	-

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading por
Kota Cahaya (Cont)7/7	18/7	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijoy (Cont)9/7	19/7	CBO	Bandhi	Cont	Col
Banga Biroi (Cont)6/7	22/7	Sing	BdShip	Cont	Sing
Jaami (Cont)10/7	18/7	CBO	Everbest	Cont	Col.
Jaya Mars (Cont)11/7	19/7	-	Everbest	Cont	Sing
Xpress Manasu (Cont)7/7	19/7	P. Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Iligan (72)13/7	21/7	Yang	H&HL	GI(Hr.Coil)	-
Baltic Leader (Roro)24/9/7	19/7	Sing	JF	Cont	Sing
Weddell Sea	19/7	Cila	OLM	C. Clink	-
Amalfi	20/7	Krabi	OLM	-	-
Consistence (Cont)6/7	22/7	P. Kel	PSSI	Cont	Sing
An Shun Jiang	23/7	P. Kel	BdShip	GI	-
Orient Patriot (Cont)13/6	21/7	P. Kel	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Alessia Prima	20/7	Sing	OTBL	-	-
Walter	20/7	Sing	OTBL	-	-
Mardios (Cont)11/7	21/7	P. Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shikha (Cont)15/7	21/7	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Kota Berjaya (Cont)10/7	21/7	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
Banga Barta (Cont)11/7	23/7	-	BdShip	Cont	Sing
Banga Lanka (Cont)8/7	22/7	-	Bandhi	Cont	Col
Orange Breeze (Roro)24/7	22/7	-	Everett	Vehi	-
Jurong Bauhinia (Cont)14/7	22/7	-	NOL	Cont	Sing
AA Venture	22/7	Ind	CLA	GI	-
QC Honour (Cont)12/7	24/7	P. Kel	QCSSL	Cont	Sing
Banga Borat (Cont)15/7	25/7	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Xpress Resolve (Cont)16/7	25/7	-	Everbest	Cont	Col.
Banga Bonik (Cont)16/7	25/7	-	Bandhi	-	-
Amalia	26/7	Avon	RSA	St. Scrap	-

Tanker due

Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arri
Jaladoot	21/7	Mina	ECSL	HSD

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arri
Dea Chancellor	-	-	Arafeen	R/A(2/7)
Danat Oatar	C. Oil	Jebe	USS	14/07
Banglar Jyotyj	C. Oil	-	BSC	R/A(17/7)

Vessels at outer anchorage Ready on

QC Lark(Cont)	Cont	P. Kel	QCSSL	18/7
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The above are shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.

STOCK