

EU can hit back at US in anti-dumping row: WTO

REUTERS, Geneva

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) authorised the European Union Tuesday to hit back at the United States over anti-dumping duties in a ruling that may heighten trade tensions ahead of the US presidential vote.

But in a decision that also gave some comfort to the United States, it softened the potential impact by adding that the EU would have to show proof that its companies had suffered damage from the law before they could retaliate.

The WTO had already ruled that a 1916 US law, allowing US companies to claim damages from foreign concerns they accused of dumping, violated international trading norms. But the United States contested the EU's right to hit back.

The official verdict said that "the arbitrator authorised the EU to suspend obligations... (under trade treaties)." At the WTO, retaliation is always expressed in terms of suspending rights of access for another member state's goods.

The Geneva-based trade body announced its decision, the latest in a series of at least partial rebuffs for Washington, as Brussels prepared

to slap \$200 million of sanctions on US goods next week in another long-running commercial spat.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said the decision was a "welcome reaffirmation that the WTO is a rule-based system and members may not ignore their obligations with impunity."

But Washington, which has vowed to keep working with Congress to get the law dropped, said that the WTO ruling posed no immediate financial threat to US companies because the EU had yet to show any quantifiable damage being done to its firms.

"We do not believe this will pose a problem. If Congress continues to make progress and repeals the 1916 Act, this matter will be resolved," said Richard Mills, a spokesman for the US trade Representative's Office.

A run of adverse WTO decisions has stirred controversy in the United States, where some top politicians have accused the body of bias.

Both John Kerry, the leading Democratic Party contender to contest the presidency in the November 4 vote, and John Edwards, his main rival, have vowed to be more aggressive in

defending US trade interests than President George W Bush.

The US law also provided for civil and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for foreign companies found by a US trade court to be selling goods in the United States below their value to undermine US competitors.

Legislation to repeal the law has been introduced in both houses of Congress and the United States had argued that no retaliation was warranted because, although the law was on the statute books, virtually no cases had been brought.

Last December, a US court awarded Illinois printing press manufacturer Gross International \$31.6 million of damages against Japan-based Tokyo Kikai Seisakusho, in what was the first successful suit under the law.

Under the WTO ruling, the EU can levy sanctions on US firms for up to the value of any penalties imposed by a US court on an EU firm, or for the cost of any out of court settlement.

But the EU has said that showing proof of the latter is difficult because such deals usually include confidentiality clauses that bar public disclosure.



PHOTO: BANK ASIA

Bank Asia Limited President and Managing Director Syed Anisul Huq and other senior officials of the bank pose for a photograph with the participants of a workshop on e-product of Bank Asia at the inauguration of the workshop organised by the bank recently. E-products of the bank have opened up new delivery channels for its clients to access their accounts from anywhere anytime.

Parmalat US dairy units file for bankruptcy

REUTERS, New York

Scandal-plagued Italian food producer Parmalat SpA put its US dairy operations under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Tuesday and said it will sell them to pay creditors.

Its three US dairy units -- Farmland Dairies LLC, its parent Parmalat USA Corp, and its subsidiary Milk Products of Alabama LLC -- filed for protection with the US Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan after vendors and bank lenders balked at extending credit.

The move followed Parmalat's bankruptcy filings in Italy on December 24, and later in Brazil and the Netherlands in one of Europe's worst financial scandals. The company's new managers have said Parmalat underreported debt by about \$16 billion and inflated profit and revenue.

The US filings are intended to help maintain value in the US business during the sale process. Parmalat said it has several potential buyers but did not name them.

Eleven US representatives, including five Securities and Exchange Commission inspectors and others from the offices of the Justice Department and Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, were in Parma on Tuesday to meet Italian prosecutors, people familiar with the matter said.

CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (Feb 25, 2004) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell		Buy	
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc
59.1500	59.2000	USD	58.2550
75.7652	75.8293	EUR	73.1916
112.5743	112.6694	GBP	109.3272
46.8527	46.8923	AUD	44.7165
0.5544	0.5548	JPY	0.5348
48.0855	48.1262	CHF	46.4702
8.1390	8.1459	SEK	7.5631
44.9059	44.9438	CAD	43.4577
7.6113	7.6178	HKD	7.4817
35.1477	35.1774	SGD	34.3100
16.2362	16.2499	AED	15.7335
15.9901	15.9136	SAR	15.4118

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai bath	Nor kroner
NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit			

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local interbank market was active on Wednesday. Dollar continued to get stronger against Bangladeshi taka due to increased profit remittances and import demand.

Local Money Market

Money market was active. Call money rate continued to ease and ranged between 1.75 and 2.50 percent compared with 2.00 and 3.00 per cent previously.

International Market

The dollar maintained a negative bias on Wednesday after soft US consumer sentiment data raised concerns the Federal Reserve would take longer to lift interest rates from unattractive low

levels. The sharp decline in US consumer confidence in February in data released on Tuesday implied a growing disenchantment with the economy among US consumers, due to a lack of new jobs. The US Conference Board's consumer confidence dropped to 87.3 in February from 96.4 in January. The dollar was trading at \$1.2670 per euro, steady from late New York levels. Against the yen, dollar stood at 105.50 yen.

At 1600 hours on Wednesday euro was at 1.2666/70. GBP was at 1.8874/78, yen was at 108.55/61 against US dollar.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 25/2/2004

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch.
J/1	Asean Energy	GI (Log)	Yang	Goldview	24/2	28/2	450
J/2	Pathein	Rice (P)	Kaki	GPST	12/2	27/2	1569
J/4	Xuan Cheng	GI	Inch	Bdship	20/2	25/2	1847
J/5	Rise	Sugar(P)	Viza	SSTL	23/10	27/2	91
J/6	Eastern Treasure	GI (HRC)	Yang	H&SL	23/2	25/2	5075
J/10	Banga Bodor	Cont	P Kel	Bdship	22/2	26/2	--
J/12	Oc Dignity	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	22/2	26/2	285
J/13	Dong Tai Fortune	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	21/2	26/2	21
CCT/1	Banglar Shikha	Cont	Sing	BSC	20/2	25/2	--
CCT/2	Banga Bijoy	Cont	Hald	Baridhi	23/2	25/2	--
CCT/3	Mardios	Cont	P Kel	RSL	21/2	25/2	--
DOJ	Star Dream	C Oil	Sing	Rainbow	23/2	25/2	--
DD	Banglar Mamata Repair	Yang	BSC	BSC	6/2	5/3	--

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Cargo	Load port
Rio Negro	25/2	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	P Kel
Eastern Star	26/2	Enoc	Unique	Fert(P)	Cont
Kriti Sea	26/2	Sing	Nov	Rsship	Demo
Kota Naga	26/2	Sing	Pil (bd)	Cont	Mong
Banga Borak	26/2	Sing	Bdship	Cont	PKL/Sing
Banga Borti	28/2	Sing	Bdship	Cont	PTP/PKL
Xiang Jiang	27/2	--	Bdship	GI	Cont
Jaami	27/2	Col	Everbest	Cont	Col
Kota Berjaya	27/2	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bonik	29/2	--	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Xpress Manaslu	28/2	P Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Qc Star	28/2	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	Cont
Sing					
Orient Excellence	29/2	--	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya	1/3	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Banga Borat	2/3	--	Bdship	Cont	PTP/PKL/Sing
Qc Honour	2/3	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	P Kel
New Blessing	2/3	--	Seaborne	Cont	Sing
Kota Singa	3/3	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Estrella Enterna	3/3	--	Everett	--	--

Tanker due

Roberto Rizzo	25/2	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/JP-1 (RM)
Loulwat Qatar	27/2	R/Tanu	USS	C. Oil Rm/
Jag Preeti	28/2	Hal	SSLL	HSD/RM

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
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Outside port limit

Nit

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

Orient Enterprise	Cont	Sing	PSSI	24/2
Ocean Marlin	Naptha	Sing	RCSL	24/2
Pac Makassar	Cont	Hald	PSSL	25/2

Vessels not ready

Asean Express	Slag	Fuku	Move	25/02
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Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Banga Biraj	--	--	Bdship	R/A (29/12)
Banglar Shourabh	--	--	BSC	R/A (19/02)
Banglar Jyoti	--	--	BSC	R/A (24/02)

Vessels not entering

Asian Prime	C. Clink	Yang	ASLL	22/2
Cenk Kaptanoglu	R. Seed	--	Rainbow	22/2
Ocean Wind	Salt(P)	Kand	Sigma	25/12
Accord	--	Sing	Viking	5/4

The above are the shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong Port as per the sheet of CPA supplied by Family, Dhaka.



PHOTO: THE ADVERTISING CLUB

Participants of a lecture on 'Communicating to Cross-section of Audience' organised by The Advertising Club, Dhaka pose for a photograph with Aly Zaker, managing director and CEO of Asiatic Marketing Communications Limited, and other officials of the club, in Dhaka recently.

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