

## US to take pre-emptive action on China textiles

REUTERS, Hong Kong

The United States will take pre-emptive action to restrict Chinese textile imports if it finds American companies are threatened by the removal of global textile quotas in January, a US official said Friday.

"The US (textile) industry will have to provide evidence to justify their case. But if they do present the evidence, we will certainly take action," US Commerce Under-Secretary, Grant Aldonas, told reporters during a visit to Hong

Kong.

Textile and clothing exports from low-cost China are expected to surge once quotas expire on January 1, 2005. As protection against that, the US has the right under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules to impose "safeguards", limiting the increase in shipments from China to 7.5 per cent above this year's level.

A Chinese official, however, said this week that the US would be breaking World Trade Organisation rules if it took pre-

emptive action against categories of textile and clothing imports from China based on the threat of, rather than actual, disruption to the US industry.

Aldonas disagreed. "What was bargained for (at WTO) was that safeguard quotas could be levied based on actual market disruption and on threat," he said. "So the US industry would be well within its rights to act on threat."

US textile industry groups plan to file dozens of petitions in the coming

weeks, asking the US government to restrict imports of trousers, skirts and other ready-to-wear apparel from China.

The government would then have 105 days to decide on whether to take action, US officials said.

Aldonas dismissed reports that Washington had asked China to introduce voluntary restrictions on its textile exports.

"No. That would be inconsistent with WTO," he said. "They have their rights as well."

## NEW RESERVES FOUND Myanmar to boost gas exports to Thailand

AFP, Yangon

Military-ruled Myanmar plans to boost natural gas exports to neighboring Thailand to 11 million cubic meters per day after discovering new reserves in the Andaman Sea, state-run media reported Saturday.

Four new reserves have been discovered in the Yetagun field which together produce four million cubic meters per day, bringing total production of the field to 14 million cubic meters daily, according to the Myanma Ahlin newspaper.

The new reserves represent a major boost in exports to Thailand from the field, with currently produces 8.5 million cubic metres for daily export.

The Yetagun field is jointly-operated by the state-owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and oil companies from Malaysia and Thailand.

Myanmar also provides natural gas to Thailand from the Yadana

gas field -- situated north of the Yetagun field -- which began production in 1998.

Yangon has signed dozens of oil and gas exploration and production contracts with foreign firms.

Thai state-energy firm PTTEP International Ltd signed a multi-million dollar deal with the junta in August to explore and develop two off-shore gas sites also located in the Gulf of Martaban, south of Yangon.

PTTEP has agreed to invest a minimum of 18 million dollars to develop the Block M3 and M4 gas fields, which have a combined area of about 18,000 kilometres.

French oil group Total and US giant Unocal both invest in Myanmar and have been accused of human rights abuses during the building of a 1.2-billion-dollar gas pipeline in the country, which was formerly known as Burma, in the 1990s.



PHOTO: ABB

Bangladesh Bank Governor Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurates the new premises of Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB) at Kakrail in Dhaka recently. Among others, ABB Chairman M Aminuzzaman and Secretary General Khondkar Fazle Rashid were present.



PHOTO: ARAMIT CEMENT LIMITED

Md Ziaul Haque Khondker, chairman of Aramit Cement Limited, speaks at the annual general meeting of the company held in Chittagong on Wednesday. Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, managing director of the company, is also seen in the picture.

## ADB to continue assistance for Sri Lanka

REUTERS, Colombo

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Friday it will continue development assistance for Sri Lanka, despite the lack of progress in the peace process, providing economic growth and reforms stay on track.

The bank plans to lend \$570 million in the next two years. This includes annual commitments of \$90 million from the concessional Asian Development Fund (ADF) and \$390 million over two years from its Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR).

"Final allocations will depend on country performance ... Assuming continued economic growth and economic reforms, the programme plans a gradual move toward increased OCR lending, said Alessandro Pio, country director of the Asian Development Bank.

Pio said any changes in disbursement would depend on country performance, macroeconomic management and progress in other sectors. Stalled peace talks between the Tamil Tigers and the government to end two decades of civil war has held back most of about \$4.5 billion in donor funds pledged for reconstruction work.

The ADB said the country's fiscal situation also remained one of the major concerns.

## CURRENCY

Following is Saturday's (September 11, 2004) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank:

Sell	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
59.7500	59.8000	USD	58.5050	58.3332	58.2633
74.2812	74.3434	EUR	70.8613	70.6531	70.5686
108.3387	108.4294	GBP	104.2091	103.9030	103.7787
42.5360	42.5716	AUD	39.7775	39.6607	39.6132
0.5521	0.5526	JPY	0.5294	0.5278	0.5272
47.8843	47.9243	CHF	46.0742	45.9389	45.8839
8.0397	8.0464	SEK	7.4463	7.4244	7.4156
46.6578	46.6969	CAD	44.9140	44.7821	44.7285
7.6700	7.6764	HKD	7.4918	7.4698	7.4609
35.3948	35.4244	SGD	34.2917	34.1909	34.1500
16.4004	16.4141	AED	15.8002	15.7538	15.7349

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar				
Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai bath	Nor kroner
65.45	105.00	193.00	31.20	4.75

Local interbank FX Trading  
Local interbank FX market was subdued Saturday as international market was closed. US dollar ended almost steady against Bangladeshi taka.

Local Money Market  
Money market was active. Call money rate increased slightly and ranged between 5.00 and 5.25 per cent compared with 4.75 and 5.00 per cent previously.

International Market  
International market was closed on Saturday due to weekend. Before closing, dollar eased across the board on back of decline in US PPI which reconfirms Greenspan's comment of gradual pace of tightening.

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PHOTO: BANGLADESH KRISHI BANK

AKM Sajedur Rahman, managing director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), and Abdus Salam, chairman of Bangladesh Handloom Board, sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) under the project of micro credit programme for weavers in Dhaka Thursday. Under the deal, Handloom Board will render financial help to genuine weavers and BKB will provide all the banking facilities for loan disbursement and recovery.

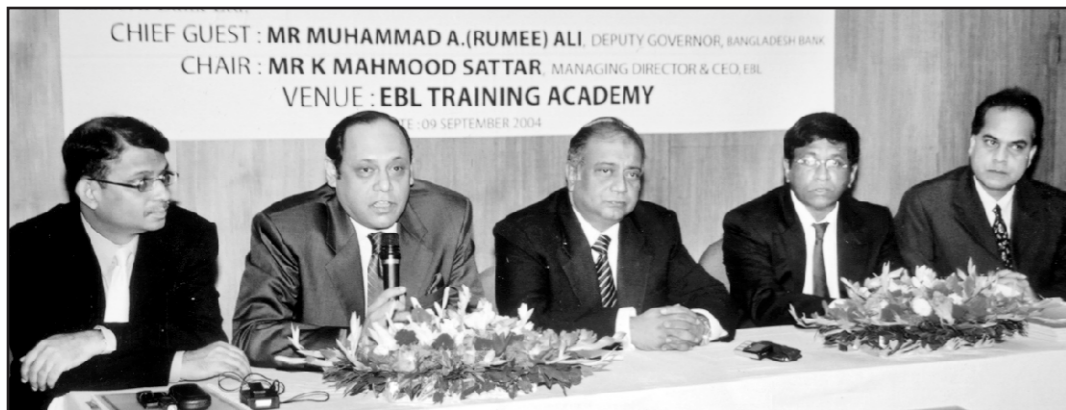


PHOTO: EBL

Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank Muhammad A (Rumeel) Ali, Eastern Bank Limited Managing Director and CEO K Mahmood Sattar, Deputy Managing Director and COO of the bank Ali Reza Iftakhar pose for photographs with other senior officials of the bank at a daylong training course on Credit Risk Management organised by the bank recently in Dhaka.



PHOTO: UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK

MS Kamal Uddin, acting managing director of United Commercial Bank Limited, gives away certificate to a participant of a training course on 'Foreign Trade and Foreign Exchange' organised by the bank recently in Dhaka. Among others, vice-presidents of the bank MM Rafiqur Rahman and SM Hafizur Rahman were present.

## STOCK