

Oil inches towards \$57

REUTERS, Melbourne

Oil prices edged towards \$57 a barrel on Monday as the IMF forecast high energy costs to stay for the next two years on worries that robust demand would strain global supplies despite moves by Opec producers to raise output.

US light crude for April delivery traded up 5 cents to \$56.77 a barrel, less than \$1 under the all-time peak at \$57.60 struck last Thursday.

The April contract is due to expire at the close of business on Monday and May crude futures on the New York Mercantile Exchange rose 4 cents to \$57.28 a barrel.

International Monetary Fund chief Rodrigo Rato warned on Saturday that the world would have to live with lofty oil prices for at least the next two years because of strong demand and constraints in supply.

He said world economic growth was expected to be more than 4 percent this year but could come in lower if oil stayed at current levels or climbed higher.

"We have to be aware that probably oil prices will stay high, although probably not at this level, in the next two years at least because of demand pressures -- there is certainly very strong demand in the world for oil -- and also because of certain supply constraints," Rato told reporters in New Delhi.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed on Wednesday to raise production by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) with immediate effect.

The producers' cartel may begin talks as early as this week to consider a second 500,000-bpd increase if prices fail to fall below \$55.

Opec output is close to a 25-year high and Non-Opec producers are pumping at full tilt, leaving

little leeway in the supply chain for any output glitch.

"The problem for Opec members and their ability to control prices is that they are now at a stage where the market is aware of how much spare capacity they have, and it is not a lot," said Mark Pervan, a Melbourne-based analyst at Daiwa Securities.

"So pledging more production just means less available supply from them."

Opec reckons it has about 1.6 million bpd of spare capacity with new projects likely to add 500,000 to 1 million bpd by the end of the year.

**A retailers' meet of cement company Holcim was held at Mirpur in Dhaka recently. PN Iyer, vice president (Customer Care) of Holcim (Bangladesh), and a number of dealers, retailers and consumers were present in the meeting.**



PHOTO: HOLCIM



PHOTO: GRAMEENPHONE

**SM Mahfuzul Haque, executive director of HRC, and Tanvir Ibrahim, head of sales of GrameenPhone Ltd, sign an agreement on behalf of their companies in Dhaka yesterday. Under the deal, HRC has become a corporate client of GrameenPhone.**



PHOTO: JANATA BANK

**A meeting of Janata Bank officials was on Saturday in Dhaka to discuss recovery performances of classified loans. Managing Director of the bank SM Aminur Rahman presided over the meeting, which was also attended by Deputy Managing Director Md Ashraf Ali and general managers.**

AIRBUS-BOEING TALKS  
EU tells US to clarify its stance

AFP, Brussels

The European Union called on Monday for the United States to clarify its position after talks to resolve a dispute over subsidies for European aircraft maker Airbus and US rival Boeing broke down.

A US official said the transatlantic row flared after EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson had abruptly ended a telephone call with outgoing US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick on Friday evening.

But Mandelson's spokeswoman Claude Veron-Reville contested that version of events.

"It is not our view that we put an end to this conversation," she told a press conference on Monday.

"The ball is in the Americans' court and we are waiting for them to clarify their position."

The EU and Washington agreed in January to negotiate a phasing-out of subsidies to develop commercial aircraft, thus avoiding taking the issue to the World Trade Organization.

Both sides set a 90-day deadline to hammer out a deal, but with three weeks left there is little sign of agreement.

"The Europeans are clearly unwilling to eliminate the subsidies," Zoellick's spokesman Richard Mills told AFP at the weekend, declining to rule out a return to litigation at the WTO if necessary.

CURRENCY

Following is Monday's (March 21, 2005) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell			Buy		
TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
63.9000	63.9500	USD	62.7550	62.7132	62.6922
85.4726	85.5395	EUR	82.4287	82.3737	82.3463
123.0267	123.1229	GBP	119.2847	119.2052	119.1654
51.3756	51.4158	AUD	48.9175	48.8849	48.8686
0.6170	0.6175	JPY	0.5930	0.5926	0.5924
55.3870	55.4304	CHF	53.1732	53.1377	53.1200
9.7098	9.7174	SEK	8.6205	8.6148	8.6119
53.5131	53.5550	CAD	51.5399	51.5056	51.4884
8.2016	8.2080	HKD	8.0387	8.0334	8.0307
39.5739	39.6049	SGD	38.3424	38.3168	38.3041
17.5400	17.5537	AED	16.9484	16.9371	16.9315
17.1751	17.1885	SAR	16.6010	16.5899	16.5844
11.8939	11.9032	DKK	10.6977	10.6906	10.6870
214.2335	214.4051	KWD	213.8596	213.7217	213.6528

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
43.57	59.38	99.37	38.575	6.1364	0.7908	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local interbank FX market was active on Monday. Dollar ended almost unchanged against Bangladeshi taka.

Local Money Market

Money market was active on Monday. Call money rates were almost unchanged from Sunday.

International Market

The dollar hit a two-week high against the euro on Monday, gaining ground on talk that the US Federal Reserve may signal a quicker pace of interest

rate rises at its meeting later this week. Markets already expect the Fed to raise the fed funds rate a quarter of a point to 2.75 percent on Tuesday, but the wording of the statement that will be released following the policy meeting will be the key. Some analysts expect the Fed to signal it would be more aggressive with monetary policy in coming months by no longer describing the likely pace of future rate increases as "measured". Euro lost 0.8 percent against the US dollar. The greenback also rose 0.4 percent against the yen.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 21/3/2005

Berth no.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/5	Pha She Gyawyywa	Gl	Yang	MTA	19/3	23/3	--
J/8	Marisa Green	Cont	P Kel	Everbest	19/3	23/3	389
J/9	Xpress Resolve	Cont	Col	Everbest	19/3	23/3	338
J/10	Blue Link	Cont	Sing	Nol	20/3	--	--
J/11	Banga Borat	Cont	Sing	Bdship	19/3	23/3	376
J/12	Kota Naga	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	19/3	22/3	265
J/13	Oel Freedom	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	19/3	23/3	287
CCT/1	Kota Cahaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	19/3	22/3	18
CCT/3	Banglar Shikha	Cont	P Kel	BSC	18/3	21/3	03
NCT	Tug Tropical Regal	lcp Piles	Lumut	Oil	20/3	--	--
CCJ	Banga Bonik	Repair	Col	Baridhi	28/2	--	--
GSJ	Saloo	Wheat (G)	Col	ASCL	14/3	26/8	--

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Banga Bijoy	21/3	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Xpress Manaslu	21/3	P Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Yasmina	21/3	Pipa	PML	Gl (SAsh)	--
Banglar Gourab	23/3	Santo	USL	Sugar (P)	--
Holy Light	22/3	Sentos	PSSL	Rainbow	Sugar
Nan Hlaik Gyi	22/3	Yang	MTA	Gl (Y Ma)	--
Banga Biraj	22/3	--	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Elizaveta	22/3	Chin	Litmond	Urea	Boic
Taraman Bibi	22/3	Mumb	Nishat	Gl (SAsh)	--
Eser Kaplanoglu	22/3	Indo	Litmond	Clink	Shah
Chin Shwe Haw	23/3	Yang	MTA	Gl (Y Ma)	--
Oel Excellence	23/3	Haid	PSSL	Cont	Col

Tanker due

Adventure	22/3	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/SKO
Eburna	23/3	Durb	MTCL	CDSO(RM/4/8/3)
Salamat-1	24/3	--	OLM	Bitumen(RM/3)
Acxoaxet Lady	24/3	--	CTPL	Fuel Oil(RM/3)
Gudermes	22/3	--	Rainbow	CDSO(RM/4/3)

Vessels at Kutubdia

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

Rig Ocean Sovereign	--	Sing	Beeline	18/11
Gulfrill-9	Pr Equip	Sing	Ibsa	27/11
Dea Captain	--	--	Ibsa	R/A (19/2)
Wira Kenis	Dr Equip	Sing	Ibsa	R/A (22/2)
Solieau Tide	Dr Equip	--	Ibsa	R/A (18/3)
Lady Margaret	Dr Equip	--	Ibsa	R/A (28/2)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

Banglar Shourabh	C Oil	K Dia	BSC	R/A
Banga Bodor	Cont	P Kel	Bdship	19/03
Qc Dignity	Cont	P Kel	QCSSL	20/03

Vessels not ready

Sn Chon	Gl (Copra)	Png	Mutual	14/3
Banglar Moni	Wheat (G)	--	BSC	R/A (17/3)
Maritime Songkhla	Clink	Tanj	BSL	20/3
Gulf Nomad	HSD/MS	Kuwa	MSTPL	20/3
Brave Royal	Clink	Kant	BRSL	20/3

Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Bumi Jaya	--	Visa	Unicorn	10/11
Banglar Jyoti	--	--	BSC	R/A (20/3)

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

STOCK