

India needs to take 'dramatic' steps to open up trade: IMF

AFP, Washington

India needs to swiftly knock down trade barriers to open up its giant economy and drive growth, says an IMF staff report which the Indian government agreed to make public for the first time.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato also conveyed to government leaders during a visit to India this month the need for more "dramatic action" to free up its "relatively closed economy" and integrate with the globalized economy.

While India has reduced non-agricultural tariffs, new forms of

non-transparent protection have emerged through the widespread use of anti-dumping, sanitary rules, and technical standards, trade experts say.

The average agricultural tariff of 40 percent is higher than those of all but four of 134 developing countries, according to the experts.

The IMF report said India had "considerable scope for trade liberalization" and that Fund staff "encouraged the authorities to take advantage of the favorable external position to reduce both tariff and nontariff barriers."

Trade together with labor mar-

ket reform and privatization are seen as key to attracting foreign direct investments in the vital manufacturing sector and create jobs for Indias growing work force.

An estimated 110 million new jobs need to be created over the next decade just to keep India's relatively high unemployment rate from rising further.

The report noted that "Indias trade regime remains restrictive" with average tariff at 22 percent in 2004, though authorities want to double the country's share in world trade and were committed to reducing tariffs to Southeast Asian levels in four years.

The IMF's "Article IV" report is based on frank discussions between Fund staff and member economies held usually every year. Some economies prefer it to be classified.

"This is the first time the (Indian) authorities have agreed to publish the Article IV Consultation report," IMF spokeswoman Gita Bhatt told AFP. "This is a very welcome step."

She said "greater openness" by member countries encouraged "more widespread discussion and examination of members' policies by the public" and enhanced "accountability of policymakers and credibility of policies."



PHOTO: DUTCH-BANGLA BANK

Managing Director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd Md Yeasin Ali speaks at the inaugural session of a foundation training course organised by the bank on Tuesday in Dhaka. Md Abidul Haque, senior executive vice president and head of Training Wing, and Tasnim Uddin Ahmed, senior vice president and head of Human Resource Division of the bank, were also present at the function.



PHOTO: TRANSCOM

General Manager (Finance and Accounts) of Transcom Electronics Ltd Habibur Rahman Mollah and Chief Operating Officer of Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Ltd Md W Adnan Wahed shake hands after signing an agreement on behalf of their organisations yesterday in Dhaka. The deal will enable the HSBC employees to buy Transcom electronics products through a special purchase scheme.



PHOTO: BENCHMARK

M Sajidur Rahman, head (Consumer Banking) of Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh, hands over a pay order of the bank's Home Loan scheme to Oliur Rahman, the first client of the scheme, in Dhaka recently. Masihul Huq Chowdhury, head of Secured Value Centre, and other high officials of the bank were also present.

Facts will determine China textile curbs: US

REUTERS, Washington

The Bush administration needs more information before it can decide whether to restrict surging clothing imports from China, a top US official said on Tuesday in response to textile industry pleas for that action.

Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said a new import-monitoring system will help the United States decide if emergency import curbs are needed.

"The process will be driven by facts. At this point, we've only just put in place the monitoring system and we'll see what the facts tell us," Gutierrez told reporters after giving a speech on US trade policy priorities.

US imports of textiles and clothing from China shot up nearly 41 percent in January after the end of an international quota system that restricted imports from China and other suppliers for decades.

Textile producers want the Bush administration to "self-initiate" a set of investigations that could restrict imports of low-priced pants, shirts, underwear and other clothing from China.

CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (March 30, 2005) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell	Buy				
	TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight/Doc
63.9500	64.0000	USD	62.8050	62.7631	62.7422
83.5763	83.6416	EUR	80.5474	80.4937	80.4669
120.8527	120.9472	GBP	117.1376	117.0595	117.0205
50.1880	50.2272	AUD	47.7506	47.7188	47.7029
0.6042	0.6047	JPY	0.5808	0.5804	0.5802
53.9662	54.0084	CHF	51.8450	51.8104	51.7931
9.4692	9.4766	SEK	8.4309	8.4253	8.4224
53.3851	53.4268	CAD	51.4079	51.3736	51.3565
8.2072	8.2137	HKD	8.0443	8.0389	8.0362
39.0463	39.0768	SGD	37.8275	37.8023	37.7897
17.5837	17.5675	AED	16.9619	16.9506	16.9450
17.4890	17.2025	SAR	16.6451	16.6040	16.5985
11.6169	11.6260	DKK	10.4642	10.4572	10.4537
214.6840	214.8557	KWD	214.3457	214.2074	214.1383

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
43.71	59.395	99.38	39.390	6.3413	0.7614	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local Interbank FX market was active on Wednesday. Dollar ended almost unchanged against Bangladeshi taka.

Local Money Market

Call money rates continued to ease. Bangladesh Bank accepted seven-day reverse repos worth 1.5 billion taka at an interest rate of 4.5 percent.

International Market

The dollar slipped from a five-month high against the yen on Wednesday as the US

currency two-week rally stalled before a raft of upcoming economic data. Revised economic growth figures are due later in the day ahead of the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge on Thursday and key US employment data on Friday. The dollar has climbed over four percent against the euro and nearly four percent against the yen since mid-March as investors have bet on more aggressive interest rate rises in the US. A speech by Federal Reserve Board Governor Ben Bernanke at 1700 GMT will be scrutinized to clues on the likely course of the US interest rates.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 30/03/2005.

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	leaving	Import Disch.
J/1	Shwe Thraphu Pagan	Rice	Yang	TCL	23/3	1/4	415
J/2	Chin Shwhaw	GI (Log)	Yang	MTA	28/3	31/03	349
J/3	Yasmina	GI(Y. Ma)	Yang	MTA	25/3	1/4	1098
J/4	Sin Chon	GI(S. Ash)	Pipa	PML	21/3	04/04	783
J/5	Nan Hlaik Gyi	GI(Copra)	Png	Mutual	14/3	3/4	822
J/6	Banga Biraj	GI (Y. Ma)	Yang	MTA	23/3	30/3	493
J/7	Taraman Bibi	Cont	--	Bdship	R/A	31/3	--
J/8	Elezaveta	GI(S. Ash)	Mumb	Nishat	22/3	02/4	1187
J/9	Jiao Chen	Urea(Bic)	Chin	Litmond	22/3	1/4	1279
J/10	Hyundai Eagle	GI	S. Hai	Cosco	28/3	02/4	1591
J/11	Kota Tampan	Urea	Sing	Litmond	20/3	30/3	1082
J/12	Eastern Star	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	26/3	31/3	65
J/13	Mardios	Cont	P. Kel	BSC	27/3	30/3	56
			Col	Everbest	25/3	30/3	--

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading Ports
Taking	30/3	Sin	Olm	Gr. Slag	--
Qc Honour	30/3	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Berjaya	31/3	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Mongla	1/4	Yang	MTA	GI(Y. Maize)	--
Supreme	2/4	Cal	Mutual	Rice(G)	--
Tug Smit Shoalrunner-1	1/4	Sing	Mutual/Towing	Barge	Swisco-12
Barge Swisco-12	1/4	Sing	Mutual		
Antairos Breeze	1/4	Jedd	Rsa	GI(H.Holl)	--
Tug Gps Pioneer	31/3	Indo	Sigma	Towing Dead	Dredger Bd-4004
Bd 4004	31/3	Sing	Sigma	Scraping	
Banglar Gourab	1/4	Santo	USL	Sugar(P)	--
Amanat Shah	1/4	Kaki	Cla	Rice(G)	--
Sangaiang	1/4	Yang	Everett	GI(St.C)	--
Magway	1/4	Yang	Everett	GI(St.C)	--
Banga Borti	31/3	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Kota Cahaya	1/4	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Mong
Xpress Resolve	1/4	Cbo	Everbest	Cont	Col

Tanker due

Al Deerah	2/4	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/MS
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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
Gulfhill-9	Pr. Equip	Sing	IBSA	27/11
Dea Captain	--	--	IBSA	R/A (19/2)
Wira Keris	Dr. Equip	Sing	IBSA	R/A (22/2)
Tug Lady Garda	Mat Equip	Sing	IBSA	27/3
Soileau Tide	--	--	IBSA	R/A (28/3)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

Banglar Moni	Wheat(G)	--	BSC	R/A(17/3)
Lu Shan	GI	Panga	Cosco	28/3
Xpress Nuptse	Cont	Sing	RSL	28/3
Mellum	Cont	Tanj	QCSL	28/3
Analisa	CPO	Pale	USL	29/3
Hua Mulan	CPO	Lumut	Rainbow	29/3
Torm Thyra	HSD	Kuwa	MSTPL	28/3

Vessels not ready

Continent-4	Rice(G)	Kaki	Cla	24/3
Esco Faith	M. Seeds	Preus	Safe	26/3

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

STOCK