

Growth outlooks for US, euro zone worsen: OECD

REUTERS, Paris

The outlook for economic growth in the United States and the euro zone has worsened, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said Friday.

The Paris-based think-tank said the United States' leading indicator, which summarises information contained in several short-term indicators linked to gross domestic product, dipped to 103.1 in February after 103.2 in January.

The country's six-month rate of change, a measure which signals

change in the pace of growth, decreased to 1.4 from 1.8, falling after three months of increases.

The leading index fell to 103.8 for the 30-nation OECD area as a whole in February after 104.0 in January.

The six-month rate of change was down at 0.9 in February versus 1.4 in the month before, following nine months of decline.

"Slowdown lies ahead in the OECD area according to the latest composite leading indicators (CLIs)," the OECD said.

"February data showed weakening performance in the CLI's six

month rate of change in all of the Group of Seven major economies except Canada," it said.

Canada's leading indicator edged up to 100.3 from 100.2.

But the euro zone's indicator dipped to 105.7 from 105.8 in January. The zone's rate of change, which has shown a downward trend since December 2003, fell to 0.7 from 1.2.

The leading indicator for Germany, Europe's largest economy, fell to 107.8 from 108.2 in January, while France's indicator dipped to 105.5 in February from

105.6 the month before.

The six-month rate of change for both countries also declined.

Britain's indicator fell to 100.3 from 100.4 in January, while Japan's leading indicator fell to 98.7 from 99.4.

The OECD's comments about the weaker outlook for the 12-nation euro zone comes after the European Commission said on Monday high oil prices and a strong euro would depress economic growth in the bloc to 1.6 percent this year.

It had previously seen 2.0 percent growth for 2005.



PHOTO: DSE
Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Matsushiro Horiguchi and Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) President Md Shahique Khan speak at a discussion on 'Japanese investment in Bangladesh and future prospect' held in Dhaka on Thursday. Economic Researcher Mitsuru Kayama, DSE Senior Vice President Md Feroj Khan, Vice President Ahmad Rashid and members of the Board of Directors were also present at the meeting.



PHOTO: CITYCELL
Anayet Rashid, director of Lalmai Group, a marketing company of fast moving consumer goods, and Sharif Shah Jamal Raj, assistant vice president (Direct & Corporate Sales) of Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Ltd, the owning company of CityCell, shake hands after signing a corporate agreement recently. Other senior officials from both the sides are also seen.

India has no plan to raise fuel price

REUTERS, New Delhi

India will not raise petrol and diesel prices for the time being despite heavy revenue losses by oil firms which are selling fuels at the same rates since November, officials said Friday.

Crude oil prices have risen about 24 percent this year but India has frozen the administered price of petrol, diesel, cooking gas and kerosene unlike several Asian countries where prices have been raised in recent weeks.

Last week, Vietnam joined a growing number of Asian countries in raising its state-controlled retail fuel prices.

It raised gasoline prices by 6.7 percent and diesel by 13.4 percent after a similar increase in Malaysia's diesel price and China's decision to raise gasoline pump prices by 7 percent.

Earlier, Indonesia and Thailand raised prices 20-30 percent.

India's oil minister, Mani Shankar Aiyar, had said the decision to revise fuel prices would be taken by the cabinet and media reports suggested the matter would be discussed on Friday.

INVESTMENT

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