



## Japan's current account surplus falls 39pc in February

TOKYO, Apr 10: Japan announced Wednesday that its current account surplus for February fell 39 per cent from the year-earlier month to 745.9 billion yen (6.87 billion dollars), reports AP.

The decline was in line with a recent downward trend in the surplus, which is a broad measure of economic flows that includes trade and other income from foreign sources.

The trade component of the surplus declined 31 per cent to 900.9 billion yen (8.30 billion dollars) in February compared to 1.298 trillion yen (11.96 billion dollar) in the same month last year.

The trade balance is measured on the basis of settled contracts which differs from the more commonly cited merchandise trade balance, which is calculated as goods pass through customs.

Speaking to reporters after the release of the data, a Finance Ministry official said the steep downturn in Japan's current account surplus is expected to continue as imports rise faster than exports.

The deficit in the service balance was also deepening as the number of Japanese traveling overseas keeps increasing. That deficit grew to 510.9 billion yen (4.7 billion dollar), in February compared with 417.4 billion yen (3.8 billion dollar) a year earlier.

Electronic components, machine tools, and computers bolstered the export figure as well, but the upward momentum in exports was constricted by a sharp drop in autos and ships.

## New aviation rules to expand air links in Beijing

BEIJING, Apr 10: China's Civil Aviation Authority has set new rules intended to bring the nation's rough and ready air passenger service in line with international standards, reports AP.

If enforced, they will mean no more camping out for days in remote airports without any idea why flights have been delayed or cancelled.

The new regulations require airlines to provide food and accommodation to passengers when their flights are delayed and to inform them the reason why, the official newspaper China Daily reported Wednesday.

The report said the new CAAC rules also would allow passengers who miss flights or want to cancel them at the last minute to obtain refunds or schedule changes.

Those who return tickets two hours to 24 hours before departure, however, will have to pay 10 per cent of the fare as a penalty. Twenty per cent

will be charged for cancellations less than two hours before departure.

In the past, passengers have not been able to obtain refunds if flights were missed, and they paid higher penalties for returning tickets.

New regulations for passengers' service and luggage transport also have been set, the report said.

It said first class passengers can carry 40 kilograms of luggage and business class passengers 30 kilograms. Economy class passengers are allowed 20 kilograms.

Those who wish to carry animals must show quarantine certificates when purchasing their tickets.

The report said pets had to be carried in special containers to prevent escape and injury and could not be placed in the cabin without permission. Fees must be paid for pets and their carriers according to standards for overweight luggage.

In a separate report, the

newspaper said China recently has established air links with nine countries as part of its drive to develop the country's aviation industry.

New, informal agreements have been signed with the Netherlands, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, Lithuania, Kirghizstan, Georgia, Armenia, and Malta, said Wang Ronghua, a CAAC deputy director.

China plans later this year to negotiate with the United States, Australia, South Korea and Germany on adding new air routes and capacities, Wang said.

China also is focusing efforts on expanding now scant air links with African and South American nations this year and is now planning negotiations with Zimbabwe.

By the end of last year, China and opened about 90 international air routes to 56 cities in 39 countries, the report said.

Some 40 airlines from more than 30 countries have flights to China.

## Singer showroom inaugurated at Panchagarh

A F M Saiful Islam, Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh, inaugurated the 56th Singer showroom-cum-sales centre at Panchagarh recently, says a press release yesterday.

Mahbub Jamil, Chairman and Managing Director of Singer Bangladesh Limited, presided over the inaugural function.

The function was attended by officials from different professional organizations like banks, insurance companies, NGOs along with local elites. Senior managers, sales and marketing executives of Singer, Bangladesh Ltd., were also present.

## SABINCO Board of Directors' meet held

The Board of Directors' meeting of the Saudi-Bangladesh Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company Limited (SABINCO), a joint venture investment company of the governments of Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh was held on Tuesday, says a press release.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Orayer, Chairman, SABINCO and Deputy Minister and Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, K.S.A., assisted by the Deputy Chairman A.H. Mofazzal Karim, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh.

The meeting was also attended by directors of the company Turki Mohammad Al-Sudary and Sami Al-Yousuf from Saudi side and by Mahbub Kabir and M. Gholam Mortuza from Bangladesh side.

The meeting reviewed the operational performance of the company for the year ending December 31, 1995. The investment portfolio of the company was also reviewed. There are currently 41 financed projects in textile, chemicals, fisheries, cement and ceramic, tannery and leather products, edible oil, fisheries and poultry supporting, engineering, dairy and fruit processing, toy and paper and pulp sectors and by the end of the fiscal year 36 projects were in operation and commercial production. Many of the projects are exporting their products.

## Kafi Sarker new PCCI president

The Pabna Chamber of Commerce and Industries held an election to the posts of 21 executive members at its conference room recently, says a PCCI press release.

A total of 43 persons contested the election. M A Kafi Sarker is elected president while Mobarak Hossain Rattino and Alhaj Abdul Latif Biswas are made vice presidents.

Other executive members are A B M Fazlur Rahman, Alhaj Abdus Satter Biswas, Johurul Islam Bishu, Sheikh Mahatab Uddin, Arjan Ali, Anisur Rahman, Asrafur Alam, Rakibuddin Khan, Anwar Hossain Azad, Abdur Rahman Nur, Abdul Gafur Khan, Rabiul Islam Rabi, Abdul Mojib, Md. Solaiman Hossain, Mahabubul Alam Mukul, Azizur Rahman Arzu, Abdur Raice Khan and Abdulal-Mahmud Shapon.

Meanwhile, the Commerce Ministry dissolved the executive committee of PCCI for corruption, mismanagement and unruly work on April 15 95 and appointed Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Pabna PCCI administrator.



A.F.M. Saiful Islam, Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh, seen opening the showroom-cum sales centre.

## Indonesia resolute on plan to restrict foreign shipping lanes

CANBERRA, Australia, Apr 10: Indonesia insisted Wednesday it will restrict foreign ships to three sea lanes, brushing off fears that this could harm international trade and interfere with the free movement of U.S. warships, reports AP.

Indonesia's new ambassador to Australia, Wiryo Sastryandoyo, said Indonesia has the right to regulate foreign shipping in its waters.

He was speaking to reporters at the Indonesian Embassy, the first interview he has given since taking up his new post last month.

Wiryo said Indonesia's plan to confine international military and commercial shipping in Indonesian waters to three sea lanes is "sensible."

"The first of the three routes that Indonesia would leave open runs between Sumatra and Java. The second is between Bali and Lombok, and the third runs through the Molucca Sea to Timor and the Arafura Sea."

He said regulation of shipping in Indonesian waters is necessary.

"With regard to the three lanes, I think you cannot have just unregulated situations," he said.

"I mean, you can enter at any point and exit at any point because it is internal waters of Indonesia and now we have the right to regulate it."

"I think that is normal," he said. "What we are trying to propose is, I think, sensible."

## Clinton signs line-item veto bill

WASHINGTON, Apr 10: President Clinton yesterday signed into law a landmark line-item veto bill that will give US chief executives unprecedented new power to shape tax and spending legislation, reports Reuter.

Clinton said the bill, which every president since Ulysses Grant has sought, would "help us cut waste and balance the budget."

A key element of the "contract with America" agenda of the Republican Congress, the bill lets a president block parts of spending bills or to strike down narrowly-targeted tax breaks. At present, the president may veto an entire bill but not its components.

Jakarta takes very seriously the archipelago status Indonesia achieved in late 1994, when its 37-year claim was recognized under the U.N law of the Sea Convention.

Wiryo said Indonesia is still open to discussion on its plan, but insisted Indonesia is not breaking the law of the sea.

US diplomats have opposed the plan, saying it would limit the strategic capability of American warships, including the submarines and aircraft carriers that sail through these waters.

Washington has been quietly trying to persuade Jakarta to accept arbitration on the question of sea lanes by the International Maritime Organization, or some other world body.

Australia has also argued that the plan would impose unacceptable limits on free passage for its submarines and surface ships, and Australian companies fear their shipping costs would be inflated by the restrictions.

A substantial part of Japanese and Australian trade passes through these waters.

Australia has argued that the proposal involves potential breaches of the Law of the Sea.

## WB announces plans for child development in Third World

ATLANTA, Apr 10: The World Bank announced plans on Tuesday to step up early childhood development in the Third World saying it would set aside one billion in loans and grants for the initiative over the next three of five years, reports Reuter.

The countries identified as having special needs include the former republics of the Soviet Union, where former state-run enterprises are leaving child development programmes to poor and ill equipped local authorities.

"We look for ways to re-allocate a country's funds and pro-

grammes where there's too much money going into low returns," Armeans Choksi Vice President of the bank's Human Capital Division, said after a two-day conference at the Atlanta-based Carter Centre.

Twenty seven representatives from 17 countries were expected to discuss the child development plan at a World Bank meeting set for next week in Washington.

Bank officials said the one billion dollar set-aside is roughly equal to what the multilateral agency has spent up to now on early childhood development since the 1970s.

## Myanmar to build power, fertiliser plants

YANGON, Apr 10: Myanmar is to construct a 200-megawatt gas turbine power plant and a 500,000-tonne a year urea fertiliser factory to be fed by its offshore Yadana gas field, a state newspaper said yesterday reports AP.

Myanmar authorities signed a memorandum of understanding Monday with the oil companies which operate the field. Total of France and the US-based Unocal — and Mitsui of Japan for the first local consumption of the gas, it said.

The project also involved the laying of pipeline from the Yadana field in the Gulf of Martaban to the sites of the

planned facilities, the official New Light of Myanmar added without providing details.

The military government signed an agreement in September, 1994, for the sale of Yadana gas to Thailand at three dollars per million BTU (British Thermal Units) on delivery at the Thai-Myanmar border.

Under the agreement, supply is to start in mid-1988 at 130 million cubic feet (3.9 million cubic meters) a day rising to 525 million cubic feet (15.8 million cubic meters) a day in 15 months and later to 650 million cubic feet (19.5 million cubic meters) a day.

## Technology reshaping global competition for jobs

BANGALORE, Apr 10: The satellite dishes of Bangalore, poking skyward from a city choked with pony carts, minicabs and meandering cows, are pumping out India's best-selling new export: homemade brainpower, reports AP.

From computer-crammed offices around town, software writers by hundreds of young Indians is being beamed back to their employers, American electronics companies.

The Indian handiwork has become, almost overnight, a prime commodity of the information age. The price is right: average pay of 450 dollar a month, one-tenth of what US programmers would receive for the same work.

Every company here is talking about doubling in size... Texas Instruments, Novell, IBM, said Ranjan Chak, who heads a 100-worker staff in Bangalore for California-based Oracle Software.

Back in America, that kind of talk troubles Joel Snyder. "There's downward pressure on US wages," said Snyder, US Chairman of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. "The companies seem to want first-rate, technical workers who will accept Third World conditions and wages."

"It's the kind of talk, too, that provokes economic nationalists like Pat Buchanan,

who condemns multinational companies for showing "no loyalty to America, no loyalty to anybody."

The digital "Globalisation" of India shows that a nation no longer must plod its way through a low-skill, low-quality economy toward "development." Today its workers can leapfrog into direct competition with the technologically advanced.

It also underscores the unpredictability of global change in the 1990s, when free-trade policies, portable technology and the death of communism have produced a planetary free-for-all over markets, innovation, cheap labour — a battle that leaves both losers and winners, whether in South Carolina or South India.

Losers began piling up quickly when India liberalised its trade policies in recent years, opening up to foreign investment, lowering protection for homegrown manufacturers.

In Bangalore, for example, the domestic motorbike industry, effectively a monopoly, was quickly devastated by Japanese competition.

"It's a question of the number of people losing out vs. the number gaining," said Narendra Panil, a commentator with India's Economic Times newspaper. "You're losing jobs at the factory level of low-

skilled labour, and gaining them, in software."

Freer trade incites India's own Pat Buchanans, like labour leader Raj Krishnan Bhakt, who supported protests against a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet that opened in Bangalore.

Foreigners "should not be investing in consumer goods like that, but only where their high technology is required," Bhakt said in an interview in India's capital, New Delhi.

Bangalore, 350 miles (560 kilometers) from India's southern tip, is the home of the Indian Institute of Science and a base for India's defense industry — fertile ground for high technology. When strict limits on foreign enterprises were lifted, glittering new office buildings quickly rose, bearing the logos of HP and 3M, Compaq and Sun, adding a new architectural layer to an old city of technicolor Hindu temples and British colonial gingerbread.

Talented young graduates stuffing their cyber-shops churn out programming for a wide range of purposes — scheduling software for US and European airline companies, programmes for retail banks, and Wall Street investment houses, three-dimensional imaging for medical diagnosis. Much of it is "shit work," via satellite, taking over troubleshooting or other US com-

puter duties while American programmers sleep through their night.

At Oracle's Bangalore centre, Chak said his designers often work on "that 101st product" — software packages the home office might never find time for. Chak and others say this shows they are not taking jobs away from Americans.

"It's not right to present this as Country X versus Country Y," said Shyam Sunder, an Indian economist at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University. "There's elasticity of demand. It's not simply that work goes to India. When the price of something drops, the total work done will be greater."

"Sound economic theory. But Oracle designer Ranji Srinivas sees more going on."

"We work harder; we're more productive," he said. "Americans are definitely losing jobs to Indians."

But will the Indians lose them next?

The electronics giant are plagued by power shortages in Bangalore and unsettled by rising wages. They may have one eye on Indian expansion, but the other is on cheaper alternatives — China's growing corps of software writers, for example.

"That's why we must prove our value not only on the basis of cost, but on quality,"

Srinivas said confidently.

But in the new global free-for-all, cost will always come first, as German industrialist Hans-Olaf Henkel reminded Indians recently.

"If unions are allowed to hike up labour costs, it can spell doom for Indian industry," the Federation of German Industries president told The Economic Times.

German economist Klaus Schwab has studied globalisation's rapid-fire changes and concluded the ever-easier movement of production plants worldwide has ushered in an era when it is possible to have high technology, high productivity, high quality and low wages.

As global companies pursue that goal, the old industrial heartlands stagnate. Europe seems unable to shake double-digit unemployment rates, and American real wages are stalled or declining.

"Jobs" top the agenda at the industrialized nations' annual summit this June. Proposed remedies are well-known: better basic education, retraining laid-off workers in new skills, government grants to move them to where the jobs are.

Look at it as an "ongoing race," said Michael Walton, Chief economist in a World Bank study on workers in a changed world.

The question is: Will there

be a swift enough capability of the work force to shift, to change their capabilities into the new demand structure? Walton said in Washington.

He believes there will be, and workers in today's industrial nations will shift successfully into social services, health, entertainment.

Schwab is not so sure. He fears the pressure for fast-paced "readjustment" could reach a "breaking point" unless governments and corporations do more to ease the social stress of transition.

But he and other economists sound confident that in the long run, in an integrated world economy, prosperity in the developing nations will help the rich countries prosper, too.

In Bangalore, Subbu Vempati knows where to put his money.

"When I was younger, I was thinking of going to the US," said the 34-year-old Hewlett Packard software manager. "Since then, the situation has changed dramatically. All the opportunities are here."

He won't be alone. In the next 30 years, the World Bank says, the global labour force will grow by 1 billion people, 99 per cent of them in the developing world. And all will be looking for work.

**Government of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Bogra

### Tender Cancellation Notice

This is for general information that the Tender Notice No. 20-BRD/1995-96 circulated vide this office Memo No. BRD 1-61/695 dt. 25/3/96 is hereby cancelled due to some unavoidable circumstances.

**Md. Abdul Quddus-1**  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
(Current Charge)  
Road Division, Bogra.

DFP-7434-8/4  
G-459

**Extension & Closing of BPDB's**  
বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয়ী হোন

### International Tender Notice

The closing & opening date of BPDB's International Tender Enquiry No. Pur-363/95 dated 5-12-95 for procurement of different sizes Power Transformers & other equipment for Grid Circle, PDB, Dhaka is hereby extended up to 6-5-96. As such tender will be received up to 11.00 AM on 6-5-96 & will be opened at 11-30 A.M on the same day in presence of the intending bidder or their representative, if any.

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-১২০৫(১৪)২৫৮-৯৬  
DFP-7525-9/4  
G-457

**Director of Purchase**  
PDB, Dhaka.

**Tender Notice**

Sealed tenders in Form No. T-1 are hereby invited from the A & B Class electrical contractor under PDB/DESA for the work Group-A repairing of lighting arrangement at switch yard & control room of Maniknagar Grid Sub-Station & from A, B & C Class electrical contractor for Group-B replacement of control cable & structure of switch yard at Narsingdi 33/11 KV sub-station vide this Office Memo No. HV s/s /DESA/HI-404/96/1261 dated 20-3-96. The tender documents will be available up to 24-4-96 in the office of the (i) Addl. Chief Engineer (P&D), DESA (ii) Superintending Engineer (E&I), DESA (iii) Pubali Bank, Gulshan Model Town Branch, Dhaka at the cost of Tk 100/- (Taka one hundred) only per group per set (non-refundable) in the shape of Bank Draft in favour of Addl. Director, RAO, DESA, Dhaka with written permission from respective offices & the undersigned. The tender will be received up to 12.00 Noon of 25-4-96 along with 2.5% Earnest Money of the quoted amount in the shape of Bank Draft in favour of Addl. Director, RAO, DESA in the office of (i) Addl. Chief Engineer (P&D), DESA (ii) Superintending Engineer (E&I), DESA (iii) Director, Planning & Development (iv) Executive Engineer, HV Sub-Station Division, DESA, Dhaka. The tender will be opened on the same day at 12.30 PM (in presence of the tenderers, if any).

**Executive Engineer**  
HV Sub-Station Division  
Dhaka Electric Supply Authority  
Road No. 135, House No 47  
Gulshan, Dhaka

DFP-7166-7/4  
G-451



A.Q. Siddiqui, Managing Director of Agrani Bank, laid the foundation stone of Europa Cold Storage at Munshiganj on Tuesday.