

# US trying to 'raise price' of China's WTO entry

WASHINGTON, May 29: China's ambassador to the United States rejected US allegations of Chinese nuclear spying yesterday and said there was an effort in Washington to 'raise the price' of China's entry into the World Trade Organisation, says Reuters.

But Ambassador Li Zhao Xing said the primary issue governing Sino-US relations, including the negotiations on WTO membership, was not the spying charges but the fall-out from the May 7 bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade.

The key at the moment is that in all fields of cooperation, of negotiations and so forth, in our relations, is to have a fair investigation' of the bombing, Li told a news conference.

In approaching Chinese membership of the world trading body, Li said it was the United States, which launched the Belgrade bombing, not China, which he said was falsely accused of espionage,

which should be making concessions.

The US side should be held responsible and should do something to make things up to put things right," he said. "It is the Chinese party that has been wronged."

"They are raising the price of entry," Li said, referring to those Americans who harbour a "Cold War mentality." "This is unacceptable for us," he said.

On Thursday Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth dismissed speculation that the United States would make trade concessions to China to compensate for the bombing.

"We're not going to use that (the bombing) as a reason to alter our policies, which are based on our national interests. We are not going to backtrack on any of the issues we have discussed," Roth told a Senate Committee.

President Bill Clinton and Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji came close to a deal in

April and, until the bombing, negotiators had been expected to resume the talks shortly. Li gave no signal as to when the talks might restart.

Three Chinese were killed in the bombing, Washington said it occurred when a bomb dropped as part of the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia was targeted on the wrong building.

"This incident has damaged the atmosphere for the WTO discussions. It is now imperative for the US side to have that investigation as demanded by China," Li said.

China initially demanded an open and public apology for the bombing, a thorough investigation, the publication of the investigation and severe punishment for those found responsible.

But it now says the priority is for a comprehensive and fair investigation and report.

"President Clinton has publicly apologised and US offi-

cials said they expect a senior official, perhaps Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, to deliver a full report to China.

Li told Reuters he had no information on when such a report would be handed over. The State Department has said no decision has been taken on when it will be delivered.

Echoing the response in Beijing to the congressional report, which alleged widespread theft of US nuclear secrets by China over the last two decades, Li said it was full of "falsifications" and was "cooked up" by enemies of China.

"We didn't steal any nuclear weapons knowledge from this country and we will never do that," he said. He complained that the authors of the report were poisoning the climate for Chinese Americans in the United States.

"It is wrong, vicious and irresponsible to whip up a sweeping hysteria to serve some politicians' ... own agenda."

# BCSIR sets up 2500 biogas plants

Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) has set up about 2500 biogas plants in different parts of the country under a Pilot project, reports BSS.

The Taka 9.13 crore five-year project has been launched to meet the growing demand for energy and also for recycling the nutrients process of soil.

Kazi Akhteruzzaman, Project Director of biogas plants of BCSIR, said.

He said 20 per cent of the country's agricultural families, meaning 40 lakh people own 4 to 5 cows and are in a position to set up biogas plants to meet the energy needs of their families.

The project director further said under the project 128 Sub-Assistant Engineers have been recruited to provide technical assistance to those using biogas plants and interested to set up such plants.

Families having 4 to 5 cows are also provided one-time grant of Tk 5000 to set up biogas plants, which require an investment of about Tk 12,000 to 14,000.

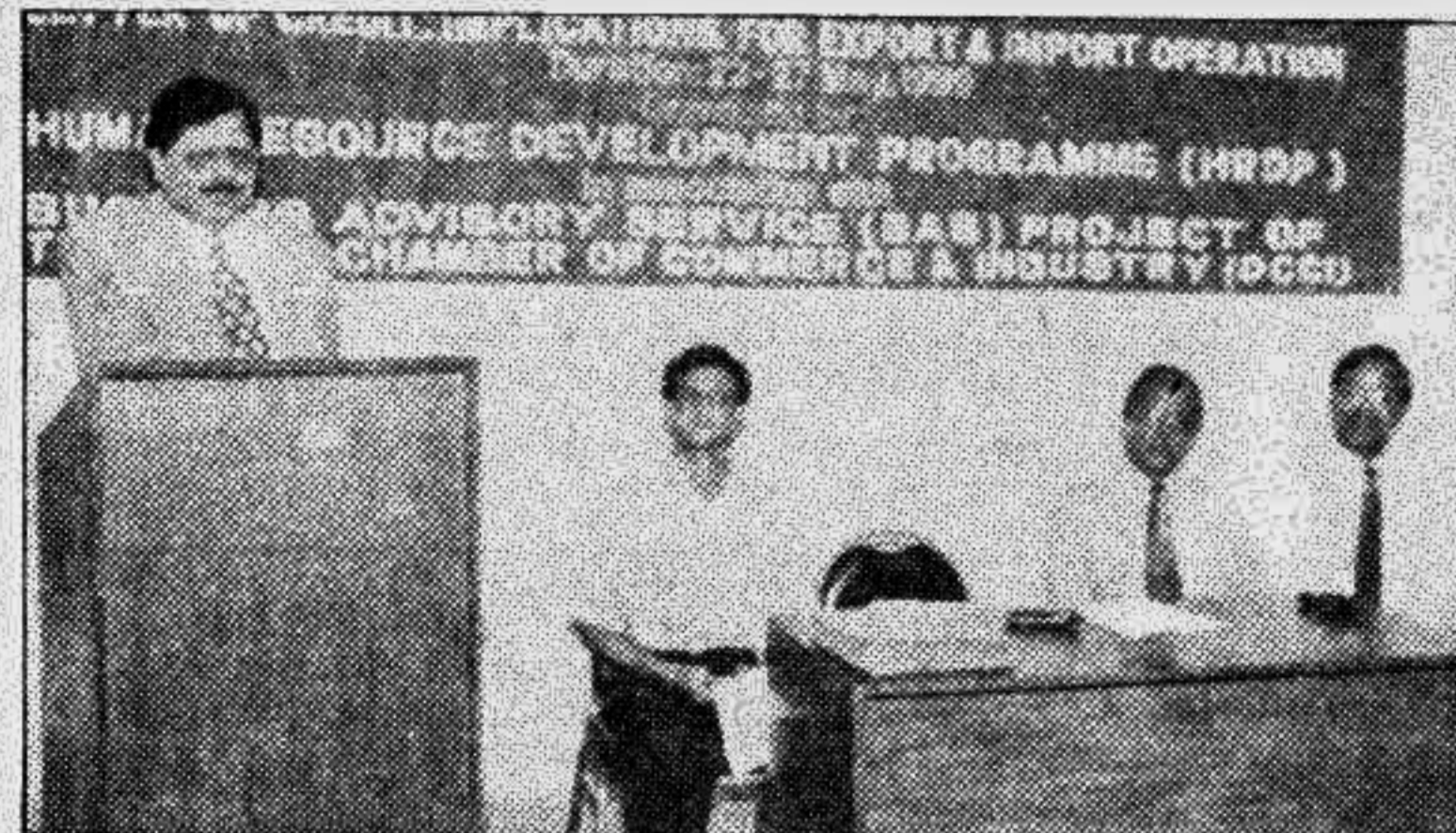
Describing the declining soil

fertility as alarming, Kazi Akhteruzzaman said the soil nutrients of Bangladesh is 11 per cent compared to 40 per cent in India and 65 per cent in China.

### DCCI course on L/C concludes

The 5-day training course on "Letter of Credit: Implications for export and import operation" organised by the Human Resource Development Programme (HRDP) in cooperation with Business Advisory Service (BAS) Project of the DCCI concluded at DCCI Training Centre on Thursday, says a press release issued yesterday.

M H Rahman, President of The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), emphasised the importance of efficient operation of L/Cs, which is a vital mode of business transaction. The success of business depends to a large extent on the successful operation of letter of credit, he added.



DCCI President M H Rahman speaks at the certificate awarding ceremony of a training course on "Letter of Credit: Implications for Export & Import Operation" at the DCCI Training Centre on Thursday. DCCI Director A M Mubash-Shar (C) distributed certificates among the participants.

# GMG opens new sales office

GMG Airlines has opened a new sales office at Hotel Sonargaon in the city.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by special guest, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, Air Commodore, T A Zearat Ali, press release.

The Sales Office, which is fully equipped and linked with a worldwide reservation system, marks a further extension to GMG's efforts to provide the utmost convenience to the passengers.

The Sales Office is well located and offers yet another access point to make bookings and reservations and obtain travel information and brochures.

# Singer declares 100 pc dividend

The 19th annual general meeting of Singer Bangladesh Limited was held yesterday at Singer Electronics Complex premises at Jhamur, Savar, Mahub Jamil, Chairman and Managing Director of the Company, presided over the meeting, says a press release.

A large number of shareholders attended the meeting.

The meeting declared a 30 per cent final dividend for the year 1998 in addition to payment of 70 per cent interim dividend. Therefore total dividend for the year stands at 100 per cent which is 40 per cent higher than that of last year.

The chairman in his comments highlighted the operational and financial results of the company. During the year the company invested Tk 89.1 million in fixed assets.

During the year, the company contributed Tk 321.42 million to the national exchequer in the form of corporate tax, Customs duty and VAT.

# Financial security tops Rio Group summit agenda

MEXICO CITY, May 29: Disaster response and financial security led the agenda at a closed-door summit of Latin American leaders Saturday, reports AP.

Representatives of the 14-member Rio Group gathered at Los Pinos, the presidential headquarters of Mexican leader Ernesto Zedillo, for the annual one-day session.

Organisers disposed of ceremonial protocol to shape the gathering as a retreat for the presidents, who were to meet privately without aides. Mexican officials said the leaders would discuss the region's economies and its ability to re-

spond to natural disasters.

When the group last met in September 1998, Latin America's largest stock market, the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange, had just suffered a huge slide and sent markets and currencies across the region tumbling. Asian economies were also in crisis, as was that of Russia.

One of the main themes at the 13th Rio Group summit Saturday was expected to be an examination of how Latin America withstood the turmoil.

"Mexico has weathered the storm fairly well and is one of the only economies in the region that didn't have negative

growth," said Gray Neuman, a Senior Latin American economist at Merrill Lynch in New York.

"For the rest of the region ... it did force a major break in Brazil's exchange rate policy."

In January, Brazil's real was abruptly devalued — losing 46 per cent of its worth in just three weeks. But since then, it has gained strength, stock markets have surged, inflation lessened and investors have slowly begun to return.

Neuman pointed to tightened monetary policy and fiscal responsibility for the region's relative stability.

# Wall Street fails to regain ground

NEW YORK, May 29: Even with a gentle rebound yesterday, Wall Street closed the week down 2.49 per cent at 10,559.74, for its third consecutive week of losses, reports AFP.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq composite also lost ground, falling 1.97 per cent to 2,470.52 points.

Over the past month the Dow Jones Industrial Average has lost 2.13 per cent, while the Nasdaq composite shed 2.85 per cent and Standard & Poor's 500 fell 2.5 per cent.

Nevertheless, since the start of the year, the three markets are still up.

Dealers noted that Friday's

session concluded a very volatile week, which saw shares on all major indices end sharply lower on nervousness about interest rates.

They said this nervousness, triggered by signs of inflationary pressures and the Federal Reserve's shift to a tightening bias, is likely to persist next week ahead of Friday's May employment report.

For the first time since 1997, the financial markets are contemplating a tighter monetary policy that could pose a challenge to the recent advance of asset prices around the world," said Salomon Smith Barney's equity research team.



Mahub Jamil, Chairman and Managing Director of Singer Bangladesh Ltd, addresses the 19th Annual General Meeting of the company yesterday. Mosharrar Hossain (extreme left), Alternate Director, Barrister Akhtar Imam (2nd from left), Director, S R Khan, (2nd-R), Alternate Director, and Mohd. Sanaullah, (extreme right), Company Secretary, are also seen in the picture. —Singer photo

# Cathay cancels flights as pilots stay home

HONG KONG, May 29: Cathay Pacific Airways canceled more than a dozen flights Saturday after growing numbers of pilots facing paycuts and layoff threats called in sick to work, the airline said, reports AP.

Sixteen flights were canceled early Saturday, and "it may be necessary to cancel more flights" later in the day, said Katherine Wang, Cathay's corporate communication manager.

"The outlook remains uncertain," she said.

The Hong Kong carrier also has stopped taking bookings since late Friday for flights flying in the next two weeks "to ensure the situation is under control," Wang said.

Those who have already booked their flights are not affected, she said. Cathay has an average of 116 flights daily.

The carrier and its pilots have been locked in a dispute after it asked its senior pilots in March to take an 8 per cent paycut in exchange for stock options after Cathay suffered its first loss in 35 years last year.

On Tuesday, Cathay halted nine weeks of talks with the pilots' union, the Hong Kong Aircrew Association, and offered a revised pay package, which included a smaller pay cut and better stock options.

The carrier is giving the pilots until noon on June 11 to

decide whether to take a paycut, retire early, or be fired.

Some pilots, claiming they were too stressed because of the paycut threats, have been taking sick days. Hong Kong law allows pilots to stop flying because of stress.

Union officials denied they had organized the action to force Cathay to reopen negotiations, but said they would not rule out future strike actions.

"We are only urging them to go and see a doctor," said John Findlay, the union's secretary-general. "If a pilot thinks he or she is unfit for duty, he or she is obliged" to stop flying.

Cathay officials refused to disclose any numbers, but Findlay said Friday that 40 to 50 pilots were absent from work that day, forcing Cathay to cancel three flights. He did not know how many pilots were out sick Saturday.

The 16 flights canceled Saturday included flights from Hong Kong to Cairns, Brisbane and Sydney in Australia, Taipei, Osaka, Tokyo, Bangkok, Manila and Istanbul, and ones from Taipei, Osaka, Bangkok and Manila to Hong Kong.

Wang said passengers would be diverted to other flights with Cathay or other airlines.

Findlay said the government Labor Department is helping the two sides mediate, but no talks had been scheduled.

# Gas contracts and tasks before Bangladesh

### Word of Caution

Reportedly by the middle of 1998 Cairn/Shell is expected to start production of about 160 million cubic feet (MMCF) per day from Sangu field. This gas will be supplied through the existing 24 inch dia Bakhrabad-Chittagong Pipe Line (perhaps a back-flow). Almost simultaneously Occidental/Unocal would produce around 100 MMCF/day from Sylhet area. Meanwhile, with the financial assistance of ADB (lying idle for the last three years due to delay in execution), seven development wells would hopefully come into production and provide around 200 MMCF/day additional gas in the existing North-South gas pipeline. Thus a total of 460 MMCF/day new gas (including 260 MMCF/day by foreign companies) will be added to the existing production of about 750-800 MMCF/day received through the national gas companies. So the new gas produced and supplied by foreign companies under the existing PSC will have to be purchased as per agreement between Petrobranga and gas companies and supplied to different consumers, even at the cost of reduced production and supply by national companies. The situation might aggravate when six more foreign companies would operate, produce and sell gas by 1999 and onwards. It also might so happen that national company's gas will sit idle, while foreign companies' gas will have to be purchased. It is, therefore, necessary to create adequate infrastructure and market for 1270 MMCF per day

gas use by 2000. From the available information it would appear that at the most 850 MW new power generating capacity might be added by 2000 and no new fertilizer plant is planned by then. Therefore, very cautious and calculative steps should be taken with regard to selection of 2nd bid-round. It might even be advisable to go slow with the current process.

Since July 1997, reportedly 23 companies have shown interest, some are less known and perhaps appeared in the exploration scene for the first time. Companies like Tullow Oil PLC, Hondo Oil and Gas, South Asia Oil & Gas, Niko, Triton and Pangala are new entries. Total, Texaco, Mobil, Union Texas, Chevron, UNOCAL and Enron are known names in the international exploration business. Available information indicate that block number 1, 2 and 23 did not get adequate response. Of the remaining 12 blocks, number 9 has 8 bidders including big names like Total, Chevron, Texaco, Union Texas and Murphy and Shell/Cairn; number 10 has 6 bidders, number 11 has 5 bidders, number 6 has 4 bidders, number 5 & 7 (contiguous) has 2 bidders each, each of block number 19, 20 and 21 has more than 2 bids. At least in two blocks, earmarked for the 1st-round, gas structures have been clearly delineate — even production is continuing. No block has been kept reserved for the national company — Bapex.

ously:

- Whether all the blocks should be opened up simultaneously. If so, what will be role of national oil company (BAPEX)?
- Whether in any offer number of wells proposed to be drilled should be the main criteria or it should technically depend on the geological structure, which would vary.
- Whether the number of wells proposed to be drilled in a particular block is justified or not.
- How much gas the nation need now, and in the foreseeable future.
- Whether progressive development of development wells can be conceived for meeting the future requirement of gas in the country.
- Whether export be considered as an option — in the event big find is made. If gas export be considered, whether Government or foreign companies will do it.
- Whether major companies' offers have been judiciously evaluated.
- Whether big-name companies are important.
- Whether mere submission of Work Programme should carry 45-50 per cent marks in evaluation.
- Whether a good professional groups have been employed to evaluate the bids etc.
- Whether the relationship between the profit split and work programme has been met as per criteria.
- Whether adequate measures have been taken to establish Regulatory body.

All these questions and

many more must be adequately and professionally addressed and relevant issues must be resolved at the 'political level' prior to finalising the offers received from various interested companies. Notwithstanding anything contained in the discussion made above, the current process of evaluation must be transparent and clear to avoid future complexities. Since 1910 (Sitakund operation) Bangladesh has about 13.74 trillion cubic feet (TCF) proven gas. It should also be understood whether there has been a breakthrough in the knowledge and information (published or otherwise) on 'big find' of hydrocarbon in Bangladesh or it is only a gossip. My personal feeling is that one should be very careful in his or her utterances about reserves, particularly if the person is holding responsible position in the Government. Optimism may be good but day-dreaming is not a solution for Bangladesh.

May be it is time to rethink about the pros and cons of opening all the prospective and technically high valued geological structures (in identified blocks) now. Also with the existing contracts undrilled potential areas would be drilled and new evidence for hydrocarbon will be available, which will add to the knowledge of reserves for oil and gas in Bangladesh.

**Concluded**  
(The author is a former Additional Secretary and Chairman of Power Development Board)

# Tender Notice

The undermentioned tenders are invited for 1999-2000 financial year:

- Supply of pulse (lentil) for the 1st quarter (July/99 to September/99).
- Supply of fire wood (mango/shirish) for the 1st quarter (July/99 to September/99).
- Wheat crushing (wheat & at a including transportation for the 1st quarter (July/99 to September/99).
- Transportation of ration items for the 1st quarter (July/99 to September/99).

Detailed description, information and schedule etc can be collected from the office of the undersigned during office hours till 1700 hours up to the day before the date of submitting tender. Separate schedule should be purchased for each item and price of each schedule is Tk-400/= (four hundred) only (non-refundable). Tenders will be received in the tender box kept at the RRF, Khulna office up to 12:00 Noon of 14/06/99.

**A K M Enayet Ullah Dewan**  
Commandant (Police Super)  
RRF, Khulna.

DFP-11524-24/5  
G-996

# Government of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD) Dhaka Road Division, Banani, Dhaka RHD Notice Inviting Sealed Tender in BD Form No 2911

- Tender Notice No : 270/RDD of 1998-99.
- Name of work : Providing for emergency repair on damaged surface area by seal coat at 13th (P) KM of BTJ Road (right side) under Road Sub-Division-I, Dhaka during 1998-99. Ch to 168 RBF.
- Estimated cost : Tk 99,750/=.
- Earnest money : Tk 1,995/= in favour of 'Executive Engineer (RHD), Dhaka Road Division, Dhaka' in BD/TC/NDS from any scheduled bank.
- Time allowed : 15 (fifteen) days from the date of issue of work order.
- Eligibility of contractor : 'A' to 'E' class general category enlisted contractor of RHD.
- Name of offices availability of tender documents : Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Dhaka/Manikganj/ Munshiganj/ Narayanganj/Narayanganj/Gazipur/ Planning & Design Division, Dhaka Zone, Sarak Bhaban, Dhaka/SE (RHD), Road Sub-Division-III, Kallyanpur, Dhaka.
- Name of offices to receive the tender bids : Offices of the Superintendent Engineer (RHD), Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka/ Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Dhaka/Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Dhaka/SDE, RHD Road Sub-Division-III/Kallyanpur, Dhaka.
- Last date of selling tender documents : Up to office hours on 6-6-99.
- Date of received tender documents : Up to 12-30 PM on 7-6-99.
- Date of opening of tender : At 12-45 PM on 8-6-99.
- Date of lottery (if required) : At 11-00 AM on 9-6-99 in the office of the Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Dhaka.

N.B: As per instruction of the Supt. Engr. (RHD), Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka vide his office Memo No 3567(6) dt 20-6-94 all tenders will not be opened in the respective offices as such the receiving officers are requested to send the tender received by them in sealed condition to the office of the undersigned before the date of opening.

**Arifur Rahman**  
Executive Engineer (RHD)  
Dhaka Road Division, Banani, Dhaka

DFP-11727-25/5  
G-1001

# Bangladesh Computer Council

House No. 31/A, Road No. 6, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205  
Phone: 864224, Fax: 880-2-863773, e-Mail: bcc@bdonline.com

Ref: BCC-678/97-1292 Dated: 24/05/1999

# EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Application with full bio-data are invited from bonafide citizens of Bangladesh for appointment in the following post of Bangladesh Computer Council Strengthening Project (Phase-1) on a purely temporary basis:

Name of the post	No. of post	Age limit	Pay scale	Qualification & experience
Programmer	1	27-35 years	Tk. 7,200-10,840	a) Master degree in any subject, or BSc. in Engineering or Computer Science. b) Associate Membership of a recognised professional Computer Society. c) At least 4 years experience as Assistant Programmer in any organisation or 2 years experience in programming in the case of a person having Master degree in Computer Science or Engineering.

Bio-data should include full name, father's name, present & permanent address, date of birth, nationality and details of academic & employment records. Applicants are requested to submit photostat and duly attested copies of academic certificates and experience certificates, 2 copies of recent passport size photographs and character certificate from class 1 gazetted officer. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The name of the project and the name of the post applied for should be written on the envelope, otherwise the application will be treated as cancelled. Application must reach the office of the undersigned within 10 June 1999. Those who are in service should apply through proper channel.

N.B.: Interested applicants for the abovementioned post should have wide knowledge in computer hardware, software, computer network, VSAT & telecommunication technology.

DFP-11720-25/5  
G-1002

**Syed Ziaul Huque**  
Secretary