

Analysts at S'pore regional forum Asian recovery still very much fragile

SINGAPORE, Sept 2: Asia's apparent economic recovery this year is fragile and still faces huge risks, analysts said Thursday at a regional forum in Singapore, reports AP.

"The year 1999 has been unusually favourable to us. I do not expect that to be the pattern for 2000," said Christopher Nailer, director of advisory services for The Economist Conferences.

"After a year as bad as 1998 was, it's not surprising to see strong rebounds in 1999," Nailer told The Associated Press. "I don't think the recovery is solid yet."

"One-off factors" were behind some of this year's economic pick-ups in crisis-hit countries, he added.

Multibillion-dollar International Monetary Fund bailout packages disbursed in Asia are giving the region a temporary boost, Nailer said. "Gradually that money dries up. It's not repeatable," he said.

Asian governments would not be able to indefinitely keep up current loose fiscal policies that have spurred consumer demand, the analyst said.

The United States' spectacular economic performance and unusually good weather this year in Asia — a boon for agriculture — are other positive factors that should not be counted on, he noted.

Nailer was speaking on the sidelines of The Economist Conferences' bi-annual economic and political forecasting

meeting. The Economist Conferences, based in Hong Kong, is part of the group that publishes The Economist magazine. The organisation sponsors forums between officials and executives.

Asia's slight upswing this year is threatened by signs that some governments are not reforming their fundamentals as promised, Nailer and other analysts said.

"In the finance sector, we're seeing some of the previously positive progress that was made six months ago starting to unravel," Nailer said.

Indonesia's recent Bank Bali scandal is a prime example of this backsliding, said James Castle, chairman of the Jakarta-based Castle Group consultancy.

"The current establishment [in Indonesia] has shown absolutely zero ability to cope with reform," Castle said of the Bank Bali flag. "It's yesterday's behaviour in tomorrow's world."

The case involved the transfer of drs 80 million from Bank Bali to a company controlled by an official of the ruling Golkar party.

Golkar opponents allege the money — which has since been returned — was intended to bankroll Indonesian President B J Habibie's campaign to remain in power when an electoral college meets later this year.

"It's bald-faced contempt for the whole reform programme," Castle said of the scandal.

Higher oil prices seen fuelling US inflation

WASHINGTON, Sept 2: A doubling of crude oil prices since January may push up the cost of goods and services dependent on oil, such as airline travel and computers, and raise the overall US inflation rate, experts said Wednesday, reports Reuters.

OPEC's success in curbing oil production in recent months has driven oil prices from an average \$10.90 a barrel during the first quarter up to around \$22 a barrel now.

The immediate impact was felt by US motorists with a rise in gasoline prices, which reached a 23-month high in August.

If oil prices stay at their current level — or increase as many experts forecast — US manufacturers will eventually have to pass on to consumers the higher cost of transporting products from cereal to automobiles, analysts said.

Higher oil prices are "going to have to be passed on, there's no doubt about that," Chelewa said. "But I don't feel it's going to be a dramatic increase."

Price increases should be expected from industries that are energy-intensive, such as petrochemicals and plastics, said Gordon Richards, an economist with the National Association of Manufacturers.

Airlines will also have to raise their fares to reflect the higher cost for jet fuel, according to David Swierenga, chief economist for the Air Transport Association.

A mere one cent per gallon

increase in jet fuel adds about \$10 million in additional costs for airlines on an annual basis, Swierenga said. Jet fuel prices have increased from about 20 cents a gallon at the beginning of the year to 55 cents now. "Eventually, that gets translated into higher airfares," Swierenga said.

The big question is where will oil prices go next year.

"We expect prices to remain at or above where they are now through the rest of the year and into the winter," said Doug McIntyre, an EIA analyst.

After that, he said oil prices will depend on several factors, including whether the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries will raise output next spring. Another key question is whether Asia's slowly-recovering economies increase their demand for oil.

Non-OPEC nations might increase their output to take advantage of high prices, which could have the effect of lowering prices as supplies increase, McIntyre said.

Last weekend, oil ministers from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia met with non-OPEC member Mexico and promised that OPEC would try to keep output limits in place until the end of March 2000 to sustain higher prices.



Airspan Ltd, General Sales Agent of Uzbekistan Airways in Bangladesh, hosted a reception at the Vintage Room of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel Monday in honour of the visiting parliamentary delegation to attend the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference for Peace and Cooperation. Photo shows Utkir Hoshimov, Chairman of the Committee for Press and Information of Oly Majlis (Parliament), and Sayera Sh Rashidova, Ombudsman of Oly Majlis, Uzbek Airways Country Manager Allayar Hasanov, Consular Agent of Uzbekistan Ahmed Khakimov and officials of Airspan Ltd. — Uzbek Airways photo

Mahathir for elimination of currency traders

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2: One year after he imposed capital controls, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday said currency traders should be eliminated from the global financial system, says AP.

"I'm trained as a doctor. If we have a gangrenous leg, we have to chop it off. I think (currency trading) is gangrene," Mahathir said.

In a one-hour speech to businessmen and experts Mahathir explained why he imposed the capital controls that scared many Western investors.

"The unorthodox, bold and strong measures which we took 366 days ago has borne fruit," said the Malaysian leader.

Unlike Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea, Malaysia received bailouts from the International Monetary Fund during the Asian currency and stock market collapse in 1997.

Instead, he locked in portfo-

lio investments for one year, halted offshore trading of the ringgit and pegged it at 3.8 to one US dollar. He subsequently hiked government spending to revive mothballed public works projects and sinking companies.

Experts were divided over Mahathir's analysis that currency controls alone bailed out Malaysia.

"The prime minister made his case and I agree with the arguments he made," said Thomas DeGregori, a University of Houston economist.

But others disagreed.

"I myself think that currency transactions cannot be prohibited," said Eisei Sakakibara, special advisor to Japan's Ministry of Finance.

"In the case of Malaysia, it is too early to make a judgement," said Zhao Jianping, the deputy director general of China's foreign exchange administration. "There will always be pros and cons."

Mahathir said the capital controls have triggered the

stock market recovery, rising exports and external reserves, and higher job demand. Two weeks ago, the central bank announced the recession was over and the economy was set to grow by least by 1 per cent.

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"There will always be pros and cons."

BTMC Tender Notice for Sale of Land at Tongi Industrial Area

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by the Chief Engineer, BTMC, BTMC Bhaban, 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka from interested persons/organisations/citizens of Bangladesh staying abroad for purchase of the land of EIL "as it is where it is basis" under Meghna Textile Mills at Morkun, Tongi Industrial Area, Gazipur. Preference will be given to the interested investors for establishment of new textile and textile related industries.

Description of land	Total land (in acre)	Last date of selling tender schedule	Dropping & opening date & time
Under mouza Morkun, SA Dhagh No 142 (part), 143, 144, 145, 146, 160 (part), 161 (part), 162, 166, 167 total land more/less 4.33 acre only. The above land situated at Morkun attached to Tongi Pubali Road, north side of Dhaka Tobacco Industries Ltd under PS Tongi, Gazipur (Sadar), District Gazipur.	4.33	15.9.99	16.9.99 at 11-30 AM & 12-30 PM.

Tender documents may be purchased @ Tk 750/- per set on cash payment (non-refundable) from the office of the Chief Accountant, 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka, from the office of the Meghna Textile Mills, Tongi, Gazipur and BTMC Shipping Office, 79, Agrabad C/A, Chittagong as mentioned above up to 1-00 PM on all working days during office hours. Tender will be received in the office of the Chief Engineer, BTMC, 7-9, Kawran Bazar (2nd floor), Dhaka, in the Gate No 1&5 of Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka, in Meghna Textile Mills, Tongi, Gazipur & in Shipping Office, 79, Agrabad, Chittagong on 16.9.99 up to 11-30 AM & will be opened in each & every place at 12-30 PM in presence of the tenderers (if any) except in Gate No 1&5 of Bangladesh Secretariat which will be opened at Kawran Bazar, BTMC H.O at 12-30 PM.

2.5% security deposit of the quoted value must be submitted with the tender in the form of Bank Draft/PO etc in favour of "BTMC" from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh, in case of citizens of Bangladesh staying abroad will submit 2.5% security money in the form of Bank Draft in foreign currency along with the original bank receipt with tender. The representative may submit tender on behalf of citizen of Bangladesh staying abroad. Tender without earnest money will be summarily rejected.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Wahidur Rahman
Chief Engineer
BTMC
Phone- 328506

British house price rises hit 10-yr high

LONDON, Sept 2: British house prices leapt 9.4 per cent in the 12 months to August, their strongest year-on-year gain since 1989, Halifax Plc HFX.L said today, reports Reuters.

Britain's largest mortgage lender said the big fall in mortgage rates and the marked economic improvement since the spring would continue to underpin the market over the remainder of the year and into 2000.

But it added that a 1980s-style boom was unlikely.

Annual house price rises peaked at a whopping 34.4 per cent in October 1988, partly thanks to a rush of first-time buyers trying to beat a deadline for a cut in tax relief on mortgages.

After that, oil prices will depend on several factors, including whether the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries will raise output next spring. Another key question is whether Asia's slowly-recovering economies increase their demand for oil.

Non-OPEC nations might increase their output to take advantage of high prices, which could have the effect of lowering prices as supplies increase, McIntyre said.

Last weekend, oil ministers from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia met with non-OPEC member Mexico and promised that OPEC would try to keep output limits in place until the end of March 2000 to sustain higher prices.

The sealed tender will be received in the tender box kept in the office of the undersigned and the office of the Executive Engineer, Dhaka O&M Division-2, WDB (Rupali Sadan), Dhaka on 21-09-99 up to 12.00 Noon.

2.5% (two and half per cent) of the total bid amount in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order.

20-09-99.

12.00 Noon at 12.30 PM.

For this particular work the

eligibility of the contractor shall be ascertained at the time of buying of tender documents. The contractor must have past experience of performing similar works and software development in any govt/semi-govt or autonomous organisation in Bangladesh. Application seeking permission for purchase of tender documents should be supported with experience certificate on software development and hardware designs. Application for purchase of tender document should be addressed to the undersigned enclosing experience certificates to prove the eligibility of the contractor/firm.

Executive Engineer
C & Division
149, Motijheel C/A
Ansar Chamber (11th Floor), Dhaka
Phone # 9551125



Tender Notice

1. Tender Notice No	01/1999-2000.
2. Name of work	Repair & Maintenance and Computerisation of current meter rating trolley installed in the Hydrology Laboratory at Green Road, Dhaka.
3. Eligibility of Contractors	Enlisted 'A' & 'B' Class contractors of BWDB during 1999-2000 and bona fide other eligible firms who have experience of performing similar type of works.
4. Cost of tender documents	Tk 750.00 per set (non-refundable)
5. Place of selling of tender documents	a) Sonali Bank, WAPDA Branch, Motijheel, Dhaka. b) Janata Bank, Green Road Branch, Dhaka. c) Other informations will be available in the office of the undersigned.
6. Earnest money	2.5% (two and half per cent) of the total bid amount in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order.
7. Last date of selling of tender documents	20-09-99.
8. Place and time of receiving tender	The sealed tender will be received in the tender box kept in the office of the undersigned and the office of the Executive Engineer, Dhaka O&M Division-2, WDB (Rupali Sadan), Dhaka on 21-09-99 up to 12.00 Noon.
9. Date & time of opening tender	21.09.99 at 12.30 PM.
10. Instruction and conditions for purchasing tender documents	For this particular work the eligibility of the contractor shall be ascertained at the time of buying of tender documents. The contractor must have past experience of performing similar works and software development in any govt/semi-govt or autonomous organisation in Bangladesh. Application seeking permission for purchase of tender documents should be supported with experience certificate on software development and hardware designs. Application for purchase of tender document should be addressed to the undersigned enclosing experience certificates to prove the eligibility of the contractor/firm.

PANI-33/1999-2000
GD-783

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

141-143, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders in prescribed forms are invited from class I enlisted contractors of the Engineering Division of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority for the undermentioned work. Tenders will have to be submitted till 12-00 Noon on 14-09-99 in the tender boxes kept at the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Office of the Superintending Engineer, BIWTA Bhaban, 141-143 C/A (6th floor), and the Office of the Executive Engineer, BIWTA, Narayanganj and will be opened the same day at 1215 PM in presence of tenderers (if anyone remains present). Paper related to tender will be available everyday (excepting the day of opening tender) during office hours. Taka as mentioned against each work in the forms of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank in favour of "BIWTA" will have to be enclosed with the tender. Schedule will have to be procured by depositing Tk 750/- (seven hundred and fifty taka) (non-refundable) as the cost of the schedule in the Accounts Office of the Authority in Dhaka/Narayanganj.

The authority reserves the power to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.

S/No Name of work Estimated cost Earnest money Time limit for work

1. Construction of new RCC ramp for steel gangway at Simpsonghat at Sadarghat in Dhaka.	Tk. 14,07,000/-	45 (forty-five) days.
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PR-66/99

DPF-1891-29/8

G-1627

Hasan Mahmud

Superintending Engineer

Dhaka Circle