

Negotiators plan to meet tomorrow

US Chamber calls for quick WTO deal with China

WASHINGTON, Sept 25: The United States' largest business group urged the Clinton administration yesterday to strike a World Trade Organisation pact with China without delay, putting pressure on US negotiators ahead of next week's high-level talks with officials from Beijing, reports Reuters.

Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Donohue said he was confident a market-opening deal between the trading powers was within reach and that the Republican-controlled US Congress would eventually support it, although not necessary before the November 2000 presidential and congressional elections.

Rather than hold up a pact to win further concessions, as suggested by senior Clinton administration officials, Donohue said the US business community was prepared to accept the market-access terms that were proposed by the Chinese last April, but rejected by President Bill Clinton. "You get the deal, you send it up, we'll get it done," Donohue told reporters in Washington.

Washington and Beijing were close to a pact in April when China unveiled a plan to reduce tariffs, open markets and increase access in such areas as agriculture, telecommunications and financial services.

But Clinton turned down that deal in hope of winning concessions in the financial sector, and protections from surges in Chinese exports of textiles and steel.

Donohue suggested that Barshefsky go back to terms proposed by the Chinese in April, rather than hold out for more. "If we can get an agreement that's exactly like the one we had before, for example, I think the Chinese would probably agree to that, I think most American industry would support it."

Donohue said he was certain lawmakers would approve the pact, despite concerns about

human rights, a growing trade deficit, security for Taiwan and allegations that China stole US nuclear secrets. But Donohue said it was unclear whether it would happen this year.

As part of any pact, Clinton must persuade Congress to grant Beijing permanent most-favoured nation status, which the United States now refers to as normal trade relations (NTR).

'Pact to cost US textile sector \$12b'

According to another report, a trade pact with China could cost the US textile and apparel industries up to \$12 billion and result in as many as 154,500 job losses, an industry group said yesterday, reports Reuters.

The report, released by the American Textile Manufacturers Institute, could fuel opposition in the US Congress to China's entry into

the World Trade Organisation.

Top US and Chinese negotiators plan to meet on Monday to try to hammer out a bilateral trade agreement that would clear the way for China's accession.

The industry report said a proposed phase out of quotas on Chinese textile and apparel imports in 2005 would result over time in \$7.6 billion in lost US apparel sales.

That's because cheaper Chinese imports would more than triple, flooding US markets, putting US textile companies out of business and forcing others to shed workers, it said.

An estimated 55,900 textile-related jobs and 98,700 apparel-related jobs would "ultimately" be lost in the United States, according to a summary of the report released by the institute.

US producers of wool, cotton and other fabrics would be hard-hit.

Thai PM rules out return to fixed exchange rate

BANGKOK, Sept 25: Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai has ruled out a return to a fixed exchange rate, saying the weakened Thai baht will continue to float in the open market, a newspaper reported Saturday, says AP.

"No, please do not shock the market, as the situation will get out of control," he was quoted by the Nation daily as telling reporters. "Let (the baht) go in line with the market."

The government has attributed the recent slide in the baht to regional currency weakness. It reached a 13-month low this week, closing Friday at 41.215 baht to the US dollar.

Until the recent instability, particularly over the past month, the exchange rate had ranged from about 36 to 37 baht to the dollar.

A report this week in a Thai newspaper, Manager Daily, had quoted unnamed sources as saying the government was considering pegging the currency if it breached 45 baht to the dollar.

Market analysts see this as unlikely. Thailand had to seek a \$17.2 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund in 1997 after it spent much of its foreign reserves to defend the baht, formerly pegged to the dollar, against speculative attacks.

The crisis triggered an economic slump across Asia. The Thai economy is now showing signs of recovery, although financial institutions are still mired in dud loans and local corporations are worried about the baht's weakness.



Australians Emma Huxley (L) and Anne Taylor (R), working for an Australian catering company, prepare rice in the kitchen of an East Timorese refugee camp in Darwin on Saturday. The refugees consume 1,000 kilos of rice a day and 4,000 eggs for breakfast. Another 2,000 refugees from East Timor are expected to arrive in Darwin early next week. — AFP photo.

The Chamber of Commerce and other US business groups have a lot riding on Beijing's accession since it would help American companies tap China's vast market, potentially the world's largest with 1.2 billion consumers.

Donohue said he would meet with Barshefsky on Friday to discuss trade issues, including China's accession and labour's opposition in the upcoming round of global trade negotiations, starting with a WTO meeting in Seattle in late November.

Unions want WTO trade deals to improve labour standards. They also opposed a WTO pact with China, and have put pressure on Vice President Al Gore to scuttle an agreement.

Organised labour has been a longtime friend of Democrats and Gore, the party's presidential front-runner, is counting on union support in next year's election.

China needs US support to join the 134-member trade body. It must also reach agreements with other members.



The 10,000th Buick car rolls off the General Motors production line in Shanghai Saturday. The car will be presented to celebrate the 50th anniversary of communist rule in China on 01 October. — AFP photo.

60pc of Chinese businessmen use Internet

BEIJING, Sept 25: Sixty per cent of the businesspeople in China are using the Internet, according to a recent survey conducted by the Chinese edition of Fortune Magazine, says Xinhua.

About 95 per cent of those people in China who haven't yet used the Internet plan to do so.

Among the 60 per cent of the businesspeople currently using the Internet, 56 per cent log on at their offices, 43 per cent go online at home, and 21 per cent do so at both places.

Ninety-six per cent of those polled cited the Internet as a useful source of business information.

British PM vows to keep tight rein on public spending

LONDON, Sept 25: British Prime Minister Tony Blair today vowed his government would keep a tight rein on public spending despite a suspected swelling budget surplus, saying discipline was the key to sustained funding, says Reuters.

Blair told the Guardian newspaper the fact Labour ruled in England, Wales and Scotland meant the party had more scope for radicalism, but he wanted to break cut-and-spend cycles of previous governments.

"We have run a tight, disciplined, prudent and successful economic policy and we have done it by not counting our

chickens, by saying we have war chests and lading out money to all and sundry," Blair told the newspaper.

"We have got to carry on being extremely disciplined and tough on public spending," he added, despite a healthy economy that has seen net government borrowing shrink and tax revenues soar. "If we are, we will get the extra money in," he added.

Analysts polled by Reuters predict Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Gordon Brown could see a 1999/2000 budget surplus of 5.0 billion pounds (\$8.17 billion)

compared with the 4.5 billion pound deficit he is currently forecasting.

"The best thing about New Labour is that it can legitimately say we are a one nation party today, that governs the whole country. What I believe it does is it allows us to be more radical," Blair said.

"If people think you are a competent economic manager they'll allow you to spend more money because, they will say, 'well, these are people who will spend it wisely and sensibly,'" he added against a backdrop of calls for more government spending in health and education in particular.

Turning to Scottish by-elections, Blair played down the narrow margin of victory over the Scottish National Party in the traditional Labour stronghold of Hamilton South.

"The most important thing to realise is that in the past we used to lose the those by-elections, the SNP used to win them in Labour governments."

Blair said his stance on joining Europe's single currency had not changed, stressing that the government would put joining to a public vote once the economic conditions were right.

"It hasn't changed, it won't change. We want to be part of a successful single currency, provided the conditions are met," he said, playing down public scepticism of the euro which translated into a humiliating defeat in European Parliament elections.

Musing on the criticism levelled at the government by core supporters, Blair said it was hard to explain to them why he could not address all his electoral manifesto promises immediately and convince them their ideology had not changed.

Taiwan quake may take more toll on economy

TAIPEI, Sept 25: Interest rates are likely to rise in Taiwan, and even though many people will be at work rebuilding from the earthquake, unemployment should be slightly higher by year's end as a result, the government said Saturday, reports AP.

Taiwan has already acknowledged its economic growth will be slowing, largely because of semiconductor plants that were shut down by power outages after the massive quake rocked the island on Tuesday.

Taiwan's economy might grow by just 5.5 per cent this year, with earlier forecasts of 5.7 per cent growth now seen as unrealistic, the government has said.

Yeh Ming-feng, secretary-general of Taiwan's Council for Economic Planning, said Saturday it may take up to year to rebuild knocked down buildings, roads, bridges, and water reservoirs.

Cities, towns and villages across a wide stretch of Taiwan were devastated, although most crucial factories and ports were spared the brunt of the damage from the quake that killed around 2,000 people.

But unemployment will likely reach 2.9 per cent by the end of the year, compared with a year-end figure of 2.7 per cent at the end of 1998. The government had previously estimated unemployment of 2.8 per cent by the end of the year.

Yeh said the economic after-effects of the quake will include slower consumer spending, with cutbacks in manufacturing and other production aggravating the situation.

Metal: Weekly Roundup
Gold goes up at last after months in doldrums

LONDON, Sept 25: Gold prices at last picked up after months in the doldrums, encouraged by three main factors: strong demand at a British bullion auction, weakness of the dollar, and hopes that the IMF will not sell the precious metal on the open market to fund debt relief, reports AP.

The gold spot price on the London Bullion Market gained more than 10 dollars to 267.20 dollars an ounce from 255.20 dollars the previous week.

It had touched the highest level since June during the week.

The bank of England's auction programme and the first sale in July had reduced prices to 20-year low points, but last week's auction for 25 tonnes of gold that were sold for 255.75 dollars and ounce was eight times oversubscribed.

Dealers showed their relief at the strong demand by buying up gold contracts.

Gold market operators were also switching back into the precious metal as the dollar lost ground on foreign exchange markets. Gold has traditionally served as a safe haven in times of turbulence on foreign exchange markets.

The rise is due to a number of factors, but the most important one is that there are worries about the long-term strength of the US dollars," said Charles Kernot, a precious metals expert with the Faribas bank.

Thirdly, the gold market welcomed proposals to revalue IMF gold stocks rather than selling them on the open market as a method of drumming up billions of dollars to finance debt relief to poor countries.

"The market is happier with the re-evaluation of the IMF reserves than with a sale," said Kernot, referring to the widely-backed idea of revaluing some 14 million ounces of gold worth some three billion dollars (2.8 billion euros), freezing funds for

the debt programme.

Silver: Gilded. Silver prices rose on the wings of gold this week.

Prices on the London Bullion Market rose by 12 cents to 5.26 dollars an ounce.

Platinum and Palladium: Hit. These two metals were hit by profit-taking late in the week after heavy gains recorded earlier in the slipstream of gold.

Palladium prices on the London Palladium and Platinum Market fell by five dollars to 363 dollars an ounce and platinum prices fell by one dollar to 376 dollars an ounce.

Base metals: Soft. The base metals complex softened this week as last week's exuberance was abruptly cut short due to the gloomier sentiment on the US equity markets.

But while market declines hurt the complex, signs of healthy economic growth in Asia and Europe continued to provide a helping hand to prices.

Friday's announcement for example of a 5.9 per cent rise in car production in Japan in August comforted metals investors.

Nickel lost the ground

gained last week due to a lock-out of the 1,050 workers at Canadian producer Inco's Thompson complex in Manitoba, central Canada, which produces six per cent of western nickel output.

There were few developments at the site this week, and a failure to reach a truce on a pay dispute should underpin prices in the medium term, dealers said.

Copper prices also suffered from a correction, while aluminium, zinc and lead followed the general tendency downwards.

Three-month copper prices lost 24.5 dollars to 1,783 dollars per tonne despite a fall of 1,950 tonnes in LME reserves to 774,275 tonnes.

Nickel shed 210 dollars to 7,015 dollars per tonne, as stocks grew by 420 tonnes to 49,554 tonnes.

Aluminium prices gave up 11 dollars to 1,535.5 dollars per tonne as market stocks swelled by 2,400 tonnes in market stocks to 796,350 tonnes.

Zinc prices weakened by 32 dollars to 1,194 dollars per tonne. LME stocks grew by 2,600 tonnes to 282,300 tonnes.

WANTED

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form obtainable from the office of the Registrar are invited from the Bangladesh Nationals for the following posts.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:
Department of Economics: 1 (one) permanent and 3 temporary posts (against leave vacancies).
Pay scale of Tk. 7200-260X 14-10840/-.

QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must have first class either in Honours or in Master's degree in Economics or in both or an equivalent degree from a foreign university with at least high second divisions in SSC & HSC examinations. They should have at least 3 years' teaching and research experience in a university. The above requirements may be relaxed in the case of those who have Ph.D degree or research publications in standard journals. Experience and performance as a teacher as well as significant contribution to different areas of university activities especially in guiding the overall educational and co-curricular activities of the students will also be treated as qualification. Other qualifications being equal preference will be given to those who have M.Phil degree. For one of the posts candidates should have special qualification in Econometrics and Statistical Software and in this case candidates having degrees in Economics/Statistics/Mathematics may also apply.

Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials and mark-sheets alongwith a Pay Order/ Bank Draft of the value of Tk. 100/- only payable to the Registrar, should reach him on or before 17-10-1999. Candidates already in services must apply through proper channel.

GD-859

Inauguration of 1st centre in Dhaka
Crown Systems Limited

Rajib Arora, Managing Director of Datapro, speaks at the inauguration of the first Datapro centre at a city hotel.

Office of the Commander
3rd Armed Police Battalion
Khagrachhari

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide contractors/suppliers of Bangladesh for supplying the undermentioned goods in group basis for the 3rd Armed Police Battalion, Khagrachhari. Tender schedule (schedule) containing detailed description of goods and rules and regulations for submission of tender can be purchased from the office of the undersigned at the cost of Taka 400.00 (four hundred) only as per rules for each group for 2 (two) days at 10-10-99 and 11-10-99 during office hours. Tenders will have to be submitted in the tender box kept at the battalion headquarters (main office) till 12-00 Noon on 12-10-99 and the tender box will be opened the same day at 12-30 PM in presence of the tenderers or their representatives (if anyone remains present).

A Bank Draft for the earnest money (earnest money) as per rule stated in the tender schedule and other related record/papers (up-to-date) will have to be submitted with the tender. Otherwise, tenders will not be treated as acceptable.

The authority reserves the power to reject or accept partially/fully any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Schedule:

- 1) 'Ka' group— supply of utensil (articles for cooking).
- 2) 'Kha' group — supply of liveries for musical band.
- 3) 'Ga' group — supply of wooden denish.

Golam Mustafa Chowdhury
Additional Police Super (Acting Commander)
DFP 20862-21/9 3rd Armed Police Battalion
G-1773 Khagrachhari

Directorate General Defence Purchase
Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Re-Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders in local/foreign currency are invited from bonafide Manufacturers/Dealers/Suppliers /Indentors (Enlisted firm and firm applied for enlistment) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh "Army."

Ser No	Nomenclature	Date of Selling		Date of Opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To			
01.	Accessories for Radio Set GP-300, Com-88/GY Qty-04 line	01-10-99	09-11-99	10-11-99	Foreign currency	214/897/P-2
02.	Spares for Radio Set Com-88/GY & Bower 16 mm portable projector P-7 Qty-13 line	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-	-Do-	214/900/P-2

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (Not refundable) during office hour between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hrs and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of all tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/99/643
DFP-20945-21/9
G-1771

Major
For Director General

Clinton takes swipe at Bush
US House panel okays scaled-down tax bill

WASHINGTON, Sept 25: A key House committee yesterday passed along party lines a bill that revives provisions of the sweeping \$792 billion tax cut plan vetoed by President Clinton that would renew expiring tax breaks for businesses and families, reports Reuters.

The much more narrowly focused \$23.3 billion, five-year plan that was approved 23-14 by the House Ways and Means Committee would extend some expiring business tax breaks, including a research and development tax credit, and reduce the number of individual taxpayers subject to the alternative minimum tax.

The alternative minimum tax was created in 1986 to ensure that the wealthiest Americans did not completely escape paying taxes by using credits and deductions.

But committee Chairman Bill Archer, a Texas Republican, said that without congressional action, many taxpayers would be unable to take full advantage of child tax credits and other tax breaks designed to help middle-income families with the costs of caring for the elderly and disabled, adoption and some home mortgages.

Disagreement over paying for bill

While both republicans and democrats said they supported extending those expiring tax provisions, the two sides disagreed over how to pay for them. They ended up voting along party lines, with Democrats opposing the bill and the Republican majority supporting it.

Directorate General Defence Purchase
Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders in local currency are invited from bonafide Manufacturer's (Enlisted Farms and Farms applied for enlistment in DGDP) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh Army.

Sl No	Name of Items & Qty	Date of Selling		Date of Opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To			
a.	Boot DMS Size-6 to 10 (1,32,000 Pair)	06.10.99	01.11.99	02.11.99	Local	2227/P-6
B.	Boot Canvas PT/ Jungle Boot. Size-7 to 10 (20,400 Pair)	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	2226/P-6

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (not refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hours and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in the presence of tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/99/642
DFP-20944-21/9
G-1774

Major
For Director General