

ASEM meeting in Berlin this weekend

EU, Asia ministers may seek to intensify economic co-op

BERLIN, Oct 7: Economy ministers and experts from the European Union and east Asian countries will meet for two days under German auspices this weekend to help guide the Asian economies out of recession and strengthen economic cooperation and trade, reports AFP.

Some 500 participants from the 15 EU countries and Brunei, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam are expected for this second Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), the German Economy and technology ministry said.

Discussions will be held on the basis of a report from a recently-ended meeting in Seoul of the Asia-Europe Business Forum on how cooperation between the two continents can be strengthened at the level of economic ministries and between

business leaders, a ministry document said.

The Asian countries want financial help and advice from the Europeans, while the western representatives will seek security for their investments in the region.

Central to the meeting will be how to intensify Asia-Europe economic cooperation in the light of signs of a new economic upturn in east Asia, the German ministry said.

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China's demand to be admitted is expected to receive at least a boost in Berlin.

However, German government sources warned that the world's most populous country could not hope to win a promise of support for special conditions for membership of the WTO.

The Berlin talks will be led by the German economy minister Werner Mueller, a technocrat and former businessman without political affiliation.

ASEM member governments are all in favour of universal membership of the WTO, and the ministers are accordingly expected to discuss in Berlin the prospect of membership in the near future for China and Vietnam in March 1996 in Bangkok.

The Berlin talks will be aimed at further economic reforms of the Asian economy and the search for markets there, and the prevention of a fall back into recession and conta-

TOP PASSENGER AGENT'S EDUCATIONAL TOUR OF TRANG & PHUKET OCTOBER 6-11, 1999

Participants of the Thai Airways International-Dhaka's Top Passenger Agents' Educational Tour 1999 to Trang and Phuket, Thailand are seen on the eve of their departure at the Zia International Airport. Thai Airways General Manager, Bangladesh Pratin Cherdehaikul, District Sales Manager Md. Hasanuzzaman, Station Manager Zabir Karim, Passenger Handling Officer Dilshad Begum and Hassina Yasmin are also seen in the picture.

— Thai Airways photo

Albright condemns Congress foreign spending cut

STANFORD, Calif. Oct 7: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright yesterday condemned a vote by Congress to cut US foreign affairs spending, saying official penny-pinching amounted to nothing less than a "clear and present danger to American interests," says Reuters.

In a speech to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Albright also repeated President Bill Clinton's warning that failure to endorse the global nuclear test ban treaty would scuttle US efforts to rein in nuclear proliferation around the globe.

Albright had harsh words for Republican-led efforts to cut the State Department budget — noting that America's foreign

programmes account for only one penny of each dollar the federal government spends.

"But that penny can spell the difference between hard times and good times for our people, war and peace for our country, less and more freedom in our world," Albright said.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Senate followed the House of Representatives in voting to slash the administration's request for foreign spending by \$2 billion.

The House voted on Tuesday to pass a funding bill that calls for \$12.62 billion in foreign spending for the new fiscal year that started Oct. 1 — compared to nearly \$27 billion in defence spending being consid-

ered by Congress out of an overall federal budget of about \$1.6 trillion.

"The results of this legislation, if it were to become law, would be to cut foreign affairs resources below their previously inadequate levels," Albright said.

"And this would create a clear and present danger to American interests, which is why I have recommended — and the President has said he would — veto the bill as soon as it reaches his desk."

Albright said that, while the US economy continued to steam ahead, serious ongoing threats to world stability required more overseas spending.

Bangladesh Bank

Currency Management and Accounts Deptt
Head Office, Dhaka

Tender Notice

Tender for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Note Sorting Machine

Sealed tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers or their local agents for supply, installation and commissioning of 6(Six) note sorting machines for offices of Bangladesh Bank at different centres.

Tender schedule showing terms and conditions with specifications of the above machines will be available at the office of General Manager, Currency Management & Accounts Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka (11th floor, 2nd annexe building) on payment of Tk 750/- per set (non-refundable) up to 11th November, 1999. No tender schedule will be sold thereafter.

The tender(s) addressed to the General Manager, Currency Management & Accounts Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka shall be submitted under sealed cover by the tenderers in two separate envelopes marked "Technical Offer" and "Financial Offer" in duplicate in the tender box kept in the office of General Manager, Currency Management & Accounts Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka. Offers shall be received up to 11:30 AM on 22nd November, 1999 and only the technical offer shall be opened at 12:00 noon on the same day at the same place in presence of the tenderers, if any.

Earnest money @2.5% (Two and a half) of the total quoted amount shall be submitted with the financial offer in the form of Bank Draft/Payment Order from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh favouring Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.

Incomplete and conditional tender and tender(s) without earnest money will not be considered.

Bangladesh Bank reserves the right to accept in full or in part or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Mohd Abdul Matin
General Manager

HK rates seen trending up on US hike concerns

HONG KONG, Oct 7: Hong Kong has shrugged off the US Federal Reserve's tightening directive, so far, but money market rates could rise significantly if people become convinced that another US interest rate hike is in store, says Reuters.

Hong Kong rates will be stable until the market is sure that the US is going to raise rates, Frank Gong, currency analyst at Bank of America, said.

"Interbank rates look like they have found the bottom and the next move will be higher."

The Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the US currency, meaning rate moves in the United States can be reflected in Hong Kong rates. The Hong Kong Association of Banks (HKAB) is widely expected to leave deposit rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent at a weekly rate review this Friday.

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growth momentum of the domestic economy of GDP growth of about 4.5 per cent.

"At the very least, the results suggest that slowdown in the June quarter recorded by the statistician's national accounts is only temporary, and/or a statistical blip," Oster said.

Forward orders and capacity utilisation were also up, as were stocks.

With further stock accumulation expected in the December quarter, the result appears to reflect anticipation of ongoing growth and building in the run-up to Y2K, rather than any involuntary stock build.



Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers look at a model British Airways airliner on display at the China Aviation Expo 99 in Beijing yesterday. Various international airlines and aircraft manufacturers are participating in the week-long exhibition with the hopes of capturing a larger slice of the Chinese domestic aviation market.

— AFP photo

Washington mulls Moscow request 'US food aid must help Russian farmers'

WASHINGTON, Oct 6: The United States yesterday said it is seriously considering a request from Moscow for additional food aid but said this time any assistance must benefit struggling Russian farmers, said Reuters.

Europeans were too concentrated on technical issues, in contrast to the United States and Asia, and not focused enough on innovation and marketing their inventions.

Cultural differences played a role in this, but also over-regulation by governments not in tune with market needs.

The economic success of Europe depends on what extent governments leave European companies free to develop their advantages in competitive situations," he said.

The \$1 billion programme was a welcome boost for US

farmers, who are earning little for their crops due to huge worldwide supplies and declining export demand.

But critics say that if the United States wants to provide more food to Russia, this time the aid should help Russian farmers. They are harvesting another dismal crop due to bad weather, lack of machinery and outdated methods.

"We have to be careful not to reduce incentives for Russian farmers to produce food," US Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman told a House Agriculture Committee hearing.

Moscow wants an additional 5 million metric tons of grains and planting seeds in the form of a US donation, not loans.

Oil prices fall as OPEC discipline slackens

LONDON, Oct 7: Oil prices slipped further from recent heady heights yesterday after a Reuters survey showed waning OPEC compliance with self-imposed output restrictions, says Reuters.

Benchmark Brent for November delivery lost ground for the third straight day to close 18 cents lower at \$22.75 barrel, down from a brief afternoon move up to \$23.03.

The falls followed news that adherence by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to export limits loosened again in September as high prices drew extra supplies from core Gulf producers.

The export group raised wellhead output in September by 140,000 barrels a day to 26.68 million bpd from a revised 26.54 million in August, according to the survey of OPEC and industry officials and consultants.

"It looks like they might be starting to turn on the taps," said one dealer.

Oil prices more than doubled to a 33-month peak of \$24.30 a barrel late last month thanks to good compliance by OPEC and some non-OPEC producers with output limits imposed to rescue the market from historic lows touched earlier in the year.

The curbs are aimed at shrinking a big global surplus of stored oil that drove 1998 prices to levels that sliced billions of dollars off the incomes of oil-dependent OPEC states.

But the latest Reuters monthly survey found that OPEC output climbed 700,000 bpd in September from a low point of just below 26 million bpd in June, spurred by incremental Iraqi oil and increasing OPEC leakage.

The survey indicated that compliance by the 10 OPEC members participating in supply restrictions fell to 81 per cent in September from 83 per cent in August.



A model shows off Fuji Photo Film Co's "Princam", the world's first super-megapixel digital still camera with a built-in colour printer in Tokyo Thursday. The firm will put it on domestic market from November 20 at a price of 99,800 yen (930 dollars).

Exchange Rates

American Express Bank Ltd foreign exchange rates (indicative) against the Taka to major currencies						
Currency	Selling TT & OD	Selling B/C	Buying T.T.	Buying OD, Sight	Buying Export Bill	Buying OD Transfer
US Dollar	49.7300	49.7700	49.3200	49.1570	49.0850	
Pound Stg	82.5220	82.5883	81.3237	81.0560	80.9363	
Deutsche Mark	27.6005	27.6227	26.6200	26.5159	26.4771	
Swiss Franc	33.5447	33.5717	33.0297	32.9206	32.8724	
Japanese Yen	0.4643	0.4647	0.4661	0.4546	0.4539	
Dutch Guilder	24.4959	24.5156	23.6257	23.5333	23.4989	
Danish Krone	7.2166	7.2224	7.0496	7.0263	7.0161	
Australians	33.4434	33.4703	32.1320	32.0258	31.9789	
Belgian Franc	1.3382	1.3393	1.2906	1.2857		
Canadian \$	34.2328	34.2603	33.2412	33.1314	33.0828	
French Franc	8.2295	8.2361	7.9371	7.9061	7.8945	
Hong Kong \$	6.4443	6.4495	6.3361	6.3151	6.3069	
Italian Lira	0.0279	0.0279	0.0269	0.0268	0.0267	
Norway Krone	6.4761	6.4813	6.3688	6.3478	6.3385	
Singapore \$	29.9944	30.0235	29.0340	28.9380	28.8956	
Saudi Rial	13.2989	13.3096	13.1150	13.0726	13.0535	
UAE Dirham	13.5770	13.5880	13.3913	13.3470	13.3275	
Swedish Krona	6.1244	6.1288	6.0478	6.0278	6.0190	
Qatari Riyal	13.6978	13.7089	13.5068	13.4621	13.4424	
Kuwaiti Dinar	169.9590	170.0957	157.6216	157.0010	156.7710	
Thai Baht	1.2639	1.2650	1.2507	1.2465	1.2447	
Euro	53.9819	54.0251	52.0643	51.3006	51.7847	

Bill buying rates

TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days

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