

'WTO members not ready for trade round'

WASHINGTON, Jan 21: World Trade Organisation Director-General Mike Moore said yesterday that WTO member nations remained too divided to get stalled global trade negotiations back on track, reports Reuters.

"We've got to narrow those differences before we go back to a ministerial," Moore told US public television's "NewsHour" with Jim Lehrer in an interview, after holding talks with senior US trade officials in Washington.

WTO negotiations collapsed in December amid huge street protests and deep divisions over agriculture, labour standards and other issues. Organisers of the Seattle ministerial had expected to launch a new trade round at that meeting.

In recent weeks, Moore has been trying to restart the negotiating process, holding talks with US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, among others.

Moore said he had spoken to close to 30 trade ministers since WTO talks failed in Seattle. But he added they (ministers) do not want to move to another meeting unless we're much closer together.

Some trade diplomats have been sceptical about the chances of making a second attempt to launch a new trade round before the US presidential election in November.

But after meeting with US Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman earlier on Thursday, Moore told reporters there was still a chance of launching a new round this year if countries showed a willingness to compromise.

But at this point, it remains difficult to gauge if countries are willing to make enough compromises, he said.

Indian court orders cellphone operators to cut charges

NEW DELHI, Jan 21: An Indian court today told cellular phone operators to slash tariffs and rentals in line with recommendations of the national telecommunications watchdog, reports AFP.

The Delhi High Court ordered cellular operators to lower their monthly rentals on mobile phones by 21 per cent to 474 rupees (10.89 dollars) with effect from last November and to cut call charges by 33.3 per cent beginning February 1.

The court said the steep reduction would be effective in larger cities such as Bombay, Bangalore, Calcutta, Madras and New Delhi.

Cellular companies were also ordered to reduce their charges in smaller towns, where the rentals are currently slightly higher at 500 rupees (11.49 dollars).

The court said the rates were recommended by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, which last September said no charge would be made to the receiver of incoming cellphone calls, with all fees paid by the caller.

Previously, callers had to pay a little over a rupee to speak to someone on the cellphone for three minutes. On the other hand, the receiver had to pay as much as 16 rupees during peak hours.

G7 meet to focus on macro fears, micro cures

Hopes for global growth high on Tokyo gathering's agenda

TOKYO, Jan 21: Hopes for world growth are high as the group of seven rich nations gather to ponder policies, reports Reuters.

But worries that the US economy is too good to last and that the growth of other nations cannot compensate if America falters are also weighing on G7 minds.

Much of the focus when finance ministers and central bank chiefs from the world's seven rich nations, joined by Russia, meet in Tokyo on Saturday will be on short-term macro-economic measures needed to ensure a rosy global scenario plays out.

The spotlight will also shine on the structural cures seen vital to help Japan and Europe achieve longer-term sustainable growth as the US economic engine slows.

"The worries are macro, but the cures are micro," said Jesper Koll, chief economist at Merrill Lynch Japan.

Economic forecasters at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have predicted a robust 3.5 per cent rise in global output for 2000 and many private economists are equally bullish.

"In 1998, the world economy grew 1.8 per cent and in 1999 it grew by 2.9 per cent. This year... no one's forecast is very much below three," said Merrill Lynch chief economist Jesper Koll.

America's economy is showing few if any signs of faltering as it draws closer to achieving its longest-ever expansion.

The Federal Reserve said on Wednesday the US economy grew strongly in December and early January, with consumer prices steady and wage rises muted despite a tight labour market.

Fed policy-makers will use the report when they meet on February 1-2 for a session expected to result in another hike in short-term interest rates to keep the economy from overheating.

US stock markets have rebounded after a bout of high anxiety as the year began, with the nation's techno-darling, Nasdaq, marking its third record close in a row on Thursday.

But worries persist the US asset markets are a bubble waiting to burst and that imbalances in the broader economy such as a widening current account deficit, are recipes for trouble.

"I imagine that some of the non-Americans (in the G7) want to have a go at the US, hinting they should take steps to make sure the whole thing doesn't end in tears," said Chris Calderwood, chief economist at Jardine Fleming Securities.

A tumble in US markets and a slowdown in its economy would be bad news for Asia, including China, a hefty portion of whose exports find their way to America.

These authorities are among the most concerned, largely from fear that a US stumble spells a soaring yen, an outcome that could kill Japan's fragile recovery.

"I think it would be better to include comments in the (G7) communiqué which recognise the possibility of a large fall in the US stock market, a consequent fall in the dollar and that concerted intervention would follow in such a case," said Yoshio Suzuki, a lawmaker and former bank of Japan official.

Donors pledge \$10b to Jakarta

JAKARTA, Jan 21: Indonesia would receive at least 10 billion US dollars in loans from donor countries in the Consultative Group for Indonesia (CGI) and other donor nations to help the country's economic reforms, reports Xinhua.

With the publication of the new Letter of Intent (LoI)... the international community has pledged 10 billion US dollars for the next three years to finance Indonesia's reforms program, visiting US Secretary of Treasury Lawrence Summers said Thursday.

The Indonesian government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Thursday signed a new LoI containing the country's medium-term economic strategy, macroeconomic policies and structural reform.

With the signing of the new LoI, the IMF would disburse a package of loans for Indonesia worth 260 million US dollars in February.

The disbursement of the package (260 million US dollars) is part of the total commitment made by the IMF for the next three years which amounts to 5 billion US dollars, IMF's senior resident representative John R Dodswoth said.

Donor countries are due to meet in Jakarta on February 1-2 for their first meeting in Indonesia after President Abdurrahman-Wahid took office last October.

Indonesia needed a foreign debt rescheduling at least for the next two years to support the government capacity, Summers said, adding that the US government was ready to help Indonesia reschedule its foreign debt.

But he added that Indonesia should first explain anything in connection with its institutional reforms and good governance in the upcoming donors' meeting.

Summers arrived in Indonesia Wednesday for a one-day visit as part of his Asian trip. He met with President Wahid and officials of the Indonesian Economist Association (ISEI) to discuss the development of the country's economy.

Summers said he and Wahid discussed the challenges faced by Indonesia's economy.

Sudibyo also said the CGI is expected to disburse a new loan package worth 4.41 billion US dollars.

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US urges EU, China to wrap up WTO talks

BRUSSELS, Jan 21: The United States urged the European Union and China yesterday to wrap up their negotiations on Beijing's entry to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) quickly to open the way for a key congressional vote, reports Reuters.

"We would like to see them reach a conclusion as soon as they can and... for our purposes, the sooner the better," David Aaron, US under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, told a news conference.

Aaron said he made this point in talks in Brussels on Thursday with senior European Commission trade official Friedrich Beesler, who will lead an EU delegation in talks with China on WTO entry next week.

The United States reached a long-awaited deal with China last November which should pave the way for Beijing to realise its long-held dream of joining the global trade body.

In return for China opening its market, the US Congress must grant Beijing permanent normal trade relations (NTR) status and halt a contentious annual review process.

Republican congressional leaders have said a vote on the trade pact would probably be pushed back to June or later to give China time to complete negotiations with other trading partners on joining the WTO.

The EU and about 20 other WTO members have yet to finish negotiations with China on WTO entry, Aaron said. All WTO members have the right to discuss their trade concerns with applicants.

Washington fears that the coming November US presidential election could complicate a congressional vote on China.

Aaron said seeking permanent NTR with China was a key goal for the final year of the Clinton administration. "Yet we won't be able to take this to the Congress... until the other

bilateral discussions are completed," he said.

The 15-nation EU has refused to be rushed in its own negotiations, with China. It says the US-China agreement covers about 80 per cent of its trade concerns but it still has special interests in areas such as telecommunications.

Talks in Brussels next Monday and Tuesday between delegations led by Beesler and Chinese Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Long Yongtu will be the first detailed negotiations between the two sides on China's WTO bid since October.

EU officials have said that it things go well, it could be the last round of technical negotiations and an agreement could be wrapped up at a later meeting between EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy and Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng.

Aaron said he had been told that the EU was aiming to have Lamy go to Beijing in February.

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Serge Weinberg, Chairman of the Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (PPR) group, explains to the Taiwanese media about his group's investment plans in Taiwan and Asia on Friday. PPR opened its first regional store in Taipei and plans to expand operations around Taiwan. —AFP photo

WB sees progress in Pak power row

WASHINGTON, Jan 21: The end of a row between some of Pakistan's independent power producers and the government is a sign of progress, but is not enough to end a battle with international lenders, a World Bank official said yesterday, reports Reuters.

The official, who asked not to be identified, noted that the agreement between the Pakistani government and 10 power producers did not include the Hub Power Company Ltd (Hubco) HWP. KA, one of the firms at the centre of a prolonged dispute which has affected World Bank lending.

An IMF spokesman said separately that the fund had not yet set a date for new talks with the Pakistani government. "We are working with the authorities on some technical questions before we can proceed with the programme negotiations," he said.

Pakistani Finance Minister Shauka Aziz said last month that an IMF team would arrive in January to discuss whether to release a new installment from a stalled \$ 1.6 billion loan.

Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have halted payments from loans to cash-strapped Pakistan, partly because of the power sector dispute, which centres on fees charged by Hubco and other power producers to state utility WAPDA.

The dispute has simmered on for years, hitting foreign investment sentiment and tarnishing Pakistan's relations with international donors.

But a senior government official told Reuters in Islamabad on Wednesday that the government had resolved the tariff row with 10 power producers and was negotiating with the remaining companies.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, Road Division, Tangail
R&H Tender Invitation Notice**

Sealed tenders are invited through Bangladesh Form No. 2911

1. Tender Notice No : 21 (twenty-one)/TRD, year: 1999-2000.
2. Name of work : Construction of flexible pavement at 3rd (part), 4th (part) & 5th (part) km of Bharadoba-Ghatail-Bhuapur Road (Ghatail-Bhuapur Portion) under Tangail Road Division during 1999-2000 financial year.
3. Estimated cost : Tk. 34,16,938/-
4. Earnest money : Tk 68,340/- should be submitted through scheduled Bank Draft/Treasury Challan etc. in favour of the Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division, Tangail.
5. Prescribed time limit for completion of work : 40 (forty) days.
6. Eligibility of contractor : 'A' to 'D' general class (R&H) enlisted contractors.
7. Offices where tender to be had at : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka/Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division, Tangail/Mymensingh/Jamalpur/Kishoreganj/Netrokona/Sherpur/Executive Engineer (R&H), Bridge Design Division-1, Bridge Zone, Dhaka/Deputy Commissioner, Tangail/Police Super, Tangail, and Sub-Divisional Engineer (R&H), Road Sub-Division, Tangail/ Mirzapur/ Madhupur/1st Line Workshop Sub-Division, Tangail under Tangail Road Division/Officer-in-Charge, Sadar Thana, Tangail.
8. Offices to receive tender : Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka/Additional Chief Engineer (R&H), Dhaka Zone, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/Superintending Engineer (R&H), Road Circle, Mymensingh/Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Dhaka Zone, Dhaka/Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Dhaka/Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division, Tangail/Mymensingh/Jamalpur/Netrokona/Kishoreganj/ Sherpur/Deputy Commissioner, Tangail/Police Super, Tangail & Officer-in-Charge, Sadar Thana, Tangail.
9. Last date of selling tender : 30-1-2000 up to office hours.
10. Last date of receiving tender : 31-1-2000 up to 12-30 pm.
11. Date & time of opening tender : 8-2-2000 at 2-00 pm.
12. Date of lottery : To be held at the office of the undersigned on 10-2-2000 at 11-00 am.

Construction of flexible pavement at 3rd (part), 4th (part), 5th (part) km of Bharadoba-Ghatail-Bhuapur Road (Ghatail-Bhuapur Portion) under Tangail Road Division during 1999-2000 financial year.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Head of expenditure	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time for completion of work	Price of tender document	Eligibility of contractor	Remarks
1	Construction of flexible pavement at 3rd (part), 4th (part), 5th (part) km of Bharadoba-Ghatail-Bhuapur Road (Ghatail-Bhuapur Portion) under Tangail Road Division during 1999-2000 financial year.	Repair/266- Development	Tk 34,16,938/-	Tk 68,340/-	40 (forty) days	Tk 1,020/-	'A' to 'D' general class contractors	

- N: B:
1. Officers of the tender receiving offices will receive tender on prescribed date as per the tender notice and send the tenders in sealed condition to the Executive Engineer (R&H), Road Division, Tangail through special messenger.
 2. Work order will be issued fixing the quantity of work within the allotment limit only.
 3. Tenderers should submit tender after going through the terms & conditions of tender.
 4. Bill of the completed work will be paid after on-the-spot examination by the Engineer-in-Charge (Executive Officer).
 5. If the date of receiving tender of the date of holding lottery is declared a holiday by govt or happens to be a holiday then it will be received/held on the next working day.
 6. If, under unavoidable circumstances, terms & conditions could not be attached to the tender, then the contractor shall have to sign 1 (one) additional set of terms & conditions at the time of submitting formal tender.

AKM Reazul Islam
Executive Engineer (R&H)
Road Division, Tangail

DFP-636-12-1-2000
G-114

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Agriculture Extension
Project Implementation Wing
Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka
No: DAE/PIW/Engg/BIRTAN-1/97/179/ Dated: 16/1/2000

Notice Inviting Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the enlisted contractors of PIW for the following construction works under the Project "Support for BIRTAN."

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost
1.	Boundary wall at Savar	Tk 8.14 lac.
2.	Boundary wall at Barisal	Tk 8.45 lac.

Tenders will be separate for each group and a tenderer may participate in one or more groups but in separate tender document.

For purchase of tenders, the owner of the firms have to submit application through the original letter pad of the respective firm.

Tenderers must submit earnest money with their tender at the rate of 2.50% of total quoted amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of the Executive Engineer, PIW, Department of Agriculture Extension. Tender without earnest money will be treated as cancelled.

Tender documents will be available for purchase at a non-refundable price of Tk 1000/- (Taka one thousand) only per set during government office hours on all working days up to 6.2.2000 in PIW office at Khamarbari (middle building, 5th floor), Dhaka.

Tenders will be received up to 1:00 PM on 7.2.2000 and be opened thereafter in presence of the tenderers who wish to be present at PIW office, Khamarbari (middle building, 5th floor), Dhaka.

Project Implementation Wing reserves the right to reject any tender including lowest tender or accept any tender in part or full and to waive any irregularity of a tender if it is found in the interest of the Project to do so without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Md Jamaluddin
Executive Engineer
Project Implementation Wing
DFP-930-18/1
G-119
Phone: 9117795

BCIC Tender Notice

(বিসিআইসি'র পন্থা শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির ধাতীক)

Sealed tenders are invited by the Managing Director, KPM Ltd., Chandraghona, Rangamati Hill District from the BCIC enlisted contractors not below category A-2 or above for

"construction of 5-storied residential building for staff & workers of KPM Ltd, CNA, (up to 1st floor)" at an estimated cost of Tk. 24,29,965/40 (Taka twenty-four lac twenty-nine thousand nine hundred sixty-five & ps. forty) only. An earnest money equivalent to 2½% (two & half per cent) of the estimated value must be submitted alongwith the tender in the form of Bank Draft/Pay-Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of KPM Ltd., Chandraghona, otherwise the tender will be rejected. Tender document may be obtained on payment of Tk. 1250/- (Taka one thousand two hundred fifty) only (non-refundable) per set from (i) General Manager (A&F), KPM Ltd, CNA, (ii) Sr. General Manager, BCIC Br. Office, 6, Agrabad C/A, Chittagong & (iii) BCIC, BCIC Acctts. Division, BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka on all working days up to 6.2.2000. No tender document will be sold on the date of opening of the tender. Tenders will be received at (i) Office of the General Manager (MTS), KPM Ltd., Chandraghona, (ii) Sr. General Manager, BCIC Br. Office, 6, Agrabad C/A, Chittagong & (iii) Sr. General Manager (Construction), BCIC, BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000 simultaneously up to 12.00 Noon on 7.2.2000 and will be opened at 12.15 PM. The tenderers must submit current year enlistment renewal and VAT Certificate (photo copy) along with the tender, otherwise the tender will be rejected. The Management reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

BCIC 26-16/1/2000
DFP-977-18/1
G-121

Dy. Chief Engineer (Civil)
For Managing Director, KPM.