

Pakistan to conduct tax survey despite protests

Move to bring black economy into tax net

ISLAMABAD, May 25: Pakistan's government vowed Wednesday to press ahead with a weekend tax survey, despite bitter opposition from traders and business to the most radical modernisation move since the army seized power last October, reports Reuters.

A spokesman for the Central Board of Revenue (CBR) said the survey would take place on Saturday as planned, brushing aside speculation that a nationwide three-day traders strike last weekend might have forced the government to back down.

He said the survey, the first step towards bringing a huge black economy into the tax net, was vital to protect economic sovereignty "and it will take place without fail."

The survey is seen as crucial to Pakistan's attempts to document the black economy, broaden a puny tax base and secure a \$2.2 billion IMF credit which is under negotiation.

But retailers and businessmen are up in arms and traders have vowed to hold another strike on the day the survey is to be conducted by the army, and to refuse to fill in the forms.

Traders and businessmen say that the survey will make them vulnerable to "corrupt" tax officials who might try to extort bribes rather than collect tax.

They also complain that many traders are not fully literate, will have problems with the forms and have little formal accounting knowledge.

Pakistan's top business body, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said the survey should be delayed because of concerns that it would cause harassment by tax officials.

The meeting reiterated that in view of the state of harassment... the proposed tax and property survey be put off till such time an amicable solution in consultation with the business community is reached," it said in a statement.

The CBR spokesmen denied rumours current in major towns that the survey was being postponed after traders closed their shops across the country last weekend in a show of opposition.

Some of these rumours are obviously being spread by quarters that do not want documentation of the economy and are bent upon creating fears and misgivings," the spokesman said.

The government of prime minister Nawaz Sharif, ousted in the coup that brought General Pervez Musharraf to power, caved in to the traders and scrapped plans to introduce a General Sales Tax (GST), opting for a self-assessed levy instead.

Tax collection — or the absence of it — is the traditional weakness of the Pakistani economy, which has accumulated a \$38 billion foreign debt but failed to sustain economic growth.

Less than one per cent of Pakistan's 135 million people pay tax and the informal economy is thought to equal or outstrip the official one.

Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz has promised to make the tax survey as simple as possible and will unveil details in a Friday news conference, the CBR spokesman said.

A previous \$1.56 billion IMF loan was suspended last year when the Sharif government failed to meet targets, including the imposition of a GST at the retail level and expanding the tax base.

WorldCom to market AOL service

JACKSON, Mississippi, May 25: WorldCom Inc will market America Online Inc's Internet service to millions of its residential, local and long-distance telephone customers in the US, under a deal announced by both companies, says AP.

WorldCom agreed to give customers an hour of free long distance each month when they sign up for AOL's service.

AOL is the largest online network in the US. WorldCom is the nation's second-largest provider of long-distance service, behind AT-and-T.

"Building on the existing relationship with AOL and WorldCom, this alliance widens the door for future WorldCom consumer initiatives with AOL," Terry Macko, WorldCom senior vice president of marketing said Wednesday in a prepared statement.

The two companies already share an agreement that allows WorldCom to handle most of AOL's Internet traffic through its UNNet subsidiary.

Ashby Foote, and analysts with Vector Money Management, said the deal may ease regulators' antitrust concerns about WorldCom's \$115 billion proposed merger with Sprint Corp, which holds a stake in EarthLink, the nation's second-largest online service.

WorldCom is a global telecommunications company with annual revenue of more than \$37 billion and operations in more than 65 countries.

Microsoft may face 3-way split

SAN FRANCISCO, May 25: Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson stunned courtroom observers yesterday by suggesting that it might not be enough to split Microsoft Corp. into two parts, and that a three-way division could be required in the landmark anti-trust case, reports Reuters.

But industry and legal sources said that such a move would be unlikely, since it would require the software giant to set up a stand-alone browser company whose prospects would be doubtful. In addition, the judge is not likely to override the government prosecutor's extensive work in proposing a remedy involving a two-way split.

Jackson ruled last March that Microsoft abused its monopoly power and he is now considering the government's breakup plan, along with other alternatives remedies. The judge can propose his own plan or follow the prosecutors' proposal.

"Perhaps what he was signalling that he is ready to accept a breakup," said Jonathan Baker, a law professor at American University and a former Federal Trade Commission chief economist.

During the hearing though, Jackson criticised the government proposal to separate Microsoft into an operating system company and application

software company, saying, "A bisection will in effect create two separate monopolies."

He cited as an "excellent brief" a 65-page friend-of-the-court filing submitted by the software and Information Industry Association in February calling for the browser business to be separated as well. That proposal led to Microsoft quitting as a longtime member of the trade group in protest.

But the industry group's proposal had been considered a more draconian solution, and the government said in the hearings that it had avoided that solution because such a plan might not work.

"It's completely nonsensical from a business and a technology perspective," agreed Harry Fenick, an industry analyst with Zora Research. "There is no business model for a browser as a standalone entity."

The browser, the essential piece of software for navigating on the Internet, is central to the Microsoft case, Microsoft launched its Internet Explorer browser and overtook the Netscape's navigator as the industry leader, allegedly by using its monopoly position.

But in the fierce competition, Netscape and Microsoft both have struggled to make their browser units profitable, since the software is mostly given away free or at very low cost.

Exchange Rates

American Express Bank Ltd foreign exchange rates (indicative) against the Taka to foreign currencies.					
Currency	Selling TT & OD	Selling BC	Buying TT Clean	Buying OD Sight Export Bill	Buying OD Transfer
US Dollar	51.2300	51.2700	50.8100	50.6570	50.5650
Pound Stg	75.8460	75.9652	74.6653	74.4405	74.3347
Deutsche Mark	24.0823	24.1011	23.0925	23.0230	22.9902
Swiss Franc	29.9014	29.9247	29.2971	29.2089	29.1674
Japanese Yen	0.4783	0.4787	0.4695	0.4681	0.4675
Dutch Guilder	21.3734	21.3901	20.4950	20.4333	20.4042
Danish Krona	6.2505	6.2554	6.1224	6.1039	6.0952
Australian \$	29.7493	29.7725	28.4538	28.3781	28.3377
Belgian Franc	1.1676	1.1685	1.1196	1.1172	1.1147
Canadian \$	34.2561	34.2628	33.2853	33.1851	33.1379
French Franc	7.1505	7.1561	6.8954	6.8655	6.8479
Hong Kong \$	6.5961	6.5992	6.5081	6.4965	6.4790
Italian Lira	0.0243	0.0243	0.0233	0.0233	0.0232
Norway Krone	5.6272	5.6316	5.5403	5.5236	5.5158
Singapore \$	29.8717	29.8960	28.9351	28.8479	28.8009
Saudi Rial	13.6964	13.7071	18.5108	18.4701	18.4510
UAE Dirham	13.9666	13.9975	13.7954	13.7539	13.7344
Swedish Krona	5.5812	5.5855	5.5132	5.4966	5.4888
Qatari Riyal	14.1149	14.1259	13.9167	13.8748	13.8551
Kuwaiti Dinar	171.8781	172.0123	159.6744	159.1936	158.9673
Thai Baht	1.3054	1.3064	1.2924	1.2885	1.2867
Euro	47.1009	47.1376	45.1650	45.0290	44.9650

TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
50.7112	50.3866	49.9632	49.5398	49.1163	48.6935

US Dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR)						
Buying (\$)	Selling (\$)	Current	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months
50.5850	51.2300	USD	6.61000	6.82000	7.04250	7.27750
74.334	75.8460	GBP	6.13125	6.25500	6.41828	6.56031

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollars					
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won
4.444449	51.995190	39.102919	3.789932005	8430.8460	1129.911299

Amex notes on Thursday's market
The USD/BDT market was very active on Thursday. USD/BDT rate touched as high as 51.2400. Demand for US dollar was extremely high against very low supply. Major players refrained from supplying USD into the market as they made large L/C payments. Average USD/BDT rate ranged between 51.22-51.2400. Call money market was active and call rates were a little up from yesterday's level. Average call rates ranged between 7.50 and 8.00 per cent.

The euro came under pressure against other major currencies on Thursday, as market awaited nervously the outcome of the first European Central Bank policy meeting after a recent US monetary tightening. Widespread sentiment that the ECB would not be able to match the Fed coupled with the Euro's inability to vault a chart barrier this week encouraged euro bears to push the euro below \$0.9020/10, a move which triggered some stop-loss orders. By 0715 GMT, the euro was hovering near session lows around \$0.90. It was still more than a cent away from recent record lows around \$0.8845. Euro/sterling, one of the biggest movers in recent days along with sterling/dollar, was testing support at 61 pence, down almost one penny from Wednesday's two-month peaks around 61.90. Only a surprise 50 basis point interest rate increase would lift the single currency significantly.

Meanwhile the dollar managed to hold onto this week's gains against the yen and was hovering near 107.50 after setting six-day highs just below 108 earlier in Asian trading. The dollar had jumped on Wednesday on a report in the New York Times that Japan's Economic Planning Agency had manipulated data on gross domestic product to make the country's economy look better. The EPA denied the story on Thursday, but market players in Tokyo said the market had already digested the report about the country's notoriously inaccurate economic indicators and was still sticking to the view that Japanese economy was on a recovery path.

Sterling/dollar quarter cent below day's highs around \$1.4800, on the back of euro/sterling move.

At around 0950 GMT the exchange rates of major currencies against USD were GBP/USD 1.4756/1.4766, USD/CHF 1.7278/1.7288, USD/JPY 107.73/107.78, EUR/USD 0.9029/0.9034.

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port						
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 25.5.2000						
Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Lady Hind	Wheat(P)	Gang	Angelic	5/5	2/5
J/2	Cover Trust	C Clink	Kant	MBL	22/5	31/5
J/3	Ocean-1	Rice(P)/G Yang	SMSL	13/5	29/5	
J/4	Handy Humanity	Wheat(P)	Darb	Total	28/1	7/6
J/5	Leona	G	Sing	Prog	22/5	29/5
J/6	ASEAN Liderty	G (Long)	Yang	HSL	24/5	30/5
J/7	Paulina	Sugar(G)	Sing	Fortune	16/5	1/6
J/8	Mn Jiafeng	G	Sing	Bdship	22/5	30/5
J/9	Axon Andriana	Wheat(P)	Turk	Total	15/4	1/6
J/10	Green Island	GIY(P)	Sing	Royal	7/5	7/6
J/11	Pan Jin Hai	C Clink	Sing	NWSL	22/5	30/5
J/12	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	PIL(BD)	24/5	28/5
J/13	Banglar Robi	Cont	Sing	BSC	23/5	27/5
CCT/1	Jurong Balsam	Cont	Sing	Nol	20/5	26/5
CCT/2	Arabella	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	21/5	26/5
CCT/3	QCE PINTAL	Cont	Sing	QCSL	23/5	26/5
RM/14	OCEAN PRIDE	Cement	Uzan	PSAL	12/5	2/6
RM/15	Norbulk Namir	Cement	Sing	PSAL	9/5	27/5
OCJ	Ocean Prayer	C Clink	Pada	PSAL	12/5	31/5
GSJ	Luna-1	Cement	Zaka	SBS	4/5	29/5
TSP	Elizabeth	R Phos	Hamre	Seacom	22/4	25/5
DOJ	Banglar Jyoti	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A	25/5
DDJ	Banglar Mooni	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	31/5
DDJ/1	Banglar Shikha	Repair	Sing	BSC	17/4	6/6
DDJ/2	Dea Champton	-	-	Arafreen	R/A	
RM/8	Chahavardz	CDSO	-	Seallit	R/A	27/5
RM/9	Banglar Urmil	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	27/5

Vessels due at outer anchorage						
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading	Port
Ban Ann	25/5	KRAB	BSL	C Clink (Ruby)	-	-
Delos-1	25/5	-	PSAL	Cement	-	-
Monte Chair	25/5	Sing	OTBL	In Bajlast	-	-
AA Venture	25/5	Yang	CLA	G	-	-
Tanko	25/5	Fuj	Ar1	Scraping	-	-
Sin Hal (Cont) 7/5	25/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
DaPa	25/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Banga Biro (Cont) 14/5	26/5	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing	Sing
Jaami 16/5	25/5	Sing	Cross	Cont	Sing	Sing
Kota Cahaya (Cont) 16/5	25/5	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont	Sing	Sing
Boxer Gap, Cook (Cont) 22/5	25/5	Sing	BD Ship	Cont	Sing	Sing
Tiger river(Cont) 26/4	26/5	Sing	Nol	Cont	Sing	Sing
OSG Argosy	26/5	-	Everest	Cont	Col	Col
Western Taam	26/5	-	Everett	-	-	-
Torn Pacific	26/5	-	OIL	Urea In Bulk	-	-
Mary Nour	28/5	Lank	BSC	Cement(scan)	-	-
Jahre Spirit	26/5	Visa	OTL	-	-	-
Xpress makalu (Cont) 14/5	27/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Banga Bjoy 18/5	28/5	-	Bdship	G	-	-
Selendang Kasa	28/5	UST	SSST	Wheat(G)	-	-
Luna Azul (48) 21/5	29/5	-	Everett	GI (St. Coll)	-	-
Arktis Crystal	28/5	Bitu	Litmond	GI(copro)	-	-
Qc Teal (Cont) 21/5	29/5	-	QCSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Fortuna Australia	29/5	Aust	SSST	Wheat(G)	-	-
Vladi	31/5	Pusan	Sinoben	-	-	-
Coral Hero (48) 22/5	30/5	-	Everett	1 (ST. Coll)	-	-
Asia Harmony (48) 22/5	31/5	-	Everett	GI (ST. Coll)	-	-
Kota Singa	31/5	Sing	PIL(BD)	Cont	Sing	Sing
Chu Hong	31/5	-	QCSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Rainbow Light	31/5	-	ASA	G	-	-
Xpres Resove 21/5	31/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Achiever 21/5	1/6	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	Sing
Yong Jiang	1/6	-	Bdship	G	-	-
Jaya Mars(Cont) 23/5	1/6	-	Everbest	Cont	Col	Col
Kota Naga (Cont) 23/5	3/6	Sing	PIL(BD)	Cont	Sing	Sing
Banga Bira	3/6	P Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing	Sing

Tanker due :					
Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port	Local agent	Date of arrival	
Rosa-T	25/5	-	Seallit	CDSO	
Stevanger Pride	25/5	Sign	Atlantic	HSD/MS	
Halla	28/5	Aljuba	ECSL	HSD	
Alam Kang Bong	27/5	-	-	CPO	

Vessels at Kutubdia					
Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port	Local agent	Date of arrival	
Energy Explorer-IV	-	-	BBAL	5/4	
Ismaya	-	-	BBAL	17/8	
Barge CSR-6	-	-	BBAL	R/A(28/11)	
Tug Margarita	-	-	BBAL	R/A(28/11)	
Dea Conqueror	P Mat	-	Arafreen	R/A(22/5)	
Julii Tide	-	-	IBS	20/5	
Seabulk Command	-	-	IBS	R/A(29/4)	
Romina-G	C Oil	Rast	ASTA	17/5	
Banglar Shourabh	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A(24/5)	
Equator	Scarp	UAE	OTBL	2/5	

The industry is facing competition from machine-made goods. In the past bamboo and cane-made articles like chair, table, bowl, pots, mora etc. had a good demand. But extensive use of furniture and other articles made from steel, aluminum, iron wood and plastic has eroded the demand for bamboo and cane-made articles.

Cultivation of cane plants has decreased in the district due to less demand of finished products in the local market. Dearth of capital has also aggravated the situation. Subash Chandra, an artisan of Khoksa, informed that they could not repay the loan they took from the money lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest.

The above are shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.					
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Health Services
Central Medical Stores Depot
30, Shaheed Tajuddin Sharoni
Tejgaon, Dhaka

Tender Notice

The Director, Stores & Supplies, Dte. General of Health Services, CMSD, Tejgaon, Dhaka invites a tender for Procurement of "Duo Derm Extra Thin Elastomeric Matrix Dressing" against MSR fund during the year 1999-2000. The particulars of tenders are as under:

Sl No	Tender No. & date	Brief description of stores	Value of tender schedule (non-refundable)	Date of dropping & opening of tender
01	HS/S-IX/Ela Matrix Dressing /10/99-2000 Dated 16.5.2000	Duo Derm Extra Thin Elastomeric Matrix Dressing (Seven hundred fifty)	Tk 750.00	Dropping by 11:00 AM on 19.6.2000 Opening on 19.06.2000 at 11:3