

# WTO a step for China to be regional economic power

Analysts say 'day still a long way off'

TOKYO, May 28: By boosting trade and investment with the rest of Asia, China's accession to the World Trade Organisation will mark another step towards its emergence as an economic force that may one day rival Japan in the region, says Reuters.

But analysts say that day is still a long way off. Although Beijing is increasingly keen to prove itself a good economic neighbour, they said it was too weak and poor to be able to play the part of a regional economic power broker — for now.

The Chinese agenda to some extent is to get back the role on Asia that has been theirs traditionally and which the Japanese have been temporarily occupying — temporarily for the last 100-odd years, said Jean-Pierre Lehmann, a professor of international political economy and executive director of the Swiss-Asian foundation based in Lausanne.

China might find it hard to knuckle down to the disciplines of the WTO, but joining the global trade watchdog — expected by the end of the year — will be a landmark in its integration into the world community, he said.

Within a quarter of a century Shanghai could be on a par with London and New York as a financial centre and will eventually dwarf Hong Kong and Tokyo, Lehmann said.

China is on its way to becoming a really extraordinary economic weight in the world,"

he added. Noboru Hatakeyama, chairman of the Japan External Trade Organisation, sees WTO membership very much through the prism of Beijing's need to spur its ailing industries to become more efficient by exposing them to foreign competition.

"This is very much enlightened foreign peer pressure to promote reform," he said.

Using a Japanese saying, Hatakeyama said China's leaders were more preoccupied with the flies buzzing around their head than with thoughts of regional power plays.

"China is too busy dealing with domestic matters to think about that kind of thing," Hatakeyama said.

Nevertheless, Stephen Leong of Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies said WTO-driven liberalisation of China's economy would enhance the process of East Asian cooperation that Beijing has been keen to espouse under the umbrella of "ASEAN+3".

The 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations plus China, Japan and South Korea held their first informal summit in Manila last year and just this month agreed to establish a collective currency-defence mechanism.

Beijing's decision not to devalue its currency in the wake of Asia's financial crisis — which earned it widespread re-

gional praise — should also be seen as contributing to the shared goal of "cooperative prosperity", Leong said.

"China is transforming and playing a bigger role in regional politics and security and the economic cooperation aspects of it. It would like to have a larger role," he said.

Jaebong Ro of the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy agreed. "China wants to play more of a role in the region and WTO participation will accelerate this policy," Ro said.

But Professor Wang Guangwu of the National University of Singapore's East Asian Institute said China was simply not in a position to parlay an improving image of a good neighbour ready to lend a helping hand into economic influence.

"Economically there's no question that Japan has got so much more to offer. Every country in Southeast Asia is dependent on Japan to some extent, whereas they don't depend on China," Wang said. "They don't have the economic strength to impress their neighbours much."

What was new, Wang said, was that China now realised that it had focused so much on the United States, Japan and Europe over the past two decades that it had neglected its own backyard.

For now, though, Beijing could not afford to project power, Wang argued. They've been takers rather than givers and, having taken

for so long, they have to learn how to give.

"This is a time to learn and prepare and one day, when they're better off, they will know how to play a useful and unthreatening good-neighbourly role and the region will appreciate it. It's a long-term project," Wang said.

## Chinese computer sales up 11 pc in first quarter

BEIJING, May 28: Desktop computer sales in China rose nearly 11 per cent in the first quarter year on year, while notebook sales were up 8.1 per cent, a state press reported today, says AFP.

"The new trend is Internet surfing and personal computers are a necessary bridge for most of us," said China Business Weekly quoting John Zhuang, market analyst with International Data Corporation.

Zhuang cited growth in Internet dotcom companies and the Chinese govt's support of the transformation to "e-forms" as factors fuelling this year's consumption.

First quarter sales of desktop computers totalled 418,061 units or 435 million dollars, while 93,414 notebook computers were sold during the same period.

Computer companies shipped 1.37 million units during the first quarter, with IDC predicting total computer sales for the year to reach 6.37 million, up from 4.93 million units in 1999.

China-based Legend Computer continued to dominate the market with 26.2 per cent of market share followed by Founder with 8.4 per cent and IBM with 5.7 per cent.

Latest figures show the number of Internet users multiplied four fold to around 8.9 million at end-December 1999, compared with 2.1 million in 1998.



Young Jo Jung, ROK Ambassador in Bangladesh, called on Abdul Awal Mintoo, President of FBCCI, at the Federation office yesterday. — FBCCI photo

## No crisis in sight for now 'Thai economy needs some fixing'

BANGKOK, May 28: Thailand's economic recovery is threatened by a range of problems which need fixing, but there is no looming crisis, the country's top brokerage National Securities (NFS) said today, reports Reuters.

The nascent economic recovery could be hurt by a lack of new investment, fragile domestic consumption and slow credit growth, its first vice president Chatchai Parasuk told news conference.

"Now our capacity utilisation rate is at 60 per cent. There is a lot of unused capacity. It's difficult for the Thai economy to record sustainable growth without new investment and credit extension," he added.

Investors' concern about another crisis hitting Thailand as it emerged from its worst-ever caused by the forced devaluation of the baht in mid-1997, heightened after sharp falls in the Thai stock market and the baht.

An exodus of foreign investors from the Thai stock market has brought the key stock market index down to a 15-month low and the baht to a seven-month low.

Chatchai said any potential crisis could be averted because the banking system was

flush with liquidity unlike when the first crisis hit.

The Thai banking sector now has excess liquidity of more than 700 billion baht and the central bank had the capacity to inject about 300 billion baht into the system if needed, he said.

Apart from a decline in private debt, he said the central bank's strict regulations on moving the baht out of the country also helped reduce risk of major capital outflows.

Private debt had now declined to \$35.4 billion from about \$70 billion during the crisis, he said.

"Short-term foreign debt at \$12.7 billion is small amount compared with the government's foreign reserves of over \$30 billion and that will help reduce that pressure," he said.

Chatchai said he expected interest rates to stay at current levels in the next six months and the baht should stay around the current 39 to the dollar level.

"The forecast is based on an assumption that there will be no irregular amount of debt repayment from private companies with capital outflow at about \$1.0 billion per month and a sustained trade surplus," he said.

## Exchange Rates

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	76.9677	77.0178	75.2750	75.0483	74.9417
Deutsche Mark	24.8078	24.8272	23.8121	23.7404	23.7067
Swiss Franc	30.6895	30.7135	30.0596	29.9632	29.9266
Japanese Yen	0.4828	0.4832	0.4696	0.4682	0.4675
Dutch Guilder	22.0174	22.0346	21.1337	21.0700	21.0401
Danish Krona	6.4423	6.4474	6.3078	6.2888	6.2799
Australian \$	29.9552	30.0196	28.8822	28.5959	28.5552
Belgian Franc	1.2028	1.2037	1.1545	1.1510	1.1494
Canadian \$	34.4264	34.4533	33.4474	33.3467	33.2993
French Franc	7.3968	7.4026	7.0999	7.0785	7.0730
Hong Kong \$	6.9676	6.9628	6.5081	6.4849	6.4793
Italian Lira	0.0251	0.0251	0.0241	0.0240	0.0239
Norway Krone	5.7533	5.7578	5.6616	5.6445	5.6365
Singapore \$	29.8979	29.9212	28.9506	28.8726	28.8316
Saudi Rial	13.6968	13.7075	13.5111	13.4705	13.4513
UAE Dirham	13.9666	13.9975	13.7958	13.7543	13.7347
Swedish Krona	5.6872	5.6916	5.6175	5.6006	5.5926
Qatari Riyal	14.1122	14.1232	13.9160	13.8741	13.8543
Kuwaiti Dinar	172.5497	172.6844	160.2334	159.7509	159.5238
Thai Baht	1.3087	1.3097	1.2653	1.2614	1.2606
Euro	48.5199	48.5578	46.5724	46.4322	46.3662

TT Doc	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
507112	50.3866	49.9632	49.5398	49.1163	48.2635

US dollar London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR)							
Buying (\$)	Selling (\$)	Curren	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	
50.5850	51.2300	USD	6.61500	6.82625	7.02520	7.28125	7.44750
74.9417	76.9677	GBP	6.08969	6.25750	6.41719	6.55125	6.67000
Cash/TC	Cash/TC	EUR	4.17688	4.39750	4.59688	4.78000	4.89938

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollars					
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won
4.20/44.38	51.895/51.90	39.16/39.21	3.7995/3.8005	8495/8545	1134/1138

Amex notes on Thursday's market

The USD/BDT market was moderately active on Sunday due to weekend in the international market. Major market players refrained from selling USD into the market. Average USD/BDT rate ranged between 51.23 and 51.2400. Call money market was active and average call rates ranged between 7.25 and 7.75 per cent.

The Euro spurned its critics with a furious rally against the dollar on Friday. The euro rocketed more than two cents in US trade as market players scrambled to cover exposed short positions, instantly touching a week of grudging gains into an emphatic 5-cent surge from all-time lows touched just one week ago. A chorus of supportive comments from European officials kicked off the dramatic climb, which swept the euro to a high of 93.42 cents, a gain of over 2 per cent on the day, and more than 5 per cent above its record floor near 88.40 cents. The single currency shattered key levels on its way to a close near 93.10 cents, realigning its technical stars in a more constructive constellation and convincing many chartists that last week's lows marked the bottom of a 17-month slide. The euro's broad-based charge brought it to four-month peaks against the British pound, a one-month high against the Swiss franc and scaling nearly 2 per cent higher against the yen.

The dollar drifted modestly lower against the yen, closing the day with a foothold just above 107 yen. Sterling strengthened against the dollar, buffeted by swings in euro dollar as the single currency breached a key technical level.

In New York on Friday, the majors closed against US\$ at 107.10/107.20 JPY, 1.6753/1.6803 CHF, Euro at \$0.9316/0.9321 and GBP at \$1.4915/1.4922.

## Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port					
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 28.5.2000					
Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival / Leaving
J/1	Lady Hind	Wheat(P)	Gang	Angelic	5/5 2/5
J/2	Cover Trust	C Clinck	Kant	MBL	22/5 2/6
J/3	Ocean-1	Rice(P)/Gi Yang	SMSL	13/5	30/5
J/4	Handy Humanity	Wheat(P)	Darb	Total	28/1 9/6
J/5	Leona	Gi	Sing	Prog	22/5 31/5
J/6	ASEAN Lidity	Gi (Log)	Yang	HSL	24/5 30/5
J/7	Paulina	Sugar(G)	Sing	Fortune	16/5 1/6
J/8	Min Jiang	Gi	Sing	Bdship	22/5 1/6
J/9	Axlon Andriane	Wheat(P)	Turki	Total	15/4 3/6
J/10	Green Island	Gi(P)	Sing	Royal	7/5 10/6
J/11	Pan Jin Hai	C Clinck	Sing	NVSL	22/5 1/6
J/12	Kota Beryaja	Cont	Sing	PII(BD)	24/5 29/5
J/13	Banglar Robi	Cont	Sing	BSC	26/5 30/5
OCT/1	Jaaml	Cont	Sing	CSS	25/5 30/5
OCT/2	Banga Birol	Cont	P. Kel	BdShip	26/5 30/5
OCT/3	Orient Independence	Cont	P. Kel	BdShip	24/5 30/5
RM/14	OCEAN PRIDE	Cement	Uzan	PSAL	12/5 3/6
RM/15	Norbuk Namir	Cement	Sing	PSAL	9/5 30/6
CGJ	Ban Ann	C Clinck	Krabi	BSL	25/5 31/6
GSJ	Alam Prayer	C Clinck	Pada	PBSL	12/5 1/6
TSP	Elizabeth	R Phos	Hamre	Seacom	22/4 30/5
RM/3	Alam Kembong	C Oil	P Guda	Seacom	27/5 30/5
RM/4	Rosa-T	CDSO	Loren	Sealfit	25/5 2/6
RM/6	Eminence	HSD	Aljuba	ECSL	23/5 30/6
DOJ	Banglar Jyoti	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A 25/5
DD	Banglar Mont	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 31/5
DDJ/1	Banglar Shikha	Repair	-	BSC	17/4 6/6
KAFCCU	Western Team	Urea	Pena	Everett	26/5 1/6

Vessels due at outer anchorage					
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Monte Chair	28/5	Sing	OTBL	In Baljast	-
Mary Nour	29/5	Lank	BSL	Cement(scan)	-
Banga Blyot 18/5	28/5	-	Bdship	Gi	-
Selendang Kasa	28/5	UST	SSST	Wheat(G)	-
Arktis Crystal	29/5	Bitu	Litmond	Gl(copra)	-
Top Glory	29/5	Bitu	Litmond	Gl(copra)	-
Tanko	29/5	FUJ	ARL	Scraping	-
Luna Azul (48) 21/5	30/5	-	Everett	Gi (St. Coll)	-
Actuarina (Cont) 25/5	30/5	Sing	QCCL	Cont	Sing
Qc Teal (Cont) 21/5	30/5	-	QCCL	Cont	Sing
Fortuna Australia	29/5	Aust	SSST	-	Wheat(G)
Coral Hero (48) 22/5	30/5	-	Everett	I (ST. Coll)	-
Asia Harmony (48) 22/5	30/5	-	Everett	GI (St. Coll)	-
Rainbow Light	31/5	-	ASA	Gi	-
Vlad	31/5	Pusan	Snoben	-	-
Kota Singa	31/5	Sing	PII(BD)	Cont	Sing
Chi Hong	31/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Xpress Resolve 21/5	31/5	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Achiever 21/5	1/6	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Yong Jiang	1/6	-	Bdship	Gi	-
Jaya Mars(Cont)23/5	1/6	-	Everbest	Cont	Col
Kota Naga (Cont)23/5	3/6	Sing	PII(BD)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bira	3/6	P. Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing
OSG Alpha (Cont) 24/5	3/6	-	RSL	Cont	Sing
Bay Fortune	6/6	BABB	SMSL	GI (Bitumen)	-
Kapitan Petro Voivoda	5/6	-	BBA	GI (St. Coll)	-
Banglar Doot	5/6	Pak	BSC	Rice	-
Eseo Virgo	7/6	-	Prog	GI (Copra)	-
Juha Parichart (Cont) 24/5	8/6	-	RSL	Cont	-

Tanker due :					
Halla	28/5	Aljuba	ECSL	HSD	-
Performance-9	28/5	-	Rainbow	CPO	-
Vanino	28/5	-	Rainbow	CPO	-

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

Vessels at outer anchorage					
Ready on:					
Lima-1	Cement	Zaka	SDS	4/5	
Undok-1	Cement	SES	SES	22/5	-
Sai Kung	Sugar (G)	Kosh	Fortune	22/5	-
Boxer Capt Cook (Cont)	Cont	P. Kel	BdShip	25/5	-
Sai Kung	Sungarig)	Kosh	Fortune	22/5	-
Kota Cahayat(Cont)	Cont	Sing	PII (BD)	25/5	-
DA FA (Cont)	Cont	Sing	RSL	25/5	-
OSG Argosy (Cont)	Cont	Col	Everbest	26/5	-
Tornii Pacific	Urea	Pena	Oil	26/5	-
Tiger River (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Nel	26/5	-
Xpress Mikalu (Cont)	Cont	Sing	RSL	27/5	-
Verjina	CDSO	Kaki	Seacom	27/5	-

Vessels not ready :					
Jing Hong Hai	Wheat(P)	Teit	OWSL	7/5	
The above are shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Group, Dhaka.					

## Chittagong Port Authority (Stores Division) Office of the Controller of Stores Tender Notice

Sealed tenders in duplicate are invited from bonafide manufacturers/importers/suppliers for supply of the undermentioned goods for Chittagong Port Authority:

Sl No	Tender No & date	Description of goods	Last date of selling tender	Last date of submitting tender	Price of tender document (non-refundable)
1.	3429 dt 3-5-2000	Tyres & tubes of various sizes	20-6-2000	21-6-2000	Tk 400/- (four hundred) only.

Tender form consisting detailed terms & conditions will be available from Controller of Stores/CPA, Chief Finance & Accounts Officer/CPA, Office of Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong & Liaison Office, House No. 49 C, Road No 4/A, Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka (Phone No 815492) during office hours on prescribed date on submission of Pay Order/Bank Draft for the said price in favour of Chittagong Port Authority.

Sealed tenders should be dropped in any of the tender boxes kept at the office of Controller of Stores, Chief Finance & Accounts Officer/CPA, Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong by 11:45 AM of 21-6-2000.

Tenders will be opened together after collecting the tenders received in boxes at the office of Chief Finance & Accounts Officer/CPA, Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong along with those in the box at Controller of Stores/CPA, at the