Malaysia likely to voice Asian concerns at Nov APEC summit

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30: Malaysia's outspoken prime minister said on Monday that he is likely to voice Asian concerns at a summit meeting of 21 Pacific Rim nations in Brunei next month, says AP.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said during a meeting with Brunei's ruler, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah on Sunday, he was asked by the host to play a "prominent role."

Brunei wants Malaysia to play a prominent role in the meeting to present the views of Asia," Mahathir was quoted as saying by the national news agency, Bernama. Mahathir on Monday ended a two-day visit to Brunei, Malaysia's neighbour on Borneo island.

Leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum are meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei's capital, mid-November. Among those expected to attend are President Clinton and China's President Jiang Zemin.

The meeting is likely to focus on globalisation and various aspects of free trade.

Although he has followed free market policies at home, Mahathir has emerged as a strong advocate against globalisation, saying it would hurt weaker Asian economies. He has argued that globalisation was a ploy by rich nations to gain control over smaller economies.

On Monday, he indicated that he would pursue that line in Brunei, where some of the world's biggest economies will be represented along with some of the smallest ones in Asia and the Pacific islands.

"Developed countries consider globalisation as something good but it may not be so for us," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

APEC, established in 1989, aims to achieve free trade and investment among its members by 2020.

The group's members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

Hyundai crisis may worsen

Bid to buy financial units uncertain

SEOUL, Oct 30: Fears grew Monday for a billion dollar deal for American International Group (AIG) to buy into troubled Hyundai financial units after it was revealed the head of the US insurance giant had postponed a trip to Seoul for talks, says AFP.

AIG chairman Maurice Greenberg had been expected in the South Korean capital on Monday.

Analysts consider the deal crucial to easing market fears of a new economic crisis in South Korea. Hyundai Group, South Korea's largest business conglomerate, is selling off units and other assets to raise money to pay its debts.

A Hyundai Securities Co. Ltd. official said the company had been informed by Greenberg he was postponing the trip and Lee Chang-Shik, president of Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities Co. Ltd., had rushed to the United States last week.

The cancelled visit raised fears that Hyundai group's lingering liquidity crisis would worsen. Most Hyundai shares fell with Hyundai Securities down 250 won at 6,300 on Monday.

AIG leads a consortium bidding to acquire Hyundai Securities, Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities and Hyundai Investment Management Co. Ltd. for one billion dollars.

But Hyundai tried to play down concerns over Greenberg's delayed trip.

"Lee's US trip was aimed at reviewing the main contract with AIG," said Lee Jae-Sun, a Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities spokesman.

"Working-level negotiations between the AIG-led consortium and Hyundai financial affiliates have already been finished."

But reports in Seoul said recent developments in talks between AIG and the Hyundai financial units raised uncertainity about the deal.

AIG has recently come out with tough demands, including a government guarantee for its investment, South Korea's Yonhap national news agency said.

AIG wants the one billion dollar investment placed under the protection of state-run Seoul Guarantee Insurance Co., a call beyond the Hyundai units' capacity, before sealing a final deal, it added.

The government has not commented publicly on the reported demands.

"The AIG investment in the Hyundai units would strongly boost foreign investors' confidence, which has recently waned in the local financial market," said Park Jun-Song, a senior LG Securties analyst.

Under a memorandum of understanding signed in August, the AIG-led consortium would take control of the three Hyundai firms for a total investment of 1.1 trillion won (one billion dollars).

The money would break down into 500 billion won for Hyundai Securities, 300 billion won for Hyundai Investment Trust Management and another 300 billion won for Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities.

The investment in Hyundai Securities will be made in the form of the purchase of convertible bonds on the nation's leading stock brokerage, which can be traded for equity shares a year afterwards.

The consortium would have the largest share of 23.7 percent in Hyundai Securities, compared with the Hyundai group's 20.2 percent.

The remaining investment would give the consortium a 50 percent controlling stake in Hyundai Investment Trust Management and an unspecified, but controlling share in Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities.

Hyundai Investment Trust and Securities, whose debt is 1.2 trillion won (1.1 billion dollars) larger than its asset base, has been at the centre of the Hyundai group's mounting liquidity problems.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury MP, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, is seen with the participants at the concluding ceremony of a workshop on Risk Asset Management organised by Standard Chartered-Bangladesh. — StanChart Grindlays photo

Jakarta mulls bailout for debt-ridden state power

JAKARTA, Oct 30: The Indonesian government is mulling a bailout plan for the state electricity company PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) which owes 1.34 million dollars to private sector, a report said today, reports AFP.

"PLN is a state company, so if the company is sick, the government is sick too energy and Mineral Resources Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro said, quoted by the Jakarta Post.

Finance Minister Priyadi and PLN were discussing the company's request for government assistance in paying its 12 trillion rupiah (1.34 million dollar) debt to independent power producers, he said.

PLN buys some of its power from independent power producers at an average price of six cents (about 540 rupiah) per kilowatt hour (kwh) but can only sell the power at the average of 240 rupiah per kwh.

Over the years, PLN has failed to pay for its purchases and officials have attributed most of the company's losses in the first half of this year to the cost of buying private electricity.

The price of private electricity quadrupled during the first half of the year due to the fluctuation of the rupiah.

PLN posted a 30 per cent raise in the net revenue for the first half of 2000 at 10.11 trillion rupiah but the company's losses also grew twelve fold to 11.58 trillion rupiah in the some period.

Yusgiantoro said he believed the government would likely pay PLN's debt considering its importance in safeguarding the national power supply. PLN also needed large investment-6 % build new infrastructure to meet growing demand, the added.

PLN estimates that without new investment the densely-populated island of Java might experience power shortages in 2003 if demand continues to grow at 12 per cent annually.

Yusgiantoro added the energy and mineral resources ministry was drawing up a plan with PLN to prevent such a power crisis.

StanChart holds workshop on risk management

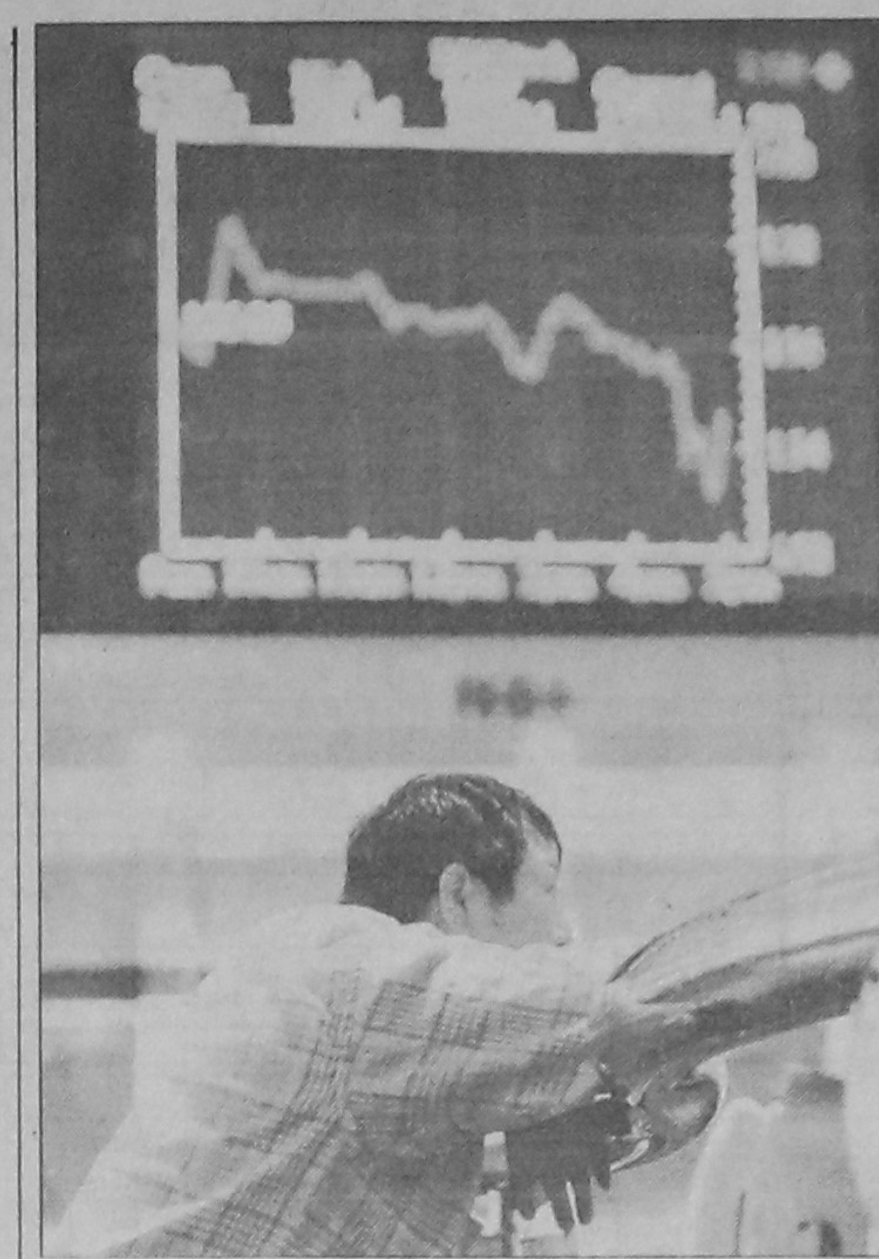
The certificate distribution ceremony of a workshop on "Risk Asset Management" arranged by Standard Chartered Bank - Bangladesh was held on Dhaka Club premises Saturday, says a press release.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, was present as the chief guest. The participants of the workshop as well as other officials of the bank were also present on the occasion.

After Standard Chartered's acquisition of ANZ Grindlays Bank in August 2000, both banks have joined forces to become the premier banking group in the Middle East and South Asia. The workshop, participated by officials from both Standard Chartered and Standard Chartered Grindlays, is yet another step reflecting the initiative of both the banks towards a successful integration.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, also a former head of corporate and International Banking of Standard Chartered, in his speech emphasised the need for development of banking sector towards the economic emancipation of the country.

He urged the foreign banks to take at least medium term exposure, if not long term, for helping the corporate quarters with a view to improving the investment scenario of the country.



A man rests his head on a beam while a graph (background) shows falling share prices at a trading floor in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Malaysian share prices tumbled 2.1 per cent, down 16.77 points to close at 774.31, as investors sold on dissapointment that the 2001 budget lacked sufficient incentives. – AFP photo

Microsoft says it knew of hacker all along

SEATTLE, Oct 30: Microsoft Corp said that a hacker had high-level access to its computer system for 12 days - not up to five weeks, as the company had first reported - and that the company monitored the illegal activity the entire time, says AP.

While the company says no major corporate secrets were stolen, at least one security expert said 12 days would be plenty of time for a hacker to do damage that may not have been detected yet.

Microsoft spokesman Rick Miller said Sunday that beginning Oct 14 a hacker gained access to high-level secrets and was able to view blueprints, or source code, for Microsoft software being developed.

Originally, the Seattle-based software giant said an electronic intruder had access to source code for as long as five weeks. On Friday, when the company first confirmed it, the duration was unclear, Miller said.

The company was alerted to the break-in by the creation of new accounts that give users access to parts of Microsoft's computer network.

"We start seeing these new accounts being created, but that could be an anomaly of the system," Miller said. "After a day or two, we realised it was someone hacking into the system."

On Thursday, the company notified federal law enforcement, which is investigating. Miller said the company is confident the high-level access occurred only between Oct 14 and Oct 25.

"We realised the intrusion had grown to the level that warranted bringing in the FBI," Miller said. Miller said the activity did not corrupt or modify the code for the product, however the hacker could have accessed corporate e-mails and other confidential information.

If any attempts to download or transfer the source code were made, such activity was not recorded in Microsoft's logs, Miller said. He said it was unlikely source code files were copied because of their immense size.

But at least one security expert questioned Miller's assessment.

"It's impossible to say with absolute certainty that (source code) file has not been copied," according to Simon Perry, vice president of security solutions at Computer Associates International in Islandia, New York. "Over a 12 day period it would be absolutely possible to take a copy of that."

Microsoft has refused to identify what program the source code was for, except to say it was a product years from release - not Windows or Office software.

Microsoft's source codes are the most coveted in the multibillion-dollar industry. With access to the software blueprints, competitors could write programmes that undermine Microsoft -- or use the data to identify vulnerabilities, making computer break-ins and virus-writing easier.

For instance, the 'Love Bug' virus that crippled computers around the globe in May exploited a security glitch in Microsoft's market-leading e-mail programmes.

The hackers in this particular case used what is called a "Trojan horse," a programme commonly sent as an e-mail attachment that looks normal but once inadvertently activated by the user can wreak havoc on a computer system.

Roaring Shanghai bourse leaves Shenzhen in dust

SHANGHAI, Oct 30: China's hard currency shares listed in Shanghai have soared at more than twice the rate of their counterparts on Shenzhen this year and analysts said they expected the eastern city to keep its lead position, says Reuters.

China's proposed merger of the two exchanges to be centred in Shanghai was also a factor in the financial city's popularity, drawing punters and foreign brokerages away from the southern boomtown of Shenzhen, analysts said.

"With more liquidity in the market, I think going forward Shanghai is likely to be the leader in determining market direction," said ABN AMRO analyst George Tsang, who is based in Shenzhen.

In addition, Shanghai's hard currency shares are traded in dollars while those in Shenzhen are denominated in Hong Kong dollars, making Shanghai more attractive for foreign players, and the Chinese investors who now dominate the hard currency markets.

There is little difference in asset quality between the two centres, though Shenzhen shares, with a price/earnings (PE) ratio of 11, were looking increasingly attractive the more they fall behind the sizzling pace of Shanghai, where the PE ratio is 18.

Shenzhen's B share index has risen 35 per cent to 114.18 points so far this year. But Shanghai has been running twice as fast, soaring 81 p... cent to 68.683 points based Friday's close.

The buying was sparked ... reform proposals which h... speculation the hard cu... B shares and domestic A ... would be merged. B shares looked cheap compared to A shares and investors bet that the prices would converge ahead of any merger.

Currently, foreigners can not trade the A shares.

Despite both Shanghai and Shenzhen suffering a correction of more than 20 per cent since August, they have been Asia's best performing markets this year.

Analysts said they expect the markets to remain firm for the rest of the year, pending any more news on market reforms.

The bias of investors, already clear from the performance of the respective indices, was shown again in trading last week.

On Wednesday punters flocked to Shanghai shares after a top regulator detailed market reform plans. They only turned to Shenzhen in earnest when Shanghai hit its 10-per cent upward limit in early afternoon.

When investors cashed in some profits on Thursday, Shenzhen took a bigger hit.

The fact that Shanghai B shares are traded in US dollars was a definite benefit, Shanghai-based analysts Norman Yu, of Sun Hung Kai Investment Services, said.

"The B share market is dominated by domestic investors and they hold more US dollars than Hong Kong dollars. If ... to convert their US ... Hong Kong dollars ... en stocks, they ... per cent loss."

... technically re... investors, are ... Chinese in... ry loopholes.

Exchange Rates

Following are yesterday's **Standard Chartered Bank** rates of major currencies against Taka:

Central Bank buying and selling rate of USD: BDT 53.85/BDT 54.15

Selling TT/OD	Selling BC	Currency	Buying TT Clean	Buying OD Sight Doc	Buying OD Transfer
54.2500	54.2800	USD	53.8150	53.6464	53.5779
46.1448	46.2317	EUR	44.3771	44.1937	44.1171
79.4403	79.4823	GBP	77.6197	77.3532	77.2986
29.4905	29.5150	AUD	26.4950	26.4026	26.3224
0.5058	0.5059	JPY	0.4876	0.4874	0.4864
30.2084	30.2329	CHF	29.5476	29.4531	29.3686
5.3903	5.3955	SEK	5.3010	5.2834	5.2674
35.7512	35.7757	CAD	34.9087	34.8151	34.7319
6.9909	6.9922	HKD	6.8674	6.8497	6.8323
31.3714	31.3927	SGD	30.2372	30.1934	30.0788
14.8919	14.9095	AED	14.5023	14.5242	14.4838
14.5787	14.5971	SAR	14.2399	14.2032	14.1850

Usance export bills

TTDOC	30 Days	60Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
53.7041	53.3727	52.9304	52.4217	51.8688	50.6303

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollar

	Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Lankan Rupee	Indo Rupiah	Thai Baht
BUY	46.68	56.90	79.40	9205	43.79
SELL	46.82	57.30	79.48	9235	43.84

The local foreign exchange market was calm. Demand for dollar was steady and dollar/Taka trading was rangebound. In the money market, demand for call money was steady and call rate fluctuated in a narrow range and traded between 6.0 to 6.50 per cent.

In the international markets, euro managed to extend last week's recovery from a record low and is holding above $0.84 level. Although euro is holding at this level, it failed to advance further as sentiment stayed bearish about the single currency. Lingering worries over euro supportive intervention also helped the currency. It was also well supported against yen.

Meanwhile, the market-players are getting ready for an eventful week, with euro-zone purchasing management surveys and a meeting of the European Central Bank scheduled for Thursday. The United States will also release its Purchasing Management Report on Wednesday and payroll data on Friday.

The US GDP report showed third quarter growth slowed more than expected to an annualised 2.7 per cent from 5.6 per cent in the second quarter. In this mood, the dollar/yen sat in tight ranges, sandwiched between heavy bids by a Japanese oil company below 108.50 yen and hedge-related sales rumoured between 109 and 109.30 yen, the market-players commented.

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 30.10.2000.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Hanjin Houston	GI/WT(P)	Sing	Mutual	11/10	4/11
J/2	Anlong Jiang(Liner)	Gi	S.Hai	Bdship	25/10	4/11
J/3	Pathein	Rice(P)	Yang	MTA	14/10	1/10
J/4	Triumph Chittagong	GI(Log)	Yang	RML	24/10	31/10
J/5	Chong Chon Gang	Sugar(TCB)	Tuti	CCNL	25/10	5/11
J/7	Banglar Kallol	GI	Momb	BSC	17/10	30/10
J/8	Pride	Salt(TCB)	Kand	UML	22/9	6/11
J/9	Yasmina	GI	Okha	SMSL	18/10	-
J/10	Century	GI(WT.CE)	Bank	Rainbow	20/10	31/10
J/11	Kota Naga	Cont	Sing	Pil(BD)	25/10	30/10
J/12	Arabella	Cont	P.Kel	QCSL	26/10	30/10
J/13	Jurong Balsam	continue	Sing	Nol	27/10	1/11
CCT/1	Jaya Mars	Cont	Col	Everest	26/10	30/10
CCT/2	Bnaga Bijoy	Cont	P.Kel	Bdship	27/10	31/10
CCT/3	Banglar Shikha	continue	Sing	BSC	28/10	1/11
CCJ	Ocean Pride	C.Clink(Ruby)	Krab	PSAL	24/10	2/10
GSJ	Sungrisan-9	GTSP(P)	Sing	Delmure	24/10	7/11
TSP	Hans	Salt (TCB)	P.Kel	SBS	26/9	31/10
RM/3	OM Sunshine	Cpo	Mala	MICL	28/10	30/10
RM/6	Eltanin	C.Clink	Sing	PSAL	3/10	4/11
Doj	Belgrae	Hsd/Ms	Sing	MSTPL	26/10	-
DDJ/1	Banglar Gourab	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	2/10
DDJ/2	Seabulk Command	-	K.Dia	IBS	R/A	-
RM/8	Banglar Urmi	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	30/10
CUFLJ	Mary Nour	Cement(Scan)	Lang	BSL	21/10	2/11

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L.Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Kota Brjaya(Cont)18/10	30/10	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	Sing
Ava	30/10	Vang	MTA	Rice(P)+GI(y.Ma)	-
Tug E.t.Ocean-ii	30/10	Duma	OTBL	-	-
Permina-56	30/10	Duma	OTBL	Scraping	-
Ks Prince	30/10	-	SBS	C.Clink	-
Jineshwar	1/11	-	SBS	Sugar(G)	-
Xpress Padma(cont)16/10	31/10	Sing	RSL	Continue	Sing
Acturia (cont) 19/10	31/10	-	QCSL	Continue	Sing
Enos	31/10	Basu	SMSL	Urea(Bag)	-
Shantar	1/11	Yang	OTL	-	-
Banga Bonik (cont) 22/10	31/10	P.Kel	Bdship	Continue	Sing
Mapleridge (72) 25/10	3110	Sing	ASA	GI(St.Coil)	-
Osg Alpha (cont) 31/10	31/10	Sing	RSL	Continue	Sing
Dea Captain	31/10	Sing	Arafeen	Proj Mat	-
Da Hua (24) 18/10	1/11	-	RSL	Continue	Sing
Qc Teal (cont) 23/10	1/11	Sing	QCSL	Continue	Sing
Leemthong Glory	1/11	Sant	CCNL	Sugar(G)	-
Beluga Obsession	1/11	Egyp	Ipt.	H.R St Steel In coil	-
Exceed-2 (72) 24/10	1/11	Sing	Everett	GI(St.Coil)	-
Kota Singa (cont) 23/10	2/11	Sing	PIL(BD)	Continue	Sing
Jaami (cont) 23/10	2/11	-	Cross	Continue	Sing
Xpress Makalu (cont) 7/10	3/11	Pbo	Everbest	Continue	Col
Al Muztuba	2/11	Okha	Cla	GI	-
Prince Of Lorin	2/11	Bang	CCNL	Sugar(TCB)	-
Keishun (roro/24) 24/10	2/11	-	Everett	Vehi	-
Joy Miracle (72) 17/09	3/11	Jaka	SSLL	GI(St.Coil)	-
Chu hong (cont) 25/10	3/11	Sing	QCSL	Continue	Sing
Khulla	3/11	Mari	BSL	M.Seed	-
Osg Argosy	3/11	Col	Everbest	Continue	Col
Xpress Resolve (cont) 23/10	4/11	-	RSL	Continue	Sing
Banglar Robi (cont) 25/10	4/11	Sing	BCS	Continue	Sing
Banga lanka (cont) 25/10	4/11	Cbo	Baridhi	Continue	Col
Asian Century (Roro/24) 24/10	4/11	Sing	JF	Vehi	-
Erodios	4/11	Sing	CCNL	Sugar(TCB)	-
Xpress Renown (cont) 16/10	6/11	-	RSL	Continue	Sing
Tiger River (cont) 25/10	5/11	-	Nol	Continue	Sing
Qc Pintail (cont) 26/10	7/11	-	QCSL	Continue	Sing
Kota Cahaya (cont) 29/10	7/11	Sing	Pil(BD)	Continue	Sing

Tanker due

Pranedya Dwitya	31/10	Sing	CTPL	F.Oil	-
Mina	3/11	Jedd	USS	Phos Acid (TSP)	-

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Vessels at Kutubdia				
Energy Explorer-IV	-	-	BBAL	5/4
Ismaya	-	-	BBAL	17/8
Dea Champion	-	Sing	Arafeen	R/A(24/9)
Dea Conqueror	-	-	Arafeen	R/A(18/10)
Smit lloyd-110	P.Mat	-	Arafeen	R/A(18/10)
Vessels at outer anchorage				
Ready on:				
Xuang Cheng Liner	Gi	S.Hai	Bdship	26/10
Yong Jiang Liner	Gi	Dali	Bdship	26/10
Orient Independence (cont)	continue	P.Kel	Sing	28/10
Spring Ocean	GI(St.C)	Sing	Everett	29/10
Mergui	Rice(P)	Yang	MTA	23/10
Golden-D	C.Clink	Pipa	NWSL	28/10
Sheng Yang Liner	GI	Sing	RML	30/10
Grand Slam Liner	GI	Sing	Prog	30/10
Vessels not ready				
Handy River	Wheat(P)	Aust	Mutual	24/10
Mathilde Oldendorff	Gi(Y.Pe) -	Bank	Seaglory	24/10
Vessels awaiting instruction				
Banglar Jyoti	-	-	BSC	R/A(19/10)
Banglar Shourabh	-	-	BSC	R/A(21/10)
Vessels not entering				
Marine Expres	Wt(P)/MS	-	Rinbow	R/A(27/10)
Makmur Perkasa	C.Clink	Indo	Uniship	27/10
Radnor	GTSP(P)	Sfax	SSST	13/10
Ibn Qutaibah	GSP(P)	Tampa	Litmond	18/10
Al Baruaq	C.Clink	-	Seacom	R/A(9/10)
Alpha-2	-	-	Rainbow	R/A(19/10)
Alex	Scraping	Inixo	Ahz	17/10
Swang Bay	Scraping	Sing	Otbl	17/10
Martina Prima	Scraping	Sing	Otbl	27/10
Fabrizia Prima	Scraping	Sing	Otbl	27/10
Tug Salavigour	-	Maur	Ahz	27/10
Tiba	Scraping	Maur	Ahz	27/10
Accord	Cement	-	Viking	5/4
Revenge		-	Sunshine	R/A(9/10)
Xing Ye	Rice(G)	-	MBCSL	R/A(20/6)
Karya Sentosa	Rice(G)	-	USTC	R/A(18/9)

Movement of vessels for 31.10.2000

Outgoing		Incoming		Shifting
J/4	T. Chittagon	J/12	K.Berjya	
J/10	Century	CCT/2	Acturia	
CCT/2	Hans	J/10	Osg Alpha	
RM/3	Om Sunshine	J/4	Spring Ocean	

The above are shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by **HRC Group**, Dhaka.