

Japan takes US steel tariffs to WTO  
AFP, Geneva

Japan has lodged an initial complaint with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against US measures to impose tariffs on imported steel, the trade body said on Friday.

Japan has requested consultations with the United States with a view to claiming compensation under the first step of a procedure laid down in the WTO's agreement on safeguards.

If the talks fail Japan could be allowed to withdraw concessions granted to the US under certain conditions.

However, no request has been filed yet by Japan for the WTO to launch a procedure over the US steel tariffs in its dispute settlement body, an official said.

This could involve a panel of experts examining whether the US measures conform to WTO rules.

On Thursday, the European Union launched a double counter-attack seeking consultations under the safeguard agreement and a case to be started in the dispute settlement body.

**Bush unveils plan to boost corporate disclosure**

AFP, Washington

US President George W. Bush unveiled a plan Thursday aimed at improving corporate disclosure of key financial data in an effort to boost investor confidence following the Enron collapse.

The 10-point plan released by Bush came from an interagency working group on financial markets created in the wake of the Enron meltdown.

"The whole design of free market capitalism depends upon free people acting responsibly," Bush told a business group here.

"Business people must answer not just to the demands of the market or self-interest but to the demands of conscience," he said.

Among its recommendations, the plan calls for corporate officers to disclose their purchases and sales of company stock within two days.

# White House sees no trade war over steel tariffs

AFP, Washington

The White House denied Thursday that President George W. Bush's controversial decision to slap tariffs on steel imports will spark a trade war or sap key allies' support for the US-led war on terror.

Asked whether an international outcry over the decision, which was announced Tuesday, would lead to either outcome, Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters: "the answer is no, on both."

Bush "believes that this was a situation that is permissible under the World Trade Organization rules, and the World Trade Organization rules are set up to help nations deal with what is inevitable: frictions and differences as we engage in free

trade," the spokesman added.

The European Union has already officially launched a counter-attack after Bush announced eight-30 per cent tariffs on a wide range of steel imports, lodging a formal complaint with the WTO, a WTO official said in Geneva.

Asked whether the president sought input from outside the United States before he made his decision, Fleischer would only say: "I think it's fair to say he heard from foreign leaders, yes."

The US leader's decision was taken under Section 201 of the 1974 trade law, which lets the president impose punitive tariffs on imports found to have caused injury to the domestic industry. No proof of unfair trade is required.

The European Union launched a counter-attack on US steel tariffs on Thursday, officially

lodging a complaint with the World Trade Organisation, a WTO official said in Geneva.

Japan has said it wants to join the EU action, and other nations hit by the measures -- such as China, South Korea, Ukraine, Brazil, India and Australia -- could opt to do so as well.

"Other nations, including Europe, have the right to challenge that under the WTO rules," said Fleischer. "So that's a matter that will get taken up, likely, by the World Trade Organization."

Fleischer also downplayed the apparent conflict between Bush's decision and his much-advertised support for free trade, saying the president "believes the best way to have additional free trade is by enforcing the laws we have on the books."

## EU urges WTO to condemn US for steel tariffs

AFP, London

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy called Friday on the World Trade Organisation to condemn the United States for imposing tariffs on steel imports, warning of retaliatory action if it failed to comply.

If Washington failed to obey a ruling the European Union hopes the WTO will impose in the row, "we would be entitled to sanctions," he said, stressing the point repeatedly.

told BBC radio.

"All we want is the World Trade Organisation to state clearly that this US steel protection is not compliant with international disciplines, and we want them to be condemned," he said.

"They will have to remove this steel protection, and if they do not remove it, then Europe will be entitled to trade sanctions," Lamy said, stressing the point repeatedly.

## Russia, EU agree to steel trade accord outlines

AFP, Moscow

Russia and the European Union have agreed to the outlines of an accord that would regulate steel imports to the European market over the next three years, Russia's deputy minister of economic development said.

The accord will aim to boost quotas for Russian steel imports by 28 per cent as compared to last year's quotas, and increase the quotas further by 2.5 per cent every year, Maxim Medvedkov said.

Also, if Russia dropped export duties on ferrous scrap, the quotas would be increased by another 12 per cent, the deputy minister added.

If Russia joins the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the accord, which is due to be signed no earlier than April and would take effect towards midyear, would become null and void, Medvedkov said.

Until the accord comes into force, "it will be used on the temporary basis in the first half of the year," Medvedkov said.

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Both Russia and the European Union were outraged by Washington's decision to introduce tariffs of up to 30 per cent on steel imports for three years to protect the US industry, excluding countries that have signed free trade agreements with the United States: Canada, Israel, Jordan and Mexico.

in the interview.

He condemned the decision announced earlier this week as "pure politics" on the part of US President George W. Bush, saying it "is not a sign of strength, it is a sign of weakness."

Bush's move Tuesday to impose tariffs of up to 30 per cent on most imported steel is a bid to shield the ailing US steel industry from foreign competition.

The EU has officially lodged a complaint with the WTO seeking the start of consultations with Washington on a settlement to the dispute.

It has also filed a second complaint demanding talks on compensation which the 15-nation European bloc would seek from the United States to cover for the cost of the tariffs.

But checks and balances written into rules laid down by the trade body mean it will be a long time before any ruling comes.

Lamy said the EU's duty in the interim was to "protect the European market" and "make sure we are not victims."

"This we can do in the short term without waiting for the WTO decision." He did not specify how that would be done.

## Greenspan disagrees with US steel tariffs

AFP, Washington

US Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said Thursday he disagreed with President George W. Bush's decision to slap tariffs on steel imports.

"I understand the difficulties any president has in trying to come to grips with our trade laws and conditions such as exist in our steel industry," he told a Senate panel.

"I happen not to agree with the particular judgment. But I recognize that it is a very, very tough judgment that the president had to make," Greenspan said.

The powerful head of the US Federal Reserve said the United States had benefited "more than anybody" from the fruits of the international free trading system.

Bush announced Tuesday tariffs ranging from eight to 30 per cent on a wide range of steel imports.

The decision was taken under Section 201 of the 1974 trade law, which lets the president impose punitive tariffs on imports found to have caused injury to the domestic industry.

No proof of unfair trade is required.

뉴 그랜저 XG  
보도발표회



PHOTO: AFP  
Two South Korean models introduce the latest Hyundai Grandeur XG in Seoul Thursday during its official launch. The latest luxury model from Korean car manufacturer Hyundai will feature three V-6 engine versions, 2-litre, 2.5-litre and 3-litre for a price range starting at US\$ 14,800 to US\$ 24,615 on the Korean market.

## Malaysia accuses US of hypocrisy, double standards

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Trade Minister Rafidah Aziz on Friday accused the United States of hypocrisy and double standards over its controversial move to increase steel tariffs.

The major world power preached free trade on the one hand but had now instituted "the worst" kind of tariff protection, she told reporters.

"Every country now is in a difficult position because of the surplus and the glut and the prices going down, so they are now instituting all kinds of tariff protection but the US is the worst of all," Rafidah said.

"That's quite normal, what they say is not exactly what they do. Most major players of the world do not practise what they preach and that is why Malaysia always adopts its own pragmatic position."

Rafidah said Malaysia also had "very small interim protection measures" for its steel industry but this was in line with its approach to gradually liberalising the market.

"We don't want to subscribe to free trade and do something else..."

## PC shipments fall 5.4pc in Japan

AFP, Singapore

Shipments of personal computers (PCs) in Japan declined 5.4 per cent to 13.36 million units in 2001 from a year earlier, pulled down by a 14.5 per cent drop in domestic demand, an industry monitor said Friday.

"Consumer demand was the driving force for the high growth Japanese PC market in 1999 and 2000," said Kumi Shingyouchi, a senior market analyst for PC research at International Data Corp. (IDC) in Japan.

The effect of the severe recession in the world's second-largest economy was reflected in the falling demand for computers.

Home demand plunged 14.5 per cent and commercial shipments declined every quarter during 2001, Shingyouchi said.

Shipments of desktop computers dropped 16.5 per cent to 6.28 million units while portable computers rose 6.7 per cent to 6.70 million with the introduction of small and lightweight products, with features for wireless technology.

## STOCK