

## Asian exporters, shippers welcome ports reopening

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian exporters and shippers on Wednesday hailed a US court order to reopen west coast ports and set about planning to clear a massive backlog of US-bound shipments.

One billion dollars worth of Asian exports pass through the US west coast ports daily and economists had warned if the shutdown dragged on for a month or more, Asia would probably have slumped back into recession.

Acting on a request by US President George W. Bush, a federal judge on Tuesday ordered the immediate reopening of the 29 ports, which employers had closed in a dispute with dockworkers.

The ruling came just hours after Bush became the first US leader in 25 years to invoke his authority to intervene in a labour dispute.

Union officials said dock workers would be back at work by Wednesday evening.

Japanese carmakers breathed a sigh of relief, with the 10-day shutdown having already disrupted their US production and exports of vehicles to the United States.

## Fiat shareholder dismisses quick sale of Fiat Auto to GM

AFP, Milan

Fiat shareholder Umberto Agnelli poured cold water Wednesday on the prospect that the struggling Italian industrial group could restore its financial health by quickly selling off its carmaking unit Fiat Auto to US giant General Motors.

Umberto Agnelli, chairman of IFIL and deputy chairman of IFI, the two holding companies which control Fiat, said he believed it would be "difficult" for Fiat to bring forward the exercise of an option to sell its car business to GM, which already owns 20 per cent of the unit.

Fiat has a so-called put option to sell its 80-per cent stake in Fiat Auto unit to GM in 2004.

## Judge orders reopening of paralysed US ports

AFP, San Francisco

A US federal judge on Tuesday ordered the reopening of paralysed west coast ports, granting an injunction requested by President George W. Bush to end a crippling trade deadlock.

Judge William Alsup, sitting in San Francisco, granted the government a temporary injunction that ordered the reopening of 29 shuttered US Pacific ports and requiring workers to report for duty immediately.

Granting the order that will end a standoff costing the US economy up to two billion dollars a day, the judge said the US west coast "is full of loaded ships and the docks are full of rotting perishables."

Union officials at the hearing said a first shift of workers could be on

duty as early as Tuesday night.

The judge said he would hold a hearing over the granting of a full injunction in one week's time.

Alsup fully accepted the government stance that the shutdown had to be ended in the short term as it endangered the vital economic interests of the United States' economy.

Bush earlier Tuesday ordered the filing of an injunction forcing at least a temporary end to the 10-day-old ports deadlock under the rarely used Taft-Hartley Act that suspends the lockout for 80 days.

The judge refused to accept arguments by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, whose workers have been locked out of dockyards amid a dispute with shipping line bosses, challenging the government intervention.

The union alleged that the first use of the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act in 25 years to end a labour stoppage was the result of "manipulation" of the court by shipping line bosses and the government.

Alsup however said he had made his decision based on the narrowly defined basis that the stoppage was endangering the health of the United States.

"We understand that the government will go to court today (Tuesday) to seek an injunction under the Taft-Hartley Act," said a source at the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents shippers.

The hearing in San Francisco, which has been the center of the five-month-old labour row between the union and the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents shippers.

## Stock slump, US woes may cast shadow over Japan recovery

AFP, Tokyo

Japan on Wednesday left its key economic assessment unchanged in October, but warned a slump in Tokyo stocks and concerns over the US economy cast a shadow over the fragile recovery.

In its monthly report of the economy, the government maintained its assessment for the third consecutive month, saying signs of a "moderate" recovery were observed in some areas.

But the pace of recovery was slowing and the future of the economy remained uncertain, the government said in the report, largely regarded as a verdict on current conditions of the nation's economy.

"Though we maintained the overall economic assessment, the result was mixed in a tug-of-war between upgrades and downgrades in different areas of the economy," a government official said.

"The economic environment has become more severe than in the previous month thanks to the continued weakness in the domestic stockmarket and concerns over the US economy, which weighs heavily

on the recovery in final demand in Japan," the official conceded.

On Wednesday, the Nikkei stock average lost 1.9 per cent to close at 8,539.34, its lowest close since June 10, 1983, on fears the government's aggressive stance on resolving bad loans would cause huge bankruptcies and unemployment, dealers said.

Japan's chief financial regulator, financial affairs and economic policy minister Heizo Takenaka said he realized the stock market situation was "very severe."

"It is our job to bring together a proper response by the end of the month," he said, adding a supplementary budget to prime the economy this year was not discussed at the meeting into the monthly assessment.

"My thinking on the extra budget is the same as I have said before," Takenaka told reporters. The minister has not ruled out extra spending as part of a larger reform package.

Earlier, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda acknowledged deflation concerns were driving shares lower as well as the global trend in stock markets.

"We are hit by a slump in European and US shares," Fukuda said. "I believe (the decline) also reflected deflation in Japan."

In the report, the government downgraded its assessment of exports and the trade balance, as well as business sentiment and housing investment, while its view of corporate profits and employment was upgraded.

"The pace of export growth has slowed," the government official said.

"Looking at the volume of exports, the April-June period saw a climb of 7.3 per cent from the previous quarter, but the August numbers were down 0.4 per cent from the earlier month."

"Evidently, the rising trend is softening due mainly to the worldwide weakening of information technology demand," he said.

"Exports for Asia and the US are becoming sluggish in the fields of IT-related products, as well as electric and general machinery."

## China an opportunity, not a threat: WB

AFP, Singapore

China presents a huge opportunity for the rest of East Asia, not a threat, but only if the region's economies push ahead with crucial economic and financial reforms, the World Bank said Wednesday.

"There's a natural debate about the role of China in the coming years. Is it an opportunity? Is it a threat?" World Bank vice president for East Asia and Pacific Jamal-uddin Kassam asked at the launch of a book on East Asia's competitiveness here.

"From our perspective, we come down on the side of very significant opportunities," he said.

Chinese imports' share of global gross domestic product is expected to double in the next five years especially after Beijing's entry into

the World Trade Organization (WTO), he said.

Eight East Asian countries also saw their exports to China increase by 50 per cent in the first half of this year, and while this may not be sustainable in the long-term, it is an indication of the opportunities.

"Our feeling is that China represents an opportunity because the challenge is to complement China, not necessarily to compete head on," he said, adding the opportunities lie in cross-border supply chains and regional production networks.

But he said East Asian economies must themselves carry on with reforms and liberalisation measures if they are to make the most of the opportunities and complementary aspects offered by the Chinese market.

## CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's foreign exchange rate statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Selling	Currency	Buying
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean
58.5800	58.6100 USD	57.8050
58.0821	58.1118 EUR	55.9032
91.7246	91.7715 GBP	88.8562
32.6349	32.6516 AUD	31.0182
0.4756	0.4758 JPY	0.4620
39.3683	39.3884 CHF	38.3577
6.2652	6.2684 SEK	6.1497
36.9217	36.9406 CAD	36.0021
7.5180	7.5218 HKD	7.403
32.8898	32.9066 SGD	32.1711
16.0779	16.0862 AED	15.6124
15.7452	15.7533 SAR	15.923
		OD Sight Doc
		OD Transfer
		57.6352
		55.7390
		88.7496
		30.8900
		0.4601
		38.2450
		6.1424
		35.8534
		7.3737
		32.0362
		15.5479
		15.2292

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	AUD
48.34	59.05	96.275	43.725	7.4307	0.4805	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading:  
The local interbank foreign exchange market was active yesterday. BDT ended softer on increased demand for the US currency from importers of foodgrains and capital machinery. BDT was quoted at 58.55/58 against the USD in the interbank market.

Local Money Market:  
Demand for overnight borrowing at call remained high in the market. Call money rate remained steady and was almost unchanged at 7.00-7.25 per cent for the day.

International Market:  
Dollar retained firm on Wednesday, reflecting concerns about economic weakness in the euro zone and Japan, but the US currency struggled to extend its gain. The basic yen-selling trend still remained but the market was also experiencing heavy dollar-selling (yen-buying) interest at about 124.50 yen. The greenback was expected to find firm support at around 123.70-80 yen, with plenty of bidders waiting to build new positions around that point. The euro stayed under pressure due to concerns over economic weakness in the euro zone and comments of European Central Bank President Wim Duisenberg that the central bank was not very inclined to trim interest rates soon to boost the euro zone's economy. The euro was also depressed by clashes among EU finance ministers over budgetary policy. At 1515 hours on Wednesday, euro was quoted at 0.9796/00, GBP at 1.5528/33, Yen at 124.19/25 against the dollar.

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## SHIPPING

### Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 09.10.2002.

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disc
J/3	The Beneficent	TSP	Sing	Unique	4/10	12/10	1822
J/4	Rainbow Joy	GI	Sing	H&SL	8/10	11/10	1087
J/6	Seleter Hope	GI	Sing	Everett	8/10	11/10	2963
J/7	Cameron	C Clink	Mala	PSAL	3/10	17/10	2500
J/8	Xpress Manaslu	Cont	P Kel	RSL	8/10	11/10	266/451
J/9	Magda	L Stone	Krabi	Move	27/09	10/10	1077
J/11	Qc Lark	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	6/10	10/10	339/X
J/12	Kola Cahaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	8/10	11/10	201/350
J/13	Banglar Moni	Cont	Sing	BSC	7/10	11/10	98/226
CCT/1	Boxer Capt Cook	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	8/10	11/10	229/260
CCT/2	Banga Borat	Cont	Sing	Bdship	6/10	11/10	366/X
RM/14	Pacific Emerald	Idle	Sing	Allseas	24/7	12/10	-
RM/15	An Wu Jiang	GTSP	Egypt	Litmond	5/10	12/10	-

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Asian Splendor	9/10	Kaoh	ASA	GI	-
Banglar Umi	9/10	Mumb	Mutual	Sugar	-
Banga Barla (Cont) 29/9	9/10	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Asian Harvester	8/10	Indo	VML	Demolition	-
Leona (Liner)	10/10	Osakas	Prog	GI	-
Banga Lanka (Cont) 25/9	11/10	Hal	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Adonis	13/10	Ind	CCNL	Sugar (P)	-
Mardios (Cont) 28/9	10/10	P Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Estralla Eterna	10/10	Sing	Everett	Vehi	-
Anadne	10/10	Indo	BSL	C Clink	-
Jaami (Cont) 6/10	11/10	-	Everbest	Cont	Col
Banga Bijoy	12/10	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Kota Singa (Cont) 28/9	12/10	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Sing
Qc Teal (Cont)	13/10	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Jaya Mars (Cont) 2/10	14/10	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Banglar Shikha	12/10	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Eco Vigour	13/10	Aust	SST	Wheat	Govt
Pacific Spirit	14/10	Goa	ASA	GI	-
Banga Birai (Cont) 3/10	14/10	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Orient Freedom (Cont) 5/10	14/10	-	PSSL	Cont	Sing

### Tanker due

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Danat Qatar	9/10	Jebe	USS	Cbude	-
Fengzhou	10/10	Sing	Pol	CPOL	-
Sea Splendor	10/10	Durb	USL	CDSO	-
Fortune Here	10/10	Sing	Rainbow	CPO	-
Formosa Nine	10/10	Sing	ECSL	SKO/JP-1	-
Dai Hung	11/10	Sing	ECSL	HSD	-
Eagle Aries	13/10	Sing	MSTPL	HSD/MS	-

### Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Dea Captain	-	-	Arafeen	R/A	(18/8)

### Vessels at outer anchorage Ready on

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Ku Hsiung	Cont	P Kel	OSSL	09/10	
Haneburg	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	09/10	

### Vessels awaiting instruction

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Banglar Shourabh	-	-	BSC	R/A	(20/9)

### Movement of vessels for 10.10.2002

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
J/9 Magda	J/11 Hsiung	
J/11 OC Lark	J/9 Hane Burg	
	J/1 E Eteran	
	J/2 Leona	
	RM/3 Fengzhou	
	DOJ B Jyoti	

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

## STOCK