

# Asia's forex reserves decline by \$2.4b

## Regional central bank figures show

REUTERS, Singapore

Asia's appetite for foreign exchange reserves appears sated for now, with holdings at the end of July little changed from March, figures from regional central banks show.

Excluding China, which releases reserve holdings on a quarterly basis, Asian central banks saw their reserves decline by \$2.4 billion to \$1.717 trillion in July from June.

During July, reserves fell by over \$1 billion in Hong Kong, India and Singapore.

Over the four months to July 31, Asian reserves excluding China have risen by just \$1.6 billion, after rising by \$210.7 billion in the first quarter.

Including China's end-June holdings of \$470.6 billion, second only to Japan, Asian central bank reserves totalled a record \$2.191 trillion at the end of the June quarter.

Asia's reserves rose by over 80 percent -- almost \$1 trillion -- from the end of 2001 to the end of the March quarter this year as regional authorities tried to stop their currencies from rising against the dollar to protect competitiveness in export markets.

Analysts say the steady holdings since March show that Asian central banks have not to intervene as the dollar found some support in expectations of the start of an interest rate tightening cycle in the United States. The US Federal Reserve raised rates on June 30 and August 10.

In fact, a number of Asian central banks were thought to have been forced to buy their own currencies in late July to stem falls against the dollar that could have added to the inflation pressures coming from rising oil prices.

Latest foreign exchange reserve holdings:				
	Reserves \$ bln	As on	end-2003 \$ bln	percent change
Japan	819.2	Jul 31	673.5	+21.6
China	470.6	Jun 30	403.3	+16.7
Taiwan	230.4	Jul 31	206.6	+11.5
South Korea	168.0	Jul 31	155.4	+8.1
HongKong	118.3	Jul 31	118.4	-0.1
India	118.3	Jul 30	100.6	+17.6
Singapore	100.3	Jul 31	96.3	+4.2
Malaysia	54.3	Jul 31	44.9	+20.9
Thailand	43.5	Jul 30	42.1	+3.3
Indonesia	34.8	Jul 30	36.3	-4.1
Philippines	16.0	Jul 31	16.8	-4.8
Pakistan	12.1	Jul 31	12.0	+0.8
Bangladesh	2.6	Jul 31	2.6	0.0
Total	2,188.4		1,908.8	+14.6

Note: In December 2003, China used \$45 billion of foreign exchange reserves -- about 10 percent of its holdings at that time -- to bail out two banks. Those funds are not included in this figure.

Sources: central banks.



PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK

Mutual Trust Bank Limited Chairman Syed Manzur Elahi formally launches the bank's website at a function held in Dhaka on Saturday. Among others, Mosharraf Hossain, managing director of the bank, is seen in the picture.



PHOTO: GP

Ola Ree, managing director of GrameenPhone (GP) Limited, clicks laptop mouse to re-launch the website of the company at a function in Dhaka recently. Among others, Mehboob Chowdhury, director, Sales and Marketing of GP, NKA Mobin, director, Finance, and Syed Yamin Bakht, general manager, Information, are also seen in the picture.

## Nepal on alert on Maoist threat to shut down top cos

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal stepped up security Monday on the eve of a threatened Maoist rebel shutdown of the Himalayan kingdom's top companies as a number of leading businesses said they would close as a precaution.

A trade union affiliated with the Maoists, who are fighting to overthrow the monarchy, has demanded that 24 prominent businesses shut down from Tuesday.

The union has accused industry of exploiting workers and presented demands to the government including the release of Maoist activists in custody and compensation for rebels killed in battle.

Home Ministry spokesman Gopendra Bahadur Pandey said the government was prepared to thwart any Maoist attack on the companies, which range from a leading hotel to the local distributor of Coca-Cola.

"The government has put the regional and district administrations and all the security units on high alert to protect people and their property," Pandey said.

## CURRENCY

Following is Monday's (August 16, 2004) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank					
Sell	Currency		Buy		
TT/OD	BC		TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
59.6500	59.7000	USD	58.5050	58.3332	58.2633
74.5088	74.5713	EUR	71.6569	71.4464	71.3809
110.6090	110.7017	GBP	107.0583	106.7438	106.6161
43.5087	43.5452	AUD	41.2402	41.1190	41.0698
0.5467	0.5472	JPY	0.5253	0.5238	0.5232
48.7018	48.7427	CHF	46.7554	46.6180	46.5622
8.3310	8.3380	SEK	7.6427	7.6203	7.6111
45.9023	45.9407	CAD	44.2215	44.0916	44.0388
7.6555	7.6619	HKD	7.4936	7.4716	7.4627
34.9198	34.9491	SGD	33.9514	33.8516	33.8111
16.3730	16.3867	AED	15.8002	15.7538	15.7349
16.0332	16.0467	SAR	15.4775	15.4321	15.4136
10.3466	10.3552	DKK	9.3455	9.3181	9.3069
202.9602	203.1303	KWD	191.3804	190.8183	190.5899

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar					
Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai bath	Nor kroner	NZ dollar
46.23	58.72	102.95	41.545	6.6855	0.7146
					Malaysian ringgit
					3.80

**Local Interbank FX Trading**  
Local interbank market was active. US dollar was mostly steady against Bangladeshi taka in a thin trading day.

**Local Money Market**  
Money market was active. Call money rate rose slightly and ranged between 3.75 and 4.25 percent as compared with 3.00 and 3.5 percent.

**International Market**  
The dollar dipped to a four-week low against the euro on Monday before rising slightly on profit-taking, but steep oil prices and weak US data continued to fan worries about the health of the world's largest economy. The US trade deficit widened well beyond expectations in June, hitting a record \$55.8 billion and sparking the debate afresh on whether the US can attract enough foreign investment to fill its external shortfall. Data on portfolio inflows to the United States will be published at 1300 GMT and analysts said a weak figure may prompt a fresh wave of dollar-selling.

## SHIPPING

### Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 16/8/2004.						
Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving
J/2	Amar	Sugar(P)	Bang	Total	1/8	17/8
J/3	Sinhai	C. Clink	Indo	NWSL	1/8	18/8
J/4	Al Mohammed	Sugar(P)	Bang	Cla	4/8	--
J/5	Defiant-T	Wheat(P)	Kiki	Pacific	3/8	20/8
J/6	Xiang Ruimen	Tspi(P)	Fang	Unique	14/8	19/8
J/7	Al Muztuba	Wheat(P)	Kaki	CLA	14/8	21/8
J/8	Feng Kang Shan	Gl	Sing	Bdship	6/8	16/8
J/11	Jaami	Cont	Col	Everbest	14/8	18/8
J/12	Micronislan Herit	Cont	--	Everbest	R/A	17/8
CCJ:	Feng Shun Shan	Fert(TSP)	Sing	Bdship	13/8	25/8
GSJ:	Blida	C. Clink	Indo	Litmond	12/8	16/8

Vessels due at outer anchorage					
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Van Xuan	16/8	Sing	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya	16/8	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Mong
Kota Tampan	16/8	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bonik	16/8	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Pan Express	16/8	Krabi	Litmond	C. Clink	Shah
Banglar Kakoli	16/8	Hamrin	BMA	R.Phos	--
Rio Negro	17/8	P. Kel	OCSL	Cont	Sing
Jin Cheng (Liner)	17/8	Tianjin	Bdship	Gl	--
New Blessing	18/8	Pkl	Everbest	Cont	Sing
Eastern Fortis(Liner)	17/8	Busan	Prog	Gl	--
Tug Sandy Cape	17/8	P. Suez	Olm	Towing Macgagne	
Mac Gagne	17/8	--	Olm	Ballast Demolition	
Timaru Star	18/8	Hald	Everett	Urea K/U	
Xpress Manaslu	19/8	P. Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Berjaya	19/8	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Bethesda-1	19/8	Batta	Pacific	Demolition	--
Blanco Pescadores	18/8	P. Linhons	RainbowW/R.	Seeds	--

Tanker due					
Al Deerah	18/8	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/Sko	
Sonata	18/8	Pesir	MTCL	Cpol (RM/8/3)	
Seal	18/8	Indo	MTCL	Cpol (RM/8/3)	
Bonvoy-Vii	19/8	--	MTCL	Cpol (RM/8/3)	

Vessels at Kutubdia				
Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
<b>Vessels at outer anchorage</b>				
<b>Vessels ready:</b>				
Salamat-1	Bitumen	Fuja	Olm	14/8
Banglar Moni	Cont	Sing	BSC	16/8
Banga Bodor	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	16/8
Scottish Bard	HSD/MS	Sing	MSTPL	15/8

Vessels awaiting employment / instruction:				
Banga Biraj	--	--	Bdship	R/A (29/12)
Continent-4	Ballast	Col	CLA	13/8
<b>Vessels not entering:</b>				
Angeliki-D	Sugar	Sant	Litmond	3/8
Tuking	G. Slag	Fuku	SSA	15/8
Namesmcha	Sugar(P)	P. Link	Rainbow	4/8
Louros	Scraping	Sint	Rship	9/8
Al Sharifa-II	Scraping	Suej	Jardine	11/8

The above are shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by Family, Dhaka.

## STOCK