

Japan exports and imports fall raising growth concerns

Japan's exports and imports dipped in August, raising fears about the impact of a global slowdown on its economy

Japan's central bank has announced new measures to try to spur economic growth there. It is an admission that the near-term recovery in the world's third largest economy is fading as exports weaken and growth in China slows. The Bank of Japan is to buy more government bonds and for a longer period. That is supposed to encourage borrowing and spending and make Japan's exports more competitive. This follows similar steps by central bankers in the United States and Europe.

Exports fell 5.8 percent from a year earlier, hurt by slowing demand from the European Union (EU) and China. Imports fell 5.4 percent from a year ago, indicating that domestic de-

mand continues to remain weak. The data comes amid fears that Japan's trade with China, its biggest trading partner, may be hurt by the continuing territorial dispute between them.

Recovery in the US remains weak, the EU crisis is far from over and now the dispute with China could have a negative impact on exports to the mainland in the near term.

Japan's economy relies heavily on exports for growth. However, the sector has been hurt by slowing demand from key markets in recent times. Shipments to the EU have now fallen for 11 straight months, as the region's debt crisis has hurt growth in the bloc's major economies. And with the

end to the crisis nowhere in sight, most analysts expect the downward trend to continue.

To make matters worse, economic expansion in China, the world's second largest economy and key driver of Japan's growth in recent years, has also slowed, further impacting Japan's export sector. Shipments from Japan to China have dropped in 10 out of the past 11 months. Analysts said that slowing growth in China was likely to further dent the sector. "Japan is extremely vulnerable to the slowdown in China," said Dan Slater of the Economist Corporate Network in Tokyo. "And the slowdown in China is very serious in itself."



Workers load a container onto a cargo ship at a port

HTC unveils two Windows Phone 8 handsets

HTC has unveiled two Windows Phone 8 handsets at an event in New York

The firm has said that it intends to promote the 8X, which features a 4.3-inch (10.9cm) display, as its flagship device alongside the Android-powered One X. The firm is also offering a smaller 8S model with a 4-inch (10.2cm) screen. HTC's share price has fallen more than 50 percent since February after the firm experienced weak sales of earlier models despite positive reviews.

Analysts have said the firm had a weak advertising campaign which was compounded by the fact that its South Korean rival, Samsung, had a much bigger marketing budget. Nokia and Samsung have already shown off alternative Windows Phone devices which will launch after Microsoft releases the operating system.

HTC said the 8X would launch in 50 countries in early November across 126



mobile operators, while the 8S would be available in 52 countries with more than 146 operators. Such detail was notably lacking at Nokia's recent Lumia 920 launch, where it did not confirm the date or number of countries the smartphone would be sold in.

HTC made much of the devices' design at the US event saying they had 'a remarkably unique profile'.

It said its top-end model featured an 8 megapixel camera on its rear supported by a dedicated chip for 'faster focus speed and clearer, sharper shots'.

EU to simplify cross-border trade rules

Less than one in ten Europeans buy online from other EU countries. For both consumers and sellers, the process is simply too complicated.

Legal differences between EU countries are one of the remaining barriers to the internal market. To boost cross-border trade, cut costs and give customers greater choice, the EU has drafted a Common European Sales Law. People living in Belgium, Latvia, Malta and Romania have similar problems. For them, 70 percent of cross-border transactions end in failure. The European average is hardly better: only four in ten cross-border deals work out. A seller can turn down an online transaction with someone in another country if he doesn't feel comfortable with the laws and regulations that would apply to the deal.

Only 9 percent of consumers in Europe buy online from other countries. The same small number of sellers take on the challenge of cross-border trading. In response, the EU has decided to draft a Common European Sales Law. Family-run business Bivolino is among the first in

Belgium to expand online to new markets.

Today the company sells its products in 19 EU countries, but at what price? Carine Moitier is the co-founder of Bivolino.com: "First of all,

tion of online payment, which varies from country to country. Other major obstacles include differences in VAT and consumers' rights. So, for example, in some countries, the maximum delay for returning



Customers check products on computer terminals

you have to invest in your brand abroad. That's the first step," she says. "Then there's the language barrier, so you need native speakers to help you in each country. That also represents a considerable cost for a small company," she adds. "There's also the whole ques-

goods is two weeks, in others it's only one week, so there again, we need to have a different approach according to the country." Each business transaction is based on a contract. Here again, rules vary between countries, making it more costly to export abroad.

British Museum to exhibit artefacts from buried cities

More than 250 archaeological remains from the lives of people in the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum will feature in a new exhibition at the British Museum next year

The two cities on Italy's southern coast were buried following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD79. The exhibition will include casts of some of the volcano's victims.

The British Museum said it will explore "real" Roman people, not the emperors and gladiators portrayed in films.

The event will be the first about Pompeii and Herculaneum in London for 40 years and will bring together recently discovered objects and finds from earlier excavations, many of which have never been seen outside Italy.

Museum director, Neil MacGregor, said the exhibition has been possible following a collaboration with the Archaeological Superintendency of Naples and Pompeii, "which has meant extremely generous loans of precious objects from their collections, some that have never travelled before".

Superweeds pose GM-resistant challenge for farmers

US farmers are facing a growing challenge from weeds resistant to chemical sprays, and enduring millions of dollars in losses as a result

The so-called "superweeds" have arisen because of the success of genetically modified crops, which now account for the vast majority of US corn, soya and cotton.

GM essentially means that crops are protected from one type of chemical weedkiller. But because farmers have become over-reliant on this one product, weeds with natural resistance have spread rapidly and have strangled production on millions of acres.

Scientists say the solution to the widespread resistance problem is a new type of GM.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies