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The economic status of Asia

DURING the month of July, I made an extended trip through Asia meeting with key government, business, academic, and media leaders in Beijing, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, and Tokyo.

Among the numerous people I spoke with were: China's chief World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiator Long Yongtu, Hong Kong Financial Secretary Donald Tsang, Hong Kong Monetary Authority head Joseph Yam, Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysian Deputy Central Bank Governor Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Malaysia's First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, South Korean Presidential adviser Governor You, South Korean Finance Minister Kang Bang-Kyun, Daewoo chairman Kim Woo Choong, Japan's former Vice-Minister of Finance Sakakibara, chairman Sakaiya of Japan's Economic Planning Agency, Liberal Democratic Party leader (currently a candidate for party president) Koichi Kato and Fuji-Xerox chairman Yotaro Kobayashi.

Following is a summary of what I found: