

EU strikes 'historic' deal to reform farm policy

AFP, Luxembourg

Luxembourg. EU farm ministers struck an "historic" accord Thursday to reform the bloc's disputed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in a move they said will strengthen the EU's hand in world trade talks.

Reform of the CAP, which swallows nearly half of the 15-member European Union's annual budget, had been stalled notably by France, the main beneficiary of its generous subsidies.

"It is a historic decision," said Greek Agriculture Minister Georgios Drys, whose country currently holds the rotating EU presidency, after the accord was hammered out in

Luxembourg.

The main plank of the reform severs most of the link between farmers' production levels and their subsidies from 2005 and redirects part of the subsidies to rural development.

The EU minister trumpeted their agreement as a boon to farmers at home and beyond in the developing world -- and will also strengthen the EU's hand at World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks on international trade reform.

"With this reform the (EU) Council is sending a strong message to European farmers, European citizens and the world, in particular the developing countries,"

they said in a statement.

The United States, backed by the European Commission, has warned that the entire Doha round of liberalisation talks at the WTO could fail unless agricultural subsidies for the world's wealthiest nations are reformed.

Opponents of the CAP say that by directly subsidising EU farmers, the policy encourages massive surpluses that are dumped on markets of poorer countries.

The reform establishes a single, direct payment system for farmers and conditions the approval of aid to certain environmental and food safety criteria.

French farm minister Hervé

Gaymard said he was particularly pleased at heading off European Commission proposals to completely sever the link between EU subsidies to farmers and their production levels.

Instead, under the compromise accord, the subsidies will only be partially "decoupled" to ensure that farming is not abandoned in less economically feasible regions of Europe.

For cereal farms, 75 percent of the aid will be decoupled from 2005, although EU member states that so wish can delay the reduction until 2007.



PHOTO: HSBC

David J H Griffiths, chief executive officer of Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in Bangladesh, and Syed Aziz Ahmad, managing director of United Insurance Company Limited, sign a contract for health insurance scheme on behalf of their respective organisations in Dhaka recently.



PHOTO: MARINE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

Members of the Executive Committee of Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association pose for a photograph at the 15th annual general meeting of the association held recently.



PHOTO: CHITTAGONG CEMENT

The 6th extra ordinary general meeting and the 14th annual general meeting of Chittagong Cement Clinker Grinding Co Ltd were held in Chittagong on Tuesday. Yavuz Ermis, chairman of the company, presided over the meetings. Abdul Awal Mintoo, Md Ziaul Haque Khondker, AS Shahudul Huque Bulbul, directors, and Mark Van Kempen, managing director, and M Abul Hashem, company secretary, attended the meetings.



PHOTO: EASTLAND INSURANCE

Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of Eastland Insurance Company Limited (centre), speaks at the 16th annual general meeting of the company in Dhaka on Wednesday. Managing Director M Azmal Hoque (left), and Secretary AFM Safu (right), are also seen in the picture.

Europe points finger at US after striking farm accord

AFP, Luxembourg

The following story appeared on The EU called on the United States Thursday to follow its lead and slash farm aid after striking a landmark accord to reform its own system that it said would strengthen its hand in world trade talks.

The European Commission, the European Union's executive arm, pointed the finger squarely at Washington after EU ministers reached a deal to reform the long-disputed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

"There are a lot of schoolmasters telling us in the last few months that we have to do our homework. Now it's up to others to do their homework," said EU farm commissioner Franz Fischler.

"For example, thinking of our American friends: contrary to what the EU has done over the last few years, they've resurrected a lot of the trade-distorting policies of the past and actually increased agricultural support enormously.

CURRENCY

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

TT/OD	Currency		Buying		
	BC	USD	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
58.8000	58.8500	USD	57.8700	57.7000	57.6310
68.5549	68.6132	EUR	66.0644	65.8703	65.7915
98.9898	99.0740	GBP	96.0179	95.7359	95.6213
39.9311	39.9650	AUD	38.1132	38.0012	37.9557
0.6029	0.6033	JPY	0.4868	0.4854	0.4848
44.4781	44.5159	CHF	43.1415	43.0148	42.9633
7.4074	7.4137	SEK	6.9698	6.9493	6.9410
43.9363	43.9737	CAD	42.6204	42.4952	42.4444
7.5473	7.5537	HKD	7.4131	7.3914	7.3825
33.8964	33.9252	SGD	33.0742	32.9771	32.9376
16.1397	16.1534	AED	15.6287	15.5828	15.5642

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringit
46.59	57.8	97.155	41.485	7.1725	0.6348	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading: USD/BDT continued to remain steady in the local interbank forex market Thursday. Local currency remained stable due to a depressed import related demand for the dollar.

Local Money Market: Demand for overnight borrowing remained moderate. Call money rate also remained almost unchanged. Call money rate ranged unchanged from Wednesday between 2.50-3.00 per cent.

International Market: The dollar extended modest gains on the euro and hit a seven-week high on the Swiss franc on Thursday after the Federal Reserve took a cautious quarter point cut in interest rates in a bid to help the world's largest economy. Fed cut its benchmark rate to a four-decade low of one per cent Greenback edged up in New York after the decision. It gained further ground in Thursday's European morning session. Yen was capped by renewed fears of intervention after suspecting that Japanese authorities yen selling on Wednesday.

At 1600 hours on Thursday, euro was at 1.1482/85, GBP at 1.6634/39 and yen at 118.67/77 against the dollar.

SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 26/6/2003

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	Funiu Shan (Liner)	Gi	Sing	Prog	19/6	28/6	875
J/2	Jubilee	Gi(Log)	Sing	CCNL	23/6	27/6	1081
J/3	Ravenna	C.Clink	Fuja	Litmond	18/6	26/6	1050
J/4	Amanat Shah	Rice	MUMB	Cla	28/5	30/6	215
J/5	Dae Gak Bong	Rice(P)	Kaki	Able	2/6	26/6	41
J/6	Banglar Mamata	Gi	Pipa	Royal	19/6	2/7	817
J/7	Levantracht	Gi	Sing	MSA	13/6	2/7	535
J/8	Hellin	Gi	P.Kel	TMML	17/6	30/6	199
J/9	Erna OldendorffPeas /WT(P)	Sing	Mutual		8/6	1/7	258
J/10	C.S.B.C. Nyon HoSug/WT(P)	Kaki	SSTL		8/6	3/7	X
J/11	Jaami	Cont	Col	Everbest	22/6	27/6	101/1
J/12	Orient Freedom	Cont	P.Kel	PSLL	22/6	27/6	326/64

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L Port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
New Sea Star	26/6	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Banga Borat	26/6	P.Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Banga Borti	5/7	Mong	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Kota Cahaya	27/6	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
Tai Hung San	27/6	Indo	OTBL	For Demolition	
Sailor-I	27/6	Kaki	Litmond	Clink (Shah)	
Induruwa Valley	28/6	Tuti	Able	Rice(P)	
Xpress Resolve	28/6	-	Everbest		Col
Yayasan Tujuh	18/6	-	Seacom	Gl	
Bosowa Sembilan	29/6	-	PSAL	Clink (Dia)	
Banga Barta	29/6	--	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Empress(Liner)	29/6	--	Everett	Gl	
Banglar Shikha	29/6	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
QC Honour	30/6	P.Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
QC Lark	30/6	P.Kel	QCSL	Cont	P.Kel
Banga Bijoy	30/6	Cbo	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Banga Bijoy	30/6	Col	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Kota Berjaya	30/6	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Sing

Tanker due

Golden Dream	26/6	Sing	USL	Lubes (DOJ)
Andhika Aryandhi	26/6	PKL	IML	CPO(RM/3)
Chariot	26/6	Argentina	AMBL	CDSO(RM/4)
Achilleus	27/6	Sing	MSTPLSKo/HSD/MD(RM/3)	
Pranedia Dwitya	28/6	Sing	CTPL	F.Oil (RM/4)

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
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Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready:				
George	C.Clink	Tarij	BSC	22/6
Fime Satu	Cpo	Bela	POL	25/6
Midax	G. Clink	Ind	SSA	21/6
Tien Mu	WT/Lentils	Sing	Mutual	22/6

Vessels not ready:

Banga Boder	Repair		Bdship	R/A(18/6)
Bosowa Delapan	Wheat(P)	Viza	Total	18/6
Siam Sri Watana	Cpo	Dumai	Rainbow	26/6

Vessels awaiting instruction

Banglar Shiourabh	-	-	BSC	R/A (23/6)
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STOCK