

EU hopes for Asean trade talks by next year

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The European Union is hoping to launch talks on a free-trade agreement with Southeast Asia next year, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said here Wednesday.

After issuing a "vision report" on prospects for a trade deal this week, the EU and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (Asean) will talk to governments of member states "for the remainder of this year," he said.

"I hope then that we will all receive the green light," Mandelson told reporters in Kuala Lumpur on the latest leg of a tour which has included talks with regional trade ministers in Manila.

"I anticipate that we will but I don't take anything for granted, to start

putting in place the modalities for our negotiations at the turn of the year for negotiations proper to get underway after that."

There have been concerns that the EU's criticism of Myanmar's military government, which has ignored calls to free democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, would pose an obstacle to any EU trade accord with Asean.

The EU and US have slapped

trade sanctions on Myanmar, which is an Asean member along with Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Malaysian Trade Minister Rafidah Aziz said after talks with Mandelson that Asean would only do business as a bloc, and would reject any pressure to exclude Myanmar in the EU trade deal.



PHOTO: ORION GROUP

Top officials, including CEOs, of banks that have extended consortium loans to Beacon Pharmaceuticals Limited pose for photographs during their visit to the plant recently. The banks include Janata Bank, City Bank, Social Investment Bank, Agrani Bank and Shahjalal Islami Bank. Mohammad Ebadul Karim, managing director of Beacon Pharma, was also present.



PHOTO: AKTEL

Ahmad Bin Ismail, managing director of AKTEL, and Abul Bashar Miah, managing director of Doorway Marketing, pose for photographs after signing an agreement on behalf of their sides recently. Under the deal, AKTEL will offer total telecom solutions through a special tariff plan and value added services to Doorway Marketing. Other officials are also seen.

Singapore's key export growth slows

AFP, Singapore

Singapore's key non-oil exports grew at 10.1 percent year-on-year in April, down from the previous month's 16.6 percent, the government's trade promotion agency said Wednesday.

Non-oil domestic exports (NODX) totalled 13.37 billion Singapore dollars (8.52 billion US) compared with 14.98 billion dollars in March, International Enterprise Singapore (IES) said.

Economists had expected a year-on-year monthly growth rate of between 14 and 20 percent.

"Growth of NODX remained strong at 10 percent in April 2006 as compared to a year ago, aided by positive growth in domestic exports of both electronic and non-electronic products," IES said.

On a month-on-month seasonally adjusted basis, NODX expanded a mild 0.3 percent on the month after contracting by 4.3 percent in March, it said.

Shipments of electronic goods, the country's main exports, increased for the ninth straight month, expanding by 6.6 percent in April, more slowly than the 16.4 percent growth in March, the agency said. Shipments of disk drives, ink cartridges and personal computers continued to fall, it said.

Pharmaceuticals, disk media products, electrical machinery and civil engineering equipment parts helped push growth in non-electronic exports to 13.4 percent on the month, down from 16.7 percent in March, IES said.



PHOTO: FLORA

Flora Ltd, an ICT (information and communication technology) company, recently opened its 18th branch on Satmasjid Road at Dhanmondi in Dhaka. Junkichi Yoshida, director of Epson Singapore, inaugurated the branch while MN Islam, chairman of Flora Ltd, Hussein Shaheed Feroz, director, and Mustafa Shamsul Islam, managing director, among others, were present.



PHOTO: CITYCELL

Officials of Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Limited (PBT) and Rishit Computers Ltd pose for photographs after signing a corporate agreement on Tuesday. Under the agreement, Rishit Computers Ltd will get some exclusive services as well as reduced call rates from CityCell. Sharif Shah Jamal Raj, head of corporate and direct sales of PBT, and Hasan Hahmud, director of Rishit Computers Ltd, signed the corporate deal. Other officials are also seen.

CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (May 17, 2006) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	Buy	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
69.5200	69.5500	USD	68.4000	68.3772	68.3316	
90.3690	90.4080	EUR	86.8475	86.8185	86.7606	
132.1436	132.2006	GBP	127.9285	127.8859	127.8006	
54.4342	54.4577	AUD	51.6830	51.6658	51.6314	
0.6438	0.6440	JPY	0.6204	0.6202	0.6198	
58.3075	58.3326	CHF	54.116	56.0929	56.0555	
9.9304	9.9347	SEK	8.9968	8.9938	8.9878	
63.4886	63.5160	CAD	61.1479	61.1275	6.10867	
8.9862	8.9901	HKD	8.8010	8.7981	8.7922	
45.2663	45.2858	SGD	43.4148	43.4003	43.3714	
19.0832	19.0914	AED	18.4735	18.4673	18.4550	
18.6882	18.6962	SAR	18.1048	18.0988	18.0867	
12.5250	12.5304	DKK	11.3106	11.3069	11.2993	
237.1625	237.2670	KWD	235.0152	234.9392	234.7872	

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
45.09	60.025	102.905	37.925	6.0957	0.6264	3.59

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local interbank FX market was active on Wednesday. USD fell slightly against the Bangladeshi taka.

Local Money Market

Money market was active on Wednesday. Call money rate rose slightly and ranged between 15.00-22.00 percent compared to 13.00-16.00 percent on Monday.

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 17/5/2006.

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch.
J/1	Cakra Kember	Gl(Copra)	Sing	Mutual	26/4	18/5	408
J/2	Falcon Trader	Wheat(P)	Suez	Seacom	8/5	22/5	1554
J/3	Midax	Slag	Viza	Move	30/4	17/5	2190
J/4	Pearl	Wheat(P)	Russ	USL	7/5	22/5	1973
J/5	Oel Wisdom	Cont	Mong	PSSL	7/5	17/5	63
J/6	Banga Biraj	Cont	Sing	Bandhi	11/5	17/5	173
J/7	Taurus	Urea	Jubail	PSL	6/5	18/5	402
J/8	Helios-II	Gl(Pa/St)	Busa	Prog	15/5	21/5	2487
J/9	Banglar Shikha	Cont	P. Kel	BSC	10/5	--	--
J/10	Phu My	Cont	P. Kel	RSL	10/5	18/5	127
J/11	Western Star	Cont	Sing	Vega	9/5	18/5	195
J/12	Oel Freedom	Cont	Col	PSSL	8/5	17/5	57

Vessels due at outer anchorage date: 17/5/2006

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Al Muztuba	17/5	Chenn	Cia	Sugar(P)	--
Banglar Robi	17/5	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
Kota Berjaya	17/5	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
Xpress Makalu	17/5	PKL	Seacon	Cont	Sing
Coastal Express	18/5	Chenn	BSCA	Cont	Kol
Cape Henry	18/5	Sin	APL	Cont	Sing
QC Dignity	18/5	PTP	QC SL	Cont	Sing
Kota Rukun	18/5	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Mong
Brave Royal	18/5	Krabi	BRSL	C. Clink	Royal
Sarim	18/5	Krabi	Litmond	C. Clink	--
Jag Vikram	18/5	Viza	Saraf	G. Slag	--
Panagia	18/5	Sing	ASLL	C. Clink	Cemex
Ocean Star	19/5	Novo	Pol	Wheat(P)	--
Amer	19/5	P. Kel	CEL	Cont	Sing
Heng Shan	19/5	Shanghai	Cosco	GI	--

Tanker due

Gaz Millennium	18/5	Haid	MBL	Ammonia
Al Deerah	19/5	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/JP-1
TCP-1	19/5	Lumut	Rainbow	CPO(RM/3)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Kota Ratna	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	11/5	
Emily-C	Cont	P. Kel	Seacon	12/5	
Oel Excellence	Cont	Col	PSSL	13/5	
Banga Bodor	Cont	P. Kel	Baridhi	14/5	
QC Honour	Cont	P. Kel	QC SL	14/5	
Kota Cahaya	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	14/5	
Banglar Moni	Cont	Col	BSC	16/5	
New Blessing	Cont	P. Kel	CEL	16/5	
Banga Bonik	Cont	Col	Baridhi	16/5	

Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Bumi Jaya	--	Visa	Unicom	10/11/2004
Banga Barta	Ballast	Col	Baridhi	10/3
Banglar Shourabh	--	--	BSC	R/A(30/4)
Banglar Jyoti	--	--	BSC	R/A(15/5)

Vessels not entering

Chang An	C. Clink	Sing	Val	5/5
Protec	C. Clink	Sing	Uniship	8/5
Thor Alliance	Wheat(P)	Novo	Rainbow	12/5
Hilal-1	Wheat(P)	Niko	Litmond	1/5
K.S. Glory	C. Clink	Liyu	Move	14/5
Power	C. Clink	Maka	Bashun	16/5
Ocean Phoenix	Slag	Kashi	Litmond	15/5
Alphaship	Ballast	Pirao	JF	27/4
Aphios Charalambos	Scraping	Chin	Rsship	11/5
Maud	Scraping	Xing	MDS	13/5
Elpis	Scraping	Sing	AHZ	12/5

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

STOCK