

EU tipped to okay free trade deal with poorest nations

Foreign ministers meet Monday

AP, Brussels
European Union foreign ministers, representing some of the world's richest nations, are expected to agree Monday on a deal to open up their markets to almost all goods from 48 of the world's poorest.

The EU head office says its proposal would be a major step in making global trade fairer, but humanitarian groups complain the deal has been reduced to near insignificance because of opposition from Europe's farm lobby.

The so-called "everything but arms" initiative is set to phase out duties and quotas on all imports into the EU except military goods from the least developed nations including Sudan, Afghanistan,

Haiti and Somalia.

However, pressure from farmers has forced the EU's head office to postpone the date when it will open its market to the most sensitive products: bananas, sugar and rice.

The delay has infuriated aid organisations who say it will significantly weaken the impact of the deal, since those goods were among those set to have the biggest impact on the poorest economies.

"We are very disappointed that the proposal was watered down," Penny Fowler of the relief agency Oxfam said Thursday. "I suppose it's better than nothing... but it doesn't offer much hope for the poorer nations getting a fair deal."

Since many of poorest nations'

products already enjoy free entry into the EU, the agreement - if approved - will only bring quick benefits to three major exports - beef, cheese and corn. Fowler said from Oxfam's headquarters in Oxford, England.

It's not even sure the weakened deal will be cleared by the EU ministers. France and Spain have objections and want to delay the opening of rice, sugar and banana markets still further.

Together those two cannot prevent the deal going through when the ministers vote, but if they can muster the support of wavering Greece and Portugal, the EU's complex voting rules mean they could block it.

Backers of the proposal were confident an agreement could be

struck.

"It's a sharp, concrete and clear proposition and I hope that we'll be able to make a decision at the meeting in Brussels Monday," said Loif Pagrotasky, trade minister of Sweden, which will chair the meeting.

The original plan put forward by the European Commission called for the removal of all trade restrictions on all goods, except the arms trade by the end of this year. Under the revised proposal, restrictions on bananas will be phased out between 2002 and 2006, those on sugar and rice from 2006 and 2009.

Sugar, rice and banana producers in the EU fear that if quotas and duties are removed too quickly, prices would plummet

Cuba counts on Asian support to lift US blockade

DPA, Singapore

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque wound up a Singapore visit by urging Asian nations to support the lifting of US economic sanctions on his country and held out hopes for stronger economic ties with the region, media reports said today.

"We are looking forward to having normal relations with the US but so far, that has not been possible," The Straits Times quoted Roque as saying.

The 40-year-old economic blockade was imposed soon after President Fidel Castro took charge and declared Cuba a Communist country in 1961.

International support is in Cuba's favour, Roque said, citing a UN meeting last year at which 167 countries voted for the blockade to be lifted.



Neaz Rahim, President of Bangladesh Accumulator and Battery Manufacturers Association (BAMBA), addresses a press conference at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club in the city Thursday. Bamba Vice Presidents Laik Ali and Kazi Mohiuddin were also present on the occasion.

India's embrace of free market faces key test

Sinha presents budget next week

REUTERS, Bombay
India's tentative embrace of the free market faces a key test next week when finance minister Yashwant Sinha decides where to set import duties in the annual budget.

Analysts say the reform-minded Sinha is expected to resist pressure from industry and opposition leaders for higher tariffs, as part of his ongoing drive to liberalise the economy.

"Lowering the average rate of tariffs and continuing with the liberalisation of the trade regime is the direction the budget should take," said S. Bhide, chief economist at the thinktank National Council for Applied Economic Research.

"It will force an improvement in competitiveness and prevent allocation of resources to inefficient sectors," he said.

However, the decision on duties in Wednesday's budget is all the more sensitive as India prepares to drop the last of its quantitative restrictions (QRs) on imports to meet World Trade Organisation commitments.

These QRs, a relic of India's past policy of matching political non-alignment with economic self-sufficiency, can be replaced under WTO rules by higher tariffs.

Industry leaders and opposition leaders, fearing a flood of cheap imports from China and east Asia, are pressing hard to keep tariffs high, and in some cases increase them.

But analysts say that Sinha is likely to resist pressure to hike import duties when QRs on over 700 items, mostly textiles, farm and consumer goods are dropped on April 1.

Media reports have quoted Commerce and Industry Minister

Murasoli Maran as saying domestic industry should focus on efficiency rather than seek protection.

Maran has however added a safety net - he has promised a bill next week which will allow the government to hike tariffs on any product which becomes vulnerable when QRs are dropped.

Officials and analysts say that the threat posed by cheap imports following the scrapping of QRs had been exaggerated.

In fact, government officials said they had actually found a decrease in imports, excluding oil and gold.

The perceived threat from China was also overplayed, said Arun Goyal, director at Delhi's Academy of Business Studies.

He noted that Indian exports to China exceeded imports from there and, in areas where the two compete, Indian products were of a superior quality.

Quarter of Indians live on less than \$10 a month

REUTERS, New Delhi

A quarter of India's billion-strong population lives below the official poverty line, although poverty has decreased over the past decade, the government said, Thursday.

In a statement the government said poverty was determined on a cut-off figure of 454 rupees (\$9.75) per head per month for people living in urban areas. People earning more than this were judged to be above the poverty level.

For rural areas, the cut-off was 327.56 rupee per head per month.

Over the past few years the percentage of poor people has shrunk but 260 million people, or 26 per cent of the population, still live under the poverty line, it said in a statement. That compared to some 36 per cent of the population in 1993-94.

The spread of poverty is much

higher in rural India where 193 million people are officially categorised as poor compared to 67 million urban poor.

In the eastern states of Orissa and Bihar almost half the population lives under the poverty line. In Orissa 47.15 per cent are among the poorest and 42.60 make do with just as little in neighbouring Bihar.

In contrast, only 3.48 per cent of the population in the disputed northern state of Jammu and Kashmir were among the very poor, it said.

The country's capital city has 1.15 million people living below the poverty line, comprising 8.23 per cent of its population.

Though the drop in poverty figures appears impressive, analysts were unsure whether the basis for calculating poverty was correct.

ROK union 'arrest squad' hunts Daewoo tycoon

AFP, Seoul

South Korean unionists launched an international hunt Friday for the founder of the Daewoo Group, Kim Woo-Chong, who is wanted for a multi-billion dollar fraud and embezzlement.

With thousands of Daewoo workers thrown out of jobs after the collapse of the group in July 1999 with 80 billion dollars of debt, many are bitter at the slow pace of the official investigation into Kim, who was once hailed as the architect of South Korea's economic miracle.

Three labor activists, calling themselves an "arrest squad," were to fly to France on Friday afternoon to set up a European base to track down Kim.

"We will set up a temporary headquarters for the mission in Paris and trace and detain Kim, if possible," Hwang I-Min told AFP.

"The team will operate in Europe for one month or so, and is ready to fly anywhere Kim is believed to be staying," he added.

Hwang, a member of the Democratic Labor Party which is backed by unions, said the "arrest squad" will be helped by French unions and civic groups.

He said the team plans to launch street campaigns to call for help to track Kim.

South Korean prosecutors suspect Kim ordered Daewoo executives to alter documents to inflate assets by 41 trillion won (32.8 billion dollars) so the group could receive 10 trillion won in bank loans between 1997 and 1999.

He left the country for a meeting in China more than a year ago and has not been seen since.

There have been reports of him staying at a luxury villa in Nice on the French Riviera, and other real-estate deals.

Matsushita, Toshiba agree on S'pore jt venture

AP, Tokyo

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co and Toshiba Corp agreed to set up a joint venture in Singapore to make displays for digital devices, the Japanese electronics companies said Friday.

The company, to be set up in March, will begin production in July 2002 of liquid crystal displays for cellphones, PVS, DVD players and mobile devices, they said.

ported sightings in Switzerland, Sudan and staying in the same hotel as US President Bill Clinton when he was in Vietnam last year.

Thirty-four people, including six former presidents of Daewoo affiliates, were indicted by the prosecution on fraud charges this week.

The collapse of the group left local banks with huge debts, forcing the government to inject 20 trillion won into the banking system.

Hwang said his delegation will file a complaint with the International Labor Organization in Geneva against a government crackdown on Daewoo Motor workers protesting layoffs.

Four thousand police stormed a Daewoo Motor plant in the western city of Incheon on Monday to end a sit-in protest by hundreds of workers fired in the firm's drastic restructuring.

The crackdown, in which 84 Daewoo unionists were detained, sparked a series of street clashes. Daewoo Motor has shed 6,884 workers, a third of its payroll at home, as it seeks to tempt General Motors Corp. and Fiat SpA into a takeover.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka City Corporation
Project Implementation Unit, Dhaka Urban Transport Project

Corrigendum Notice for Appointment of Management Consultant

IDA Credit No: 3163 BD IDA Credit Name: Dhaka Urban Transport Project

The following amendments are hereby made for the Notice Memo No DUTP/PD/2000(1)/39 dated 18-01-2001, Invitation for Appointment of Management Consultant under Project Implementation Unit, Dhaka Urban Transport Project, Dhaka City Corporation.

Reference Article	Description	Original	1st Amended	Amended
4.	Bid must be delivered	On or before 12:00 hours on 08-02-2001	On or before 12:00 hours on 15-02-2001	On or before 12:00 hours on 27-02-2001
6.	Bid shall be opened	12:30 hours on 08-02-2001	12:30 hours on 15-02-2001	On or before 12:00 hours on 27-02-2001

All others terms and conditions will remain unchanged and the above corrigendum will be an integral part of the bid documents.

DCC/PRD/350/00-01
GD-192

Project Director

Wide-ranging issues on agenda
IMF, WB hold talks with 10 African leaders

REUTERS, Dar Es Salaam

The heads of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund joined ten southern and east African leaders in Tanzania Thursday to discuss the continent's crises, from prolonged wars to AIDS.

Debt relief under the IMF and World Bank's enhanced initiative for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and improving political and economic governance are other key issues on the agenda.

"We are pushing for a total debt cancellation. This has to be resolved if we are to eradicate poverty in Africa," said Malawi President Bakili Muluzi.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn and IMF Managing Director Horst Koehler flew into Tanzania from Nigeria where they met President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The leaders of Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe also arrived for the two days of talks with Wolfensohn and Koehler, which formally begin on Friday.

War in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi's civil war will be discussed as well as the end of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

James Adams, the World Bank's country director for Tanzania and Uganda, said the meeting would focus on regional issues, rather than bilateral platforms that could drag it down.

"The heads of state and the leadership of the IMF and World Bank will examine issues of governance, AIDS, increased financial assistance to programmes and conflict resolution."

"The Bank and IMF also wish to dialogue with Africa on a more-regular basis, they want to seek a consensus on how to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the people," he added.

In east and southern Africa, the World Bank and IMF have some of their sharpest critics and most ardent supporters.

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi have accused the institutions of imposing their will and programmes on sovereign states, with few positive results.

"What can we say when we are mere beggars? We are going to say everything we have to say," Moi said.

But Uganda, Botswana and Mozambique have all worked closely with the IMF and the World Bank and say they have already made significant progress in reducing poverty.

BCIC Tender Notice
(বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক)

Managing Director, Polash Urea Fertilizer Factory Ltd, Polash, Narsingdi invites sealed quotation for Mechanical seal against tender No. PUFF/COM-18.143/2000-2001, Tender will be received up to 11:00 am on 28.2.2001 and will be opened immediately thereafter in the same day in presence of tenderers (if any). Tender documents will be available on payment of Tk 25/- (twenty-five) only per set (non-refundable) from the office of (i) Controller of Accounts, BCIC, 30-31, Dilkusha, Dhaka, (ii) BCIC Branch Office, 6, Agrabad, Chittagong & (iii) Polash Urea Fertilizer Factory Ltd, Polash, Narsingdi. No tender documents will be sold on the date of its opening.

BCIC-1294-12/2001
DFP-4116-14/2
G-351

Md Mokarram Hossain
Addl Chief Manager (Purchase)
For Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Public Health Engineering
Comilla Division, Comilla

Short Amended Tender Notice
Notice No-11(2000-2001)

Memo No. 158(30) Dated 15/2/2001

This is for information for all concerned that following amendments have been done due to unavoidable circumstances in the tender notice invited through the memo no 106(30), dated 31/01/2001 for installation of pipe lines in Chandina & Barura pourashavas in (2 groups).

- The last date of selling tender will be 26/2/2001 till office hours instead of 18/2/2001.
- The date of receiving tender will be 28/2/2001 till 1:00 pm instead of 19/2/2001.
- The date of opening tender will be 01/03/2001 till 3:00 pm instead of 22/2/2001.

Other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer
Public Health Engineering
Comilla Division, Comilla.

DFP-4492-19/2/01
G-370

Cambodia must join WTO by 2005: PM

REUTERS, Phnom Penh

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen warned yesterday that Cambodia would lose its competitiveness in attracting foreign investment if fails to join the World Trade Organisation by 2005.

Hun Sen told the country's annual commerce meeting that Cambodia needed to join the WTO before the trade organisation eliminates quotas in 2005.

"If Cambodia is a member of the WTO at the time of complete quota elimination, we will have the possibility to compete. If we fail to become a member of the WTO by that time, we will be subjected to quota restrictions forever," he said.

"Cambodia would lose the competitive edge and its attractiveness for investment."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests
Banobhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
Bangladesh

Memo No Dev-76/2001 Dated: 20.02.2001

Sub: Invitation for Hiring the Services of Consultants

Applications are hereby invited to hire individual local/expatriate consultants having experience and expertise in the disciplines indicated below to provide services in the IDA financed Forest Resources Management Project of GOB (IDA Cr No BD-2397) of GOB.

1. Forest Inventory Specialist (1 position)
Qualification and Experience:
The consultant should have at least:

- MSc in Forest Inventory/MFS or MF degree preferably major in forest inventory and forest management from an accredited University of the National University System of any developed country.
- 10 years on-the-job experience in planning, designing and conducting inventory of tropical hill forests, both natural and plantations, including efficient sampling techniques, remote sensing techniques, forest mensuration techniques, electronic data processing, statistical analysis of data and presentation of results.
- Knowledge and experience in remote sensing and GIS.
- Extensive on-the-job experience in preparing stand and stock tables, volume and yield tables for natural and man made tropical forests.
- Experience in photo interpretation, photogrammetry, satellite image analysis and mapping.
- Experience in imparting inventory, remote sensing and EDP related on-the-job training, both formal and informal, to the forestry personnel.
- On-the-job experience in tropical forest management, particularly in volume and growth estimation.
- Experience of technical reporting.

2. Aerial Photo/Satellite Image Interpreter (1 position)
Qualification and Experience:

- Consultant should have a Post Graduate Degree in Aerial Photography & Remote Sensing/GIS.
- He/She should have working experience in Remote Sensing in Natural Resource Management.
- Proven experience to work with SPOT image.
- Proven experience in application of digital image processing using ERDAS Imagine.
- Proven experience in visual Image Interpretation.
- Proven experience in application of Geographic Information Systems using (GIS) PC-Arc/Info/Arc View/Avenue.
- Experience in using Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Proven experience in digital processing and GIS
- Knowledge of quality plotting/printing.

The individual Consultants will work under direct supervision of Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Management planning and under administrative control of Project Director, FRMP. The works are to be carried out as per TOR prepared for the consultancy service mentioned above which can be obtained from the office of the Project Director, FRMP, Banobhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 during office time. The individuals/consulting firms interested in providing services for the consultancy positions mentioned above are requested to submit applications/offer along with their CV and also indicating expected consolidated monthly remuneration, per diem & other out of pocket expenses and round trip air fare to the Project Director, Forest Resources Management Project, Banobhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 on or before 22 March 2001 (up to 5 PM). Applications with inadequate information shall not be considered.

Md. Nuruzzaman
Chief Conservator of Forest
Bangladesh

C-264