

Key member states press for farm deal at WTO talks

REUTERS, Geneva

Five pivotal players in world trade sought a breakthrough on agriculture Tuesday that could help the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meet a looming deadline for wider free trade pacts.

The Geneva-based body is struggling for preliminary accords in key areas, including farm and industrial goods, by the end of July. This would get its Doha Round of free trade negotiations back on track and ease fears it could be delayed months if not years.

Although accounting for only a small portion of global business, agriculture has long been the most sensitive item on the WTO agenda, with poorer nations and leading exporters demanding richer states slash huge farm subsidies, which they say distort trade and keep them out of markets.

Senior officials from leading exporters Australia, Brazil and India, as representatives of the G20 developing country alliance, the United States and the European Union, were meeting ahead of the start on Wednesday of three days of talks involving the full WTO mem-

bership.

Diplomats said the five hoped for at least some concrete ideas on how to close the gap between rich and poor before the end of this week's WTO session.

"If we want a deal in July, then this week could be crucial," said one trade diplomat who declined to be named. "We are looking for something from these five (members)," he added.

The G20, which emerged with force at last September's ill-starred WTO ministerial in Cancun, Mexico, has rejected EU and US

proposals for tackling farm import barriers, or market access, a crucial issue, saying they are not generous enough.

Australia, which speaks for the Cairns Group of farm goods exporters, also rejects the EU-US market access blueprint. It is also pressing Washington and Brussels for more detail on offered cuts to domestic subsidies.

On the pillar of the farm talks, export subsidies, the EU is ready to set dates for ending them, but only if the United States makes a parallel offer on its export credit programmes.



PHOTO: JALALABAD TELECOM

Syed Marghub Murshed, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), hands over the fixed phone licence to Masih Malik Chowdhury, chairman of Jalalabad Telecom Limited, yesterday in Dhaka. Jalalabad Telecom has got a 20-year licence for operating fixed phones in 16 districts of the country's north-east zone. Abdul Hafiz Chowdhury, director, and MA Nowsher Ali, operating director of Jalalabad Telecom, were also present.



PHOTO: ADCOMM

Officials of Adcomm Limited and AP (Dhaka) Limited sign an agreement on Tuesday in Dhaka. Under the deal, Adcomm will plan, design and promote all activities of AP honey brand and range of herbal products of the company.



PHOTO: BAPLC

Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies (BAPLC) Chairman Samson H Chowdhury presides over the 5th annual general meeting of the association in Dhaka on Saturday.

Lanka to seek Opec help to fund oil subsidy

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka hopes to get help from Opec to overcome a heavy fuel subsidy burden that is costing the state millions, the finance minister said Tuesday.

Sarath Amunugama said representations were expected to be made to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) at its meeting in Vienna in late July for a loan, grant or subsidy to manage the cost in the short term.

The government has also said it would consider revising the subsidy rates, possibly moving to the previous government's policy of monthly revisions in keeping with changes in global oil prices.

"This has become a critical issue and CPC (Ceylon Petroleum Corp) is unable to pay overdrafts taken and is running into problems with the banks," Amunugama said at a seminar.

A report from Lanka Orix Securities carried in local media said the country's oil bill would rise by at least \$117 million in 2004 to \$550 million, due to the subsidy with world oil prices rocketing in the last few weeks.

The report said the current cost of the subsidy was around 800 million rupees (\$7.867 million) a month, compared with about 600 million rupees previously.



PHOTO: SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK

Sajjatzumma, chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited, formally inaugurates SWIFT operations at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. Among others, vice-chairmen of the bank Mohammed Farooq and Abdul Halim, Managing Director M Kamaluddin Chowdhury and Advisor Ashfaq U Chowdhury were present at the function.

CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (June 23, 2004) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell	Currency	Buy
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean
62.1000	62.1500	60.3550
76.1594	76.2208	72.5407
114.0032	114.0950	109.3210
43.4824	43.5174	40.7819
0.5786	0.5791	0.5508
50.4263	50.4669	47.9731
8.2324	8.2390	7.5027
46.1813	46.2185	44.1127
7.9702	7.9766	7.7314
36.2712	36.3004	34.9459
17.0455	17.0592	16.2998
16.6918	16.7052	15.9669
10.5699	10.5784	9.4746
211.2964	211.4665	197.4321
		196.8522
		196.6166

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai bath	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
46.2	57.9	102.05	40.960	6.8630	0.6780	3.80

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 23/6/2004

Berth No.	Name of Vessels	Cargo	L. Port Call	Local Agent	Dt of Arrival	Leaving	Import Disch.
J/1	Khanak Ocean Pride	GI	Yang	PSAL	14/6	24/6	314
J/3	Pathein	Sugar(P)	Bank	GPSL	29/5	27/6	563
J/5	Jin Cheng (Liner)	GI	Qing	Bdship	15/6	26/6	1365
J/7	Flame	GI(Hrc)	C. Town	MTCL	19/6	24/6	4784
J/9	Kota Cahaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	20/6	23/6	--
J/10	QC Honour	Cont	PTP	QCSL	19/6	23/6	--
J/12	Me Linh	Cont	Sing	BSC	22/6	25/6	263
CC7/1	Xpress Manaslu	Cont	P. Kel	RSL	19/6	23/6	--
CC7/2	New Blessing	Cont	P. Kel	Everbest	22/6	28/6	354
CC7/3	Kota Tampan	Cont	Sing	Pil (Bd)	21/6	24/6	231
GSJ:	Mela	Wheat(G)	Vanc	ASCL	21/6	24/6	--
TSP:	Pearl	R. Phos	Sing	Pacific	30/5	24/6	--
RM/3	Aurora	CDSO	P. Louis	Rainbow	18/6	25/6	--
RM/4	Tank Oil	CPO	Lumot	Rainbow	19/6	23/6	--

Vessels due at Outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of Arrival	L. Port Call	Local Agent	Cargo	Load Port
Orient Excellence	24/6	Hald	PSSL	Cont	Col
Banga Bodor	24/6	P. Kel	Bdship	Cont	Sing/PKL
Kota Singa	24/6	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Sing
Blue Sea	24/6	Pada	Pacific	Clink	--
Banga Borti	26/6	P. Kel	Bdship	Cont	PKL/Sing
Amanat Shah	25/6	Kand	Cla	GI(St.Pipe)	--
Antipolis	25/6	Hald	JF	Scraping	--
Yangon Starcont	25/6	PKL	Everbest	Cont	Yangon
Express Resolve	25/6	CBO	RSL	Cont	Col
Mardios	25/6	P. Kel	RSL	Cont	Sing
QC Dignity	26/6	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Orient Freedom	26/6	--	PSSL	Cont	Sing
Kota Naga	27/6	Sing	Pil(Bd)	Cont	Sing
An Long Jiang(Liner)	27/6	--	Bdship	GI	--
Dongtai Fortune	27/6	Sing	Pil (Bd)	Cont	Sing
Banga Bijoy	27/6	--	Baridhi	Cont	Col
Rio Negro	27/6	P. Kel	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Shivaji	27/6	P. Band	Inraport	Scraping	--
Orient Wisdom	28/6	--	PSSL	Cont	Col

Tanker due

Al SABIYAH	23/6	Kuwa	MSTPL	SKO/UP-1
Ocean Porpoise	27/6	Sing	MSTPL	HSD/MS
Globel Juno	25/6	--	Rainbow	CPO/IRM(3)
Golden Dream	27/6	--	Rainbow	CPO/DOJ
Shalamar	29/6	Rast	OWSL	Crude OI

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of Vessels	Cargo Call	Last Port	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
			IBSA	R/A(21/6)

Outside port limit:

Dea Captain	--	--	IBSA	R/A(21/6)
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Vessels at Outer Anchorage

Vessels ready:	Cargo	Local Agent	Date of Arrival
Yapi	CDSO	Toma	USL
Straits Express	Vehi	Sing	Purbachal
Black Forest	Urea(W/LD)	P. Kel	Everett
Salamat-1	Bitumeen	Sing	OLM
Banga Bonik	Cont	Col	Baridhi

Vessels not ready:

Novgorod	Sugar (P)	Durb	KSM	11/6
Banglar Robi	Sugar (P)	Mumb	PML	15/6
Noblesse	Fert/Mop	Russ	Angelic	17/6
Urana Naree	Clink	Pena	PSAL	17/6
Seabuss-1	Slag(CBFS)	Japan	SSST	14/6

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

STOCK