

WTO postpones key farm talks amid trade round gloom

REUTERS, Geneva/Brussels

Trade negotiators have postponed talks due late next week on reforming agriculture markets, officials said yesterday, amid gathering gloom over an end-July deadline for a draft deal to liberalise world commerce.

their agreement to an outline accord on liberalising world trade by July 31.

Veteran trade negotiator and first WTO head Peter Sutherland said in The Financial Times that "failure this month would mean we had not moved one jot from the Doha Declaration, referring to the Qatari capital where the current round of trade talks began in late 2001."

Envoy says that if the end-July date is missed, effective talks can only resume next year, after US presidential elections and a change of the European Commission in November.

A full trade accord, covering tariffs on industrial goods and services as well as on farm goods, was originally due by the end of this year.

But diplomats and trade analysts say a final deal, which economists argue would give fresh vigour to the world economy, is now unlikely before 2007 at best.

Trade sources said the WTO farm talks, which were to have been held on July 14-16, could take place just a few days later - but that moves them closer to the deadline.

There was no immediate explanation for the delay, but there are still differences among and between rich and poor members of the WTO over how to move ahead in the negotiations.

Some envoys said the delay became inevitable when the chairman of the WTO farm talks, New Zealand's ambassador Tim Groser, said he could not produce a draft accord on how a final agriculture pact would be negotiated until later next week.

The end-July outline deal is aimed at making up for ground lost when world trade talks collapsed in Cancun last September.

The European Commission, in charge of trade for the EU, has offered to eliminate export subsidies for farm goods and other concessions. It said it wanted an outline deal this month.



Shamsuddin Ahmed, managing director of Uttara Bank Limited, inaugurates the bank's Regional Heads' Conference on Thursday in Dhaka. Additional Managing Director of the bank Md Abdus Sattar and Deputy Managing Director MA Halim are also seen in the picture.

China to manage soft landing for economy Says ADB

REUTERS, Tokyo

China will probably manage a soft landing for its economy over the next few years as it takes measures to cool overheating sectors, the head of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Friday.

"Growth in money supply, bank loans and fixed asset investment all moderated slightly in March," ADB President Tadao Chino told a seminar hosted by a Japanese newspaper.

"We thus expect the Chinese economy to achieve a soft landing over the next two to three years," he said.

Financial markets have feared that a boom in China's economy - now a major driving force behind global trade flows and growth - would turn to bust, but Beijing has taken measures to curb heavy investment in order to slow down certain sectors, and Chino said this seemed to be working.

The government is trying to address structural problems and achieve more balanced growth, particularly by reorganising investment in under-invested sectors, such as agriculture, he said.

While citing the sustainability of China's growth and a recent rise in oil prices as risks for the region, Chino said they were not likely to derail Asian growth over the next two years.

On the ADB's efforts to strengthen economic ties within the region, Chino said conditions were becoming ripe for introducing a common Asian currency.

Trade flows within Asia were comparable to that of Europe before the euro, while labour mobility in East Asia was also high, he said.

"We are confident that while there are a number of daunting conditions and necessary steps towards introducing a single currency in Asia, this is not impossible."

"As private sector-led economic integration in Asia proceeds, the potential benefits of increased regional integration may outweigh the costs," Chino said.

While there were challenges such as the need for the region's diverse economies to give up independent monetary and fiscal policies, he said a single currency would bring about exchange rate stability and lower costs for trade and investment.



Mohammad A Moyeen, chairman of Vanik Bangladesh Limited, presides over the 7th annual general meeting of the company held recently in Dhaka. Among others, Anil S Amarasinga, managing director of Sampath Bank Ltd, Sri Lanka, D Justin M Meegoda, president of Vanik Incorporation Ltd, Sri Lanka, BW Kundanmal, alternative director of Vanik Bangladesh, Khondoker Monir Uddin, managing director of Shanta Apparels Ltd, and Sayyed Husain Jamal, managing director of Vanik Bangladesh, were present.



Dekko Group Managing Director M Shahadat Hossain Kiron, General Manager of Dekko Foods Limited Nurul Amin Sheikh, Manager (Sales & Marketing) AKM Anisuzzaman and brand ambassador of Rasna drink in Bangladesh actress Moussim, among others, pose for photographs at a function held to mark the launch of "Rasna Mini" and the Distributors' Conference 2004 of Dekko Foods Ltd at a hotel in Dhaka recently.

India's Tata to drop 40pc stake in joint venture with Honeywell

AFP, Mumbai

India's Tata business group will sell off its 40 percent stake in a domestic joint venture with technology firm Honeywell Inc to the US-based company's Asian subsidiary, a company statement said Friday.

The deal is valued at \$2 billion dollars and each share held by the Tata group will be sold for 350 rupees (7.60 dollars), the Tata statement added.

The shareholding of Honeywell Asia Pacific Inc will increase from 40 percent to 80 percent as a result of the transaction.

"It is important to note that Tata Group companies have many other business relationships with Honeywell and these will continue as hitherto," said K.A. Chakkar, managing director of Tata Industries Ltd.

The company offers industrial automation services and building technology in the domestic market. Honeywell International is a 23-billion dollar diversified technology and manufacturing company, serving customers worldwide with aerospace products and other technologies.

CURRENCY

Table showing exchange rates of various currencies against the US dollar as of Saturday, July 10, 2004. Columns include Sell, Buy, and various currency codes like USD, EUR, GBP, etc.

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Table showing exchange rates for Indian rupee, Pak rupee, Lankan rupee, Thai baht, Norwegian, NZ dollar, and Malaysian ringgit against the US dollar.

Local interbank FX Trading: Local interbank market was subdued on Saturday. US dollar continued to ease against the Bangladeshi taka due to lower demand in the market.

International Market: International market was closed on Saturday. Dollar fell sharply against the yen on Friday ahead of Sunday's Japanese election that may see Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi win support, enabling him to maintain the country's yen-boosting economic reforms.

ReadyCash Raffle Draw Winners

The latest ReadyCash Raffle draw was held at ReadyCash Bangladesh office at Dhanmondi in Dhaka on Saturday, says a press release.

Table listing raffle prizes and winners. Columns include Prizes, Name of Winners, and Card No.

Winners can collect their prizes from the Executive, Promotion of ReadyCash within 30 days of this news circulation by producing their ReadyCash card transaction vouchers. ReadyCash encourages its cardholders to read The Daily Star and the daily Prothom Alo on every Sunday or call our Customer Service at: 8123850, 8130497, and 8125294-7.

STOCK

TODAY'S TRADED ISSUES July 10, 2004

Large table containing stock market data for July 10, 2004. It is divided into 'Day's Market' and 'Non Traded Issues'. The 'Day's Market' section includes indicators like DSE and CSE indices, turnover leaders, and capital gainers/losers. The 'Non Traded Issues' section lists various companies and their stock details. The table includes columns for company names, share prices, changes, and financial performance metrics.