

BID TO REVIVE TRADE TALKS

WTO proposes elimination of farm export subsidies

AFP, Geneva

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) on Friday proposed that its 147 member countries eliminate subsidies as it launched a new attempt to broker a compromise in deadlocked global trade talks by the end of the month.

The proposal was contained in a copy of the new draft text of an agreement outlining the way ahead for the troubled negotiations, which was obtained by AFP.

"Members agree to commitments ensuring the parallel elimination of all forms of export subsidies... by a credible end date," the text distributed to the WTO's 147 mem-

bers stated.

The "Doha Work Programme" put together by chief negotiator Shota Oshima, who is also Japan's ambassador at the WTO, marked the first time a compromise has been put forward since a ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico collapsed last September.

That opened up a rift between rich and poor countries principally over subsidies and trade barriers in agriculture, as developing countries and farm exporters stood firm in demanding the elimination of billions of dollars in subsidies paid to farmers in the European Union and the United States.

"We urge members to approach

this draft in a constructive spirit," Oshima and WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi said in a covering letter to trading nations.

They emphasised that member states will have a chance to revise the draft before a meeting of the WTO's ruling General Council on July 27 and 28, which holds the key for progress on the Doha round of trade talks.

The text included farm export subsidies under a list of items "to be eliminated by the end date to be agreed", a more wide-ranging and direct formulation than the one that had been under consideration at Cancun.

Ministers had agreed at a ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar in

2001 to reduce, "with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies" on agricultural produce as they set out to achieve the new round by the end of 2004.

"Substantial and effective reductions" in support for cotton -- which is mainly implemented in the United States -- were included under the agriculture section. The proposal appeared to favour a key demand of African countries.

The new draft work programme also proposed that the talks should cover the elimination of the "trade distorting element of export credits and export credit guarantees by reducing the repayment period" to 180 days.



(From left) Md Mahmudul Haque, general manager of Square Toiletries Limited, model Monalisa, brand ambassador of Meril Beauty Soap, Malik Sayeed, marketing executive of the company, and Md Tareque, deputy general manager (Sales), pose for photographs at a press conference held for the draw of promotion campaign, Lakhpati Lottery, in Dhaka Thursday.



The Oriental Bank Limited Managing Director CM Koyes Sami speaks at a meeting with the bank's officers and staff of Chittagong zone during his visit to Chittagong recently.



Bipin Gangadharan, Zodiac Group Australia Pty Limited representative, and Rabul Islam, managing director of Jago Corporation Limited, sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on behalf of their organisations on Thursday. Under the deal, Jago Corporation will market Zodiac products in Bangladesh.



The award giving ceremony for Totalgaz dealers of Narayanganj district was held recently. Among others, Mujibur Rahman, sales manager of Totalgaz, was present.

China, Thailand to build \$1b power plants

REUTERS, Beijing

China and Thailand will spend more than \$1 billion on two new power plants with capacity of more than 7,000 megawatts, the official Xinhua news agency said Saturday.

China's Huangeng Group and Thailand's GMS Power would set up a joint venture to build and operate the new plants in China on the upper reaches of the Mekong River, known in China as the Lancang River, Xinhua said.

China would have a 75-per cent stake in the projects, which were expected to cost 9 billion yuan (\$1.1 billion), Xinhua said.

Huangeng is China's biggest independent power producer and is the parent of listed Huangeng Power International Inc. Xinhua did not say if the listed unit was involved in the deal.

China, whose power supplies are stretched thin amid strong economic growth, is building a total of eight power plants on the Lancang, and the new facilities would be the fifth and sixth, the agency said.

Martha Stewart gets 5 months in jail

REUTERS, New York

Celebrity homemaker Martha Stewart was sentenced on Friday to five months in prison and five months of house arrest, the lightest term allowed by law, for lying about a stock sale -- and vowed to make a comeback.

Her former stockbroker, Peter Bacanovic, drew the same term for conspiring with her.

Speaking in a shaking voice before the sentencing, Stewart made a brief plea for leniency to U.S. District Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum, who could have given the 62-year-old lifestyle guru 16 months behind bars.

The judge recommended a minimum security federal prison in Connecticut, not far from one of Stewart's posh homes, and ordered

two years' of supervised release and a \$30,000 fine. But Stewart does not have to surrender until an appeal is decided.

"Today is a shameful day," said Stewart, who built a catering company into a media and merchandise empire of lifestyle magazines, cookbooks and television shows. "I ask that in judging me, you remember all the good I've done."

Clad in a dark pantsuit, Stewart looked upset as the judge read the sentence but quickly regained her composure and kissed her daughter and her sister. She told reporters in the courtroom she was not surprised "at all" by the sentence.

The judge said she chose the minimum sentence because Stewart had no criminal record and had "suffered and will continue to suffer enough."

CURRENCY

Following is Saturday's (July 17, 2004) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Table with columns: Sell, Currency, Buy, TT Clean, OD Sight Doc, OD Transfer. Lists various currencies and their exchange rates.

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Table with columns: Indian rupee, Pak rupee, Lankan rupee, Thai baht, Norwegian, NZ dollar, Malaysian ringgit. Lists exchange rates for these currencies.

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local interbank market was sub-sued on Saturday. US dollar was stable against Bangladesh taka.

Local Money Market

Money market was active. Call money rate was steady and ranged between 2.50 and 2.75 per cent compared with 2.50-3.00 per cent previously.

International Market

The international market was closed on Saturday due to weekend. The dollar slid to a four-month low against the euro on Friday and also fell against other major currencies after US economic data signaled slowing, though still solid, growth. Core US inflation in June, minus volatile food and energy prices, was more muted than expected. Sterling hits its five-month highs against the dollar.

This memorandum is issued by Standard Chartered Bank and is based on or derived from information generally available to the public from sources believed to be reliable. While all reasonable care has been taken in its preparation no responsibility or liability is accepted for errors of fact or any opinion expressed herein.

ReadyCash Raffle Draw Winners

The latest ReadyCash Raffle draw took place at ReadyCash Bangladesh office at Dhannondoi on Thursday, says a press release.

Table with columns: Prizes, Name of the Winner, Card No. Lists names of winners and their respective prizes.

Winners can collect their prizes from the Executive, Promotions of ReadyCash within 30 days of this news circulation. ReadyCash encourages its cardholder to read The Daily Star and The Daily Prothom Alo on every Sunday for any listing of card winner or call our Customer Service at 8125294-7, 8130497 and 8123150.

STOCK

TODAY'S TRADED ISSUES July 17, 2004

Large table containing stock market data for July 17, 2004. It is divided into sections: DSE (Dhaka Stock Exchange), CSE (Chittagong Stock Exchange), Turnover Leaders, Capital Gainers, Capital Losers, Non Traded Issues, and MISCELLANEOUS. Each section contains columns for company names, prices, and other financial metrics.