

Tough criticism of WTO pact makes revision inevitable

REUTERS, Geneva

Mediators bowed to pressure Thursday and began revising plans for farm trade reform, the centre-piece of a hoped-for global trade pact, after an earlier blueprint was maulled by both rich and poor nations.

Despite warnings from World Trade Organisation (WTO) chief Supachai Panitchpakdi that an end July deadline for a deal left little time for changes, trade sources said fierce criticism leveled at the initial draft had made revision inevitable.

"It could not be avoided after last night," said one trade source referring to a late night session at which the G20 alliance of developing countries, in particular, raised serious objections.

Brazil, spokesman for the alliance of some of the richer develop-

ing states, told the closed-door meeting that the plan as it stood "needs important changes and improvements," according to the text of remarks obtained by Reuters.

France called for substantial changes to the draft, saying that a European Union effort to eliminate export subsidies had not been matched by others. Trade Minister Francois Loois said France would seek support for revisions from EU allies at a meeting in Brussels next week.

Developing nations fear the farm plan, drawn up by New Zealand's ambassador Tim Groser, who chairs the agricultural negotiations, would not force big cuts in rich state farm subsidies which, poorer countries say, distort world trade.

WTO states are racing to finalise a pact to put to a meeting of the executive General Council, starting on July

27 and which is likely to be attended by a number of trade ministers.

The aim is to lay down the parameters for liberalising commerce in farm and industrial goods, under the WTO's Doha Round of free trade negotiations. Failure to meet the end July deadline could plunge the round into deep crisis.

Activist groups, such as Oxfam and the US-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, on Thursday echoed developing country criticisms, saying that the initial draft had been weighted heavily in favour of the richer nations.

"Because of this imbalance, the talks... may fail, which would have dire consequences for the future of multilateralism and global poverty reduction," Oxfam said in a statement.

Apart from the issue of subsidies, developing countries have also

criticised what they see as too much freedom for richer states to keep tariff barriers at high levels for products they consider politically sensitive, such as rice for Japan.

Tariff reduction for both developed and developing states is one of the most contentious issues of the farm talks, and for some rich farm importing countries, far from giving too much freedom, the previous draft was too restrictive.

The Doha Round, whose successful conclusion analysts say could give a big boost to the world economy, has been in trouble almost from its launch in Qatar in 2001.

It was all but derailed by the failure of a ministerial conference in Mexico last September when deep divisions emerged between rich and poor nations, particularly over farm trade.

EU reassures France over farm subsidies

AFP, Brussels

The president of the EU Commission, Romano Prodi, replying to French government concerns in a letter released on Friday, said EU negotiators would fight to defend European interests in World Trade Organisation talks next week.

The letter, sent late Thursday to French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, emphasised that a WTO work programme including a proposal to end agricultural export subsidies was a negotiable matter, rather than a final conclusion.

Prodi also noted that France's European Union partners would agree to end farm subsidies only on condition that "export support measures by our trading partners which disturb the exchange markets" were also halted.

Raffarin wrote to Prodi on Wednesday expressing his government's "deeply serious concerns" about the proposal, prepared for a

meeting of the WTO General Council to be held in Geneva next week.

In his reply, Prodi forecast that "the next days are certainly going to be hard" but said EU officials would fight "to draw up a negotiating framework which protects the interests of the European Union while meeting the hopes of developing countries".

Government support for farmers in rich countries has been blamed for depressing world prices and preventing farmers in the developing world from competing on world markets, and is seen as one of the major obstacles to completing global trade negotiations by the end of this year.

While the WTO draft was designed to galvanize the Geneva talks, scheduled for July 27 and 28, French President Jacques Chirac said it was "profoundly unbalanced to the detriment of the interests of the European Union".

"ম্যানেজিং কোর রিস্ক হন ব্যাংকিং" কোর্সের সনদপত্র বিতরণী অনুষ্ঠান



Hamidul Huq, managing director of United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL), speaks at the concluding session of a training course on "Managing Core Risks in Banking (fifth batch)" organised by the bank in Dhaka. MM Rafiqur Rahman, vice-president-Administration Division of UCBL, and SM Hafizur Rahman, vice-president and principal of the bank's training institute, are also seen in the picture.

Weekly Currency Roundup

July 17 July 22, 2004

Local FX Market

US dollar got stronger against Bangladeshi taka throughout the week. Increased demand for import payments and profit remittances increased the demand for greenback.

Money Market

Bangladesh Bank issued BDT 6,892.00 million by the Treasury bill auction held on Sunday, compared with BDT 11,993.00 million in the previous week's bid. The weighted average yields of T-bills of different tenors were almost unchanged from the previous bid.

Call money rate was on upward trend this week. The rate was stable in the beginning of the week between 2.00 and 2.50 percent. It continued to increase for the rest of the week and ended the week at 5.00 and 6.00 percent.

International FX Market

In the beginning of the week, the dollar extended its recent losses, briefly hitting a new four-month low against the euro and a near-five month low versus sterling as soft US data weighed on interest rate hike expectations. The dollar fell one tick lower than its Friday's four-month low but later gained. Against sterling, the dollar fell to its weakest level since February 26. No major US data was scheduled for release on Monday, while Euro Zone industrial production data for May was due at 0900 GMT. But investors were awaiting congressional testimony by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan on Tuesday and Wednesday, eager to see whether he reiterates the bank's pledge of "measured" monetary tightening in the future.

The dollar hovered near one-week highs versus the euro in the middle of the week, holding gains from the previous session after comments from the Federal Reserve chairman reinforced expectations of higher interest rates. The dollar rose after Alan Greenspan said on Tuesday in his semi-annual review of monetary policy that the US economic expansion had "become more broad-based" and had "produced notable gains in employment". Greenspan also said he couldn't rule out an inflation push from prolonged monetary accommodation. The dollar traded almost unchanged against both euro and yen from late New York levels.

The dollar was close to multi-week highs against the euro and yen by the end of the week but its rally fuelled by an upbeat economic outlook from Fed chief Alan Greenspan this week appeared to be running out of steam. Soft inflation data at the end of last week had encouraged investors to sell the dollar in anticipation that Fed tightening would be gradual. Greenspan's comments reassured the market that the central bank could act more aggressively if it needed to. The greenback was keeping pressure on the British pound, which currently ranks among the higher yielding currencies.



Mirza Azizul Islam, chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), speaks at a seminar titled "Securitization: An Alternative to Debt?" organised by Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) on Tuesday in Dhaka. Keynote speaker of the seminar Malik M Rashid from School of Management, Yale University, and M Fouzul Kabir Khan, executive director and CEO of IDCOL, are also seen in the picture.



Participants of a seminar on ISO 14001 Environmental Management System pose for photographs on Tuesday in Dhaka. The seminar was jointly organised by Orion Registrar Inc USA and Management System Services of Bangladesh.

Microsoft profit up \$ 2.69b

AFP, Redmond, Washington

Microsoft said Thursday its profit rose to 2.69 billion dollars in the most recent quarter, up sharply from 1.48 billion in the same period last year but below Wall Street estimates.

The company, which closed out its fourth quarter June 30, ended with a fiscal full-year profit of 8.17 billion dollars, up from 7.53 billion the prior year.

The earnings of the world's biggest software firm fell just short of Wall Street forecasts after stripping out one-time gains and losses, and also projected upcoming earnings below the consensus forecast.

Earnings amounted to 25 cents a share, after subtracting a five-cent-per-share charge for stock compensation and adding two cents per share in tax benefits. Analysts had been expecting a profit of 29 cents per share.

Microsoft's most active stock in the after-hours trade, dropped as much as 4.8 percent after gaining 14 cents to 29.00 in regular trading.

RESUMPTION OF BEEF IMPORTS Japan, US mad cow experts end talks

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese and US officials Thursday ended talks on lifting Tokyo's import ban on US beef, with reports saying both sides acknowledged tests cannot detect mad cow disease in young cattle, Kyodo news agency said.

The finding could result in an easing of Japan's demand that all US cattle be screened for the brain-wasting disease before it lifts a ban on US beef imposed since a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was found in Washington state in December.

The United States has rejected the demand, saying that blanket testing of young cattle was not scientifically meaningful.

The third round of working-level talks came before a sub-ministerial policy meeting next month expected to move the countries closer toward lifting the ban, which has caused beef prices to soar and

fast-food eateries to shift to using pork as a staple ingredient.

Last week, a Japanese cabinet-appointed panel said in a draft report that testing for BSE in young cattle, in particular those less than 30-months-old, is not technically feasible because there would not be enough abnormal prions -- believed to cause the disease -- to be detected.

Japan has screened every cow slaughtered for consumption after it became the only country in Asia to have confirmed BSE with the discovery of its first case in September 2001.

Its ban shut off the number one export market for US beef, amounting to about 333,272 tonnes in 2002, roughly one-third of the Japanese market.

Since 80 percent of US beef imports are from cattle 20-months-old or younger, removing young cattle from Tokyo's testing regime could permit the resumption of almost all US beef imports, analysts

TRADED ISSUES IN THE WEEK																																
DSE					CSE					Financial Performance					DSE					CSE					Financial Performance							
Company	FMV (Tk.)	Price (Tk.)	Change (%)	Turnover (Tk.)	Share	Price (Tk.)	Change (%)	Turnover (Tk.)	Share	Last AGM	EPS (Tk.)	DPS (Tk.)	Company	FMV (Tk.)	Price (Tk.)	Change (%)	Turnover (Tk.)	Share	Last AGM	EPS (Tk.)	DPS (Tk.)	Company	FMV (Tk.)	Price (Tk.)	Change (%)	Turnover (Tk.)	Share	Last AGM	EPS (Tk.)	DPS (Tk.)		
BANK																																
AB Bank Ltd.	1005	202.50	-4.14	211.25	5245	250.00	Not Traded	27/09/03	5.02	---	---	---	Mithun Knitting	10020	94.00	3.87	90.50	220	104.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	31/12/03	9.49	5.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
City Bank Ltd.	1005	560.50	-3.57	581.25	2645	278.00	Not Traded	30/04/03	5.26	---	---	---	Mitex Textiles Ltd.	10020	44.00	-3.80	46.00	120	52.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	28/02/02	36.25	10.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
DFC Bank Ltd.	1005	237.25	-2.36	244.50	1880	240.00	Not Traded	07/23/03	15.38	---	---	---	Deta Spinning Ltd.	10020	86.00	-1.40	82.00	250	85.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	30/12/03	7.28	10.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Islamic Bank Ltd.	1005	368.00	-1.46	376.50	3619	367.00	Not Traded	17/09/04	195	---	---	---	Awaj Weaving & Finis.	10020	60.00	-6.77	66.50	110	61.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	30/12/03	7.28	10.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
National Bank Ltd.	1005	229.50	-3.00	269.75	17416	262.25	Not Traded	19/09/04	20.4	---	---	---	Handy Textiles Ltd.	10020	60.00	-6.77	66.50	110	61.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	30/12/03	7.28	10.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Bank of Dhaka Ltd.	1005	742.50	-3.00	765.50	7775	750.00	Not Traded	29/12/03	199	---	---	---	Sonapangon Textiles Ltd.	10020	115.00	-4.56	120.50	350	91.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/03	7.76	7.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Rupali Bank Ltd.	1005	217.25	-5.03	228.75	12740	212.00	Not Traded	02/08/03	22.9	---	---	---	Beximco Textiles Ltd.	10020	30.00	-4.88	41.17	1700	30.50	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
UCBL	1005	606.50	1.04	600.25	6015	601.00	Not Traded	15/09/99	15.6	---	---	---	Beximco Denims Ltd.	10020	100.00	-3.00	100.00	100	100.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Uttara Bank Ltd.	1005	318.50	-2.77	329.25	11354	321.75	Not Traded	14/06/04	192	---	---	---	Beximco Denims Ltd.	10020	100.00	-3.00	100.00	100	100.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
The Oriental Bank Ltd.	1005	333.25	-3.75	328.50	9818	333.00	Not Traded	09/11/03	52.1	---	---	---	Prime Textile Ltd.	10020	64.00	-10.80	71.75	600	39.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
DLCL Ltd.	1005	708.00	5.91	668.50	740	675.00	Not Traded	26/05/04	77.5	---	---	---	Adima Yarn & Dyeing	10020	36.50	-6.40	39.00	120	37.25	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Eastern Bank Ltd.	1005	400.00	-8.68	438.00	130	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	Sajid Knitwear Ltd.	10020	36.50	-6.40	39.00	120	37.25	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
United Leasing Co. Ltd.	1005	1116.00	0.81	1107.00	18180	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	Chic Text Ltd.	10020	16.25	-9.72	18.00	100	17.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
United Finance and Inv.	1005	578.00	13.44	509.50	27256	593.00	Not Traded	03/03/04	83.5	---	---	---	Monno Fabrics Ltd.	10020	78.75	-1.88	80.00	16450	78.75	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Al Arabia Islamic Bank	1005	182.50	-1.25	190.00	445	190.00	Not Traded	19/03/04	216	---	---	---	Alara Industries Ltd.	10020	24.00	-1.88	24.00	1400	24.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Prime Bank Ltd.	1005	94.00	-4.82	358.25	32063	336.00	Not Traded	16/03/04	36.1	---	---	---	H.R. Textile Ltd.	10020	84.00	-1.88	84.75	650	84.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Southeast Bank Ltd.	1005	562.75	-1.56	568.50	83463	563.25	Not Traded	29/09/04	45.3	---	---	---	CMC Knit Textile	10020	85.50	-4.84	95.00	200	94.00	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
Bank of Bangladesh Ltd.	1005	315.00	-2.00	315.50	16295	315.00	Not Traded	27/08/04	40.5	---	---	---	Metron Spinning Ltd.	10020	12.00	-1.88	13.40	21000	13.40	Not Traded	---	---	---	29/12/02	3.97	3.00	---	---	---	---	---	---
NCC Bank Ltd.	1005	209.25	-7.72	226.75	38100	202.50	Not Traded	25/07/04	12.1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Social Investment Bank	1005	2811.00	0.36	2801.00	115	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
South Bengal Bank Ltd.	1005	755.25	-0.04	742.25	4050	770.00	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Vidya Finance Ltd.	1005	277.00	1.00	274.25	1315	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.	1005	265.00	-0.84	267.25	68230	263.50	Not Traded	04/03/04	26.4	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
First Lease Int. Ltd.	1005	181.25	-4.77	173.00	91780	181.25	Not Traded	19/02/04	19.5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Standard Bank Ltd.	1005	204.25	-5.11	215.25	23230	202.75	Not Traded	09/06/04	20.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
One Bank Ltd.	1005	203.00	-4.11	211.75	71237	204.75	Not Traded	07/06/04	131	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Bank of Commerce Ltd.	1005	179.00	-0.99	187.25	38100	178.50	Not Traded	28/01/04	26.50	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
INVESTMENT																																
ICB Mutual Fund	1005	130.00	-0.19	130.25	1855	123.00	Not Traded	23/10/03	21.3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1st ICB Mutual Fund	1005	2406.00	1.04	2381.25	10	2500.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	154	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
2nd ICB Mutual Fund	1005	687.50	-1.88	675.00	165	675.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	127	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
3rd ICB Mutual Fund	1005	497.50	-0.50	501.00	100	476.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	102	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
5th ICB Mutual Fund	1005	290.00	-6.15	309.00	40	330.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	93	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
6th ICB Mutual Fund	1005	191.50	-1.79	195.00	390	190.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	148	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
8th ICB Mutual Fund	1005	350.00	-1.99	362.50	310	353.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	210	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
1st BSR Mutual Fund	1005	94.00	-0.79	94.75	70	95.00	Not Traded	12/08/03	50	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
AIMS Fund	1005	125.00	-1.13	126.00	111	113.88	Not Traded	11/01/01	10.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
ENGINEERING																																
Arabs Automobiles Ltd.	1005	99.75	-3.44	574.00	3080	399.75	Not Traded	30/12/03	87.7	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Auto Pipes Ltd.	1005	72.25	-4.30	75.25	1215	77.00	Not Traded	29/06/04	181	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Olympic Industries Ltd.	1005	176.00	-0.39	182.75	1313	173.00	Not Traded	24/10/03	15.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Bangladesh Lamps Ltd.	1005	508.50	-3.56	527.75	7820	515.00	Not Traded	24/10/03	15.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Eastern Cables Ltd.	1005	303.00	-4.27	311.00	4695	303.00	Not Traded	18/12/03	11.1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Monno Jute Ltd.	1005	766.50	-2.75	600.00	40	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Monno Shaffery Ltd.	1005	127.25	-12.88	132.00	70	Not Listed	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Shree Bangladesh Ltd.	1005	139.00	-1.40	139.75	31	165.00	Not Traded	10/05/04	77	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Atlas Bangladesh Ltd.	1005	273.60	-2.17	281.70	9777	Not Traded	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
DL Autores Ltd.	1005	14.00	-1.37	14.50	300	Not Traded	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Quorum Drycell Ltd.	1005	14.90	-2.25	15.40	9390	15.00	Not Traded	17/12/03	1.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Renwick Japewear Ltd.	1005	6.75	-1.10	6.85	1320	Not Traded	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Textile Tubes Ltd.	1005	188.50	-1.57	187.00	1210	141.25	Not Traded	16/09/03	11	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
BD Aluminium Ltd.	1005	140.00	-1.45	147.00	110	131.00	Not Traded	30/03/04	5.91	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Anwar Galvanizing Ltd.	1005	130.25	-5.27	137.00	110	131.00	Not Traded	30/03/04	5.91	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Ray & Que (BD) Ltd.	1005	12.00	-0.99	12.50	600	20.00	Not Traded	24/12/03	1.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Wonder Land Toys Ltd.	1005	37.50	-2.00	38.50	1000	40.50	Not Traded																									