

Final WTO agreement possible: Lamy

AFP, London

A final agreement in global trade talks is possible, World Trade Organization chief Pascal Lamy said in an interview with the British newspaper Independent published Monday.

"It's not mission impossible," Lamy told the paper, referring to the Doha Round of talks launched by the WTO in the Qatari capital in late 2001.

"Everybody will have to move," he added, while admitting that current "positions are too different" to allow for an agreement soon.

Ruling out an accord among WTO

member states when they gather in Hong Kong next month, Lamy said, "it is better to stage Hong Kong as a step forward rather than a big, make-or-break, brinkmanship aim."

"The areas that are most visible, agriculture, industrial tariffs and services, are only the most important part of that. Many issues remain: anti-dumping, regional trade, and trade and environment," he said.

The "WTO is a big truck, not a Formula One car," he added.

"After Seattle, it took nearly two years to produce proposals, after Cancun it was nearly one year," he said referring to earlier meetings in Canada and Mexico.

The European Union's top official Jose Manuel Barroso had said Sunday that next month's World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong were headed for failure chiefly because of the intransigence of Brazil and the United States.

Europe had put forward proposals that were a "very important step" and it was up to countries such as the United States and Brazil to make concessions, Barroso told Europe 1 radio and the TV5 television channel.

"If they don't move in the areas of services and agriculture, it could be that there will be failure," Barroso said.

No new trade deal unless US, Brazil compromise

EC president says

REUTERS, Paris

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said Sunday there would be no new world trade agreement at a summit in Hong Kong next month unless the United States and Brazil compromised.

"If the others do not move ... there will be no agreement," Barroso told France's Europe 1 radio in an interview.

He said he was "pessimistic" about the chances of reaching agreement at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit.

"If the others do not move, it will be a failure. They must consider this offer (by the European Union) as a very big

step," Barroso said, adding that the EU could not be blamed if the summit ended in failure.

Trade negotiators from around the world said last week their differences were still too deep to settle on a blueprint for a new WTO round at the Hong Kong summit.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim held talks in Rome on Saturday which they said were useful but did not achieve a breakthrough.

The Hong Kong meeting between Dec. 13 and 18 was previously billed as a deadline for reaching the outline plan, four years after the round was launched to boost the global economy

and help farmers in some of the world's poorest countries.

Now the toughest issues are only likely to be thrashed out in 2006, approaching what trade experts say is the real deadline for the round -- the expiry in mid-2007 of the US president's authority to do trade deals with minimal congressional scrutiny.

Brazil -- which has a booming agricultural sector -- and other nations including the United States and Australia complain that the EU's proposals to cut its barriers for farm imports are too timid.

Brussels insists it has gone as far as it can, given the resistance of some EU members such as France to more concessions.

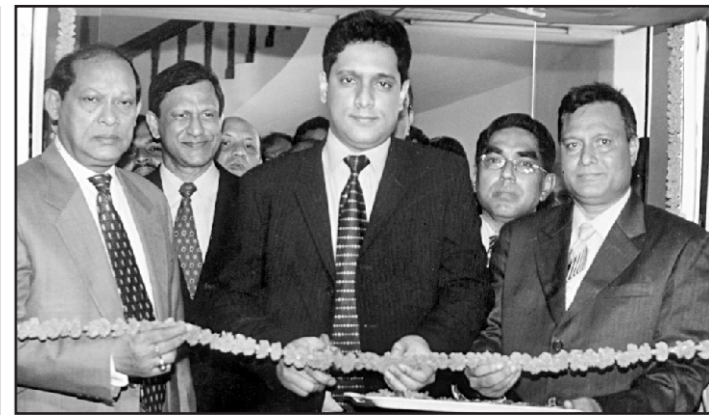


PHOTO: THE CITY BANK

Ahmed Rajeeb Samdani, director of The City Bank Ltd, inaugurates the shifted Moulibazar branch of the bank at Kushumbagh Shopping City recently. Abbas Uddin Ahmed, managing director, among others, was present at the inauguration.

CURRENCY

Following is Monday's (November 14, 2005) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell	Buy	OD Transfer
TT/OD	BC	Currency
66.2000	66.2300	USD
78.5728	78.6084	EUR
116.1611	116.2138	GBP
49.5507	49.5732	AUD
0.5683	0.5685	JPY
51.0842	51.1073	CHF
8.4483	8.4521	SEK
56.1112	56.1366	CAD
8.5542	8.5581	HKD
39.7121	39.7301	SGD
18.1708	18.1791	AED
17.7933	17.8014	SAR
10.8471	10.8520	DKK
223.1972	223.3006	KWD
65.1800	65.1583	65.1148
75.7196	75.6944	75.6439
112.6310	112.5935	112.5184
46.9948	46.9791	46.9478
0.5488	0.5487	0.5483
49.2817	49.2653	49.2324
7.6342	7.6317	7.6266
54.1677	54.1496	54.1135
8.3839	8.3811	8.3755
38.2063	38.1936	38.1681
17.6029	17.5970	17.5853
17.2429	17.2372	17.2257
9.8741	9.8708	9.8642
222.1865	222.1148	221.9713

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
45.55	59.76	101.845	41.140	6.6012	0.6871	3.78

Local Interbank FX Trading
Local interbank FX market was active on Monday. USD was steady against BDT.

Local Money Market
Money market was active on Monday. Call money rate eased slightly and ranged between 7.50 and 8.50 per cent compared with 8.00-9.50 per cent previously.

International Market
The dollar tracked back from last week's two-year peak against the euro on Monday, as investors locked in gains ahead of Tuesday's hearing on Ben Bernanke's nomination for US Federal Reserve Chairman. Most analysts expect Bernanke to push on with the Fed's campaign of raising interest rates at a measured pace. But the market is alert to any signs of a change in tone from that of Alan Greenspan, who has headed the central bank for 18 years. Investors were also looking out for US October retail sales and producer price data on Tuesday. Analysts said the euro also found support after comments from Bank of France governor Christian Noyer who said in a newspaper interview that there was a need to keep down inflation and inflationary expectations in the euro zone on concerns over rising energy prices. Markets are paying close attention to comments from European Central Bank officials for clues on when it might move on raising interest rates. Some traders said the dollar could fall this week as Japanese and European investors repatriate coupon payments due on Tuesday from US treasuries.

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.

Australia turns heat on EU over WTO gridlock

AFP, Busan, South Korea

Australia said Monday it was up to the European Union to make a better offer on market access to break the logjam in global trade talks.

"We, from Australia's perspective, expect the European Union to understand what the rest of the world is saying about market access," Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said.

"We expect a better offer from the European Union on market access than has so far been the case. And clearly, here in Busan the initiative will be given a lot of thought."

Downer, whose country is a major farm producer, was speaking to reporters in the South Korean port of Busan where he will attend a meeting of APEC foreign and trade ministers Tuesday and Wednesday.

The annual APEC gathering will culminate in a two-day summit beginning Friday in which leaders

are expected to issue a hard-hitting statement calling for compromises to ensure next month's World Trade Organisation ministerial talks in Hong Kong do not collapse.

The round of WTO talks launched in the Qatari capital Doha in 2001 has become bogged down in a dispute over agriculture subsidies which has pitted mainly rich nations against developing nations.

Developing countries argue that farm subsidies in the United States and countries of the European Union depress global prices and prevent growers in poor nations from competing.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, last month offered to cut the bloc's highest farm tariffs by 60 percent as part of measures to almost halve the overall tariff rate to 12 percent.

The offer was conditional on its main negotiating partners -- the United States, Brazil, India and

Australia -- responding constructively, notably on industrial goods, services and development.

Downer said he was hopeful that the statement to be issued by the APEC leaders on the Hong Kong WTO talks would help break the impasse.

"APEC has a very big share of the world's economy, so when you have got major economic players here, major trading nations expressing one view on how the Doha Round should progress, it's going to have an impact," he said.

"And it's important we get a good strong statement out of APEC in order to help the Hong Kong ministerial meeting be a successful meeting."

APEC includes the world's largest and second biggest economies -- the United States and Japan, respectively -- as well as a major trading nations such as Australia, South Korea and China.

Korean farmers allowed to attend WTO summit

AFP, Hong Kong

A Korean farmers' group known for its feisty protests against globalisation will be allowed to attend the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Hong Kong next month, the WTO said on Monday.

The Korean Peasants League, which groups South Korean farmers from across the country, will join thousands of other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and protesters at the meeting, according to the WTO's meeting website.

Hong Kong police chief inspector Alfred Ma said the group's inclusion on the list of attending NGOs would have no impact on security arrangements.

"We do not consider them particularly militant," Ma told AFP. "They are simply one of the groups that likes to make themselves known."

A member of the organisation, which is opposed to the slashing of subsidies to farmers, stabbed himself to death during a protest at the WTO's last ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, in 2003.

Europe key to WTO talks: Portman

AFP, Beijing

Next month's WTO trade liberalization talks in Hong Kong are a "once in a generation opportunity," US Trade Representative Rob Portman said Monday as he placed the onus on Europe for a breakthrough.

"This is a once in a generation opportunity," said Portman, who is visiting China for a China-US relations forum. "And if we allow this to go by, we miss an opportunity."

Developed countries' high agriculture tariffs and subsidies, aimed at protecting domestic farmers, are the key point of contention holding up an agreement among World Trade Organization (WTO) members to free up trade, Portman told a news briefing.

To make the December 13-18 WTO Hong Kong meeting a success, the European Union must adequately reduce agriculture tariffs and quotas, Portman said, blaming EU unwillingness to do for "blocking the talks."

Developing countries, which have a comparative advantage in agricul-

ture, will not likely sign onto a trade liberalization agreement unless rich countries reduce their protection of agriculture sectors, said Portman.

"So we've got to get the tariffs down and the European Union is frankly not willing to provide meaningful market access by reducing tariffs and quotas," Portman said, building on previous comments.

"That means that the rest of the world is being asked to live with a formula that doesn't reduce tariffs and quotas adequately."

Without an agreement in agriculture, it will be difficult to get developing countries to agree to other issues, such as market opening, including cutting industrial tariffs and dropping barriers on trade in services.

"I'm concerned right now that unless we can break this deadlock on agriculture, it will be hard to make progress on all the other issues," Portman said.

"Unless the Hong Kong meeting is successful, we won't be able to help the developing world."

STOCK