

Star BUSINESS

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WTO talks heat up in Davos

AFP, Davos, Switzerland

Frozen world trade talks will be warmed up and tackled again in the Swiss mountains this week amid hopes that leading negotiators can narrow some of their differences in the rarefied atmosphere of Davos.

The United States, the European Union and emerging countries Brazil and India will hold talks on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum here on Saturday with a view to relaunching the stalled Doha round of WTO talks.

"We are looking for a political signal from this meeting to relaunch negotiations shortly," said a senior EU official close to European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson on Wednesday.

The Doha round of World Trade

Organisation talks was suspended by WTO director-general Pascal Lamy last July following five years of acrimonious meetings pitting the EU, the United States and the emerging countries against each other.

The round, which aims to break down trade barriers and reduce distorting government subsidies, is deadlocked because of differences between the EU and US on farm issues and discord between rich and poor countries about trade in industrial products and services.

The EU official said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the meeting in Davos, but scaled back expectations that a deal might be struck on any of the outstanding issues.

"There will not be a breakthrough. That's certain," he said.

A report in the Financial Times on Monday had claimed that both sides had been discussing the vexed issue of trade in farm products and were on the verge of an agreement.

Schwab said in a statement Wednesday that she was looking forward "to continuing discussions with trade ministers and exploring ways to build on the progress we have been making over the past few months".

The Davos meeting, which brings together leading political and business figures for four days of talks in the Swiss ski town, is also set to feature bilateral meetings between the leading countries.

Some believe the most that can be hoped for is that the WTO's Lamy reverses his decision to suspend the talks, making the negotiations active again and spurring hopes that a final deal might be reached.

Lamy said Tuesday he was also looking for a signal from leading nations of their readiness to begin full-scale talks again.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who opened the Davos event, threw political weight behind the search for an end to the stalemate, saying that "the positions of the US, EU and emerging countries need to come closer".

But the greatest challenge for the Doha round might come once negotiators have agreed the outlines of a deal.

Any final agreement would require political approval and would likely face opposition in the current climate, not least in the United States where the White House is set to lose its special trade negotiating powers at the end of June.

If the newly Democrat-dominated Congress decides not to renew the presidential "fast-track" trade powers, then any deal would be picked through by Congress and would possibly be derailed, analysts predict.



PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

Dhaka Bank Ltd has received a Safa Award 2005 for published accounts and reports. Khondker Fazle Rashid, deputy managing director of the bank, received the award on behalf of the bank from Indrajith Fernando, president of South Asian Federation of Accountants (Safa), at a function held recently in Sri Lanka.

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 25/1/2007

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	Tug Solid-1	Ball Clay	Kuch	DNS	5/1	24/1	--
J/2	Zenovia	Wheat(p)	Novo	Mutual	19/1	10/2	1288
J/3	Eid-A-Mostafa	GI	P.Band	Cla	23/1	30/1	787
J/4	Hun Jiang	GI	Xing	Cosco	21/1	28/1	1646
J/5	Banga Biraj	Cont	Sing	Bdship	18/1	27/1	--
J/6+5	Jin Ping	GI(y. Peas)	Vanc	Lithmond	14/1	31/1	2270
J/7	Komsomolsk Sakhalia	Urea(bic)	Sing	Seacom	22/1	27/1	--
J/8	Ju Yong Guang	GI(S. Ash/s.sulp)	Xing	Cosco	23/1	30/1	3464
J/9	Markovo	Urea(BCIC)	Long	Pip	18/1	29/1	1044
J/10	Phoenix	Cont	PSSL	19/1	29/1	--	--
J/11	Vinashin Mariner	Cont	Sing	PSSL	18/1	28/1	360
J/12	Dewi Laksmi	Bg. Pass	Sura	Lufful	23/1	26/1	104

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Caraka Jaya Niaga-III-4	25/1	Kol	Mutual	Ballast	--
Orfeas	27/1	Sing	CTPL	Urea(prill)	--
Noor-e-madina	25/1	--	PSAL	Salt	--
Banga Borak	25/1	Pkel	Bardhi	Cont	C.Clink
Mir Damad	25/1	Chenn	Move	L/viza	--
Guo Shun	25/1	Nant	TCL	GI(Y. Ma)	--
Maris	26/1	Kant	Lithmond	C.Clink	--
Coastal Express	26/1	Kol	BSCA	Cont	L/para
Eshan	26/1	Sing	CEL	Cont	Sing
Kota Ratna	26/1	Sing	Pi(Bd)	Cont	Mong
Sea Master One	27/1	Sing	PML	Cont	Sing
Yongxing	20/1	Cbo	PSSL	Cont	Col

Tanker due

Sc Guoji	25/1	Sing	WTH	CPO(RM4)
Al Badiyah	26/1	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/SKO
Overseas Primar	28/1	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/MS

Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo call	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Wira Keris	--	--	Ibsa	R/A(4/1)
Pacific Champion	Pro. Equip	--	Ibsa	R/A(12/1)
Sea Drill-6	Pro. Equip	--	Ibsa	8/1
Gulf Drill-9	Pro. Equip	--	Ibsa	3/1
Pacific Steel	--	--	Ibsa	R/A(20/1)

Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready

Rhone Borg	Cont	Ptp	QCSL	15/1
Rio Lawrence	Cont	Ptp	QCSL	17/1
Csav California	Cont	Col	PSSL	18/1
Eagle Progress	Cont	P.Kel	Everbest	19/1
Kota Rukun	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	21/1
Kota Tampan	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	21/1

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

STOCK



PHOTO: GRAMEENPHONE

Dr Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, vice chancellor of Independent University, Bangladesh, and Yasir Azman, head of Sales (Dhaka region) of Grameenphone Ltd, pose for photographs at a corporate agreement signing ceremony recently. As per the deal, the mobile phone operator will provide complete communication facilities under its 'Business Solutions' package for the university.