

# Japan, Asean hope for basics of FTA

AFP, Singapore

Japan's Trade Minister Akira Amari and his southeast Asian counterparts will attempt to agree the framework of a free trade deal when they meet in Brunei on Friday, a Japanese diplomatic source said.

Amari will meet with ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in a bid to iron out remaining differences.

"There is no signing but we sincerely hope we can have an agreement in principle," said the source, who asked not to be named.

"We want to have a common understanding on the modality for tariff reduction on trade in goods, but even at this moment I cannot say we are 100 percent sure," he told AFP by telephone from the Brunei capital Bandar Seri Begawan.

"We are still negotiating on the table."

Japanese and Asean working-level officials who met in Tokyo last month for the seventh round of their talks on a so-called comprehensive economic partnership agreement (EPA) said they hoped to strike an accord in Brunei on merchandise trade.

Such a free trade pact, which is expected to eventually include services and investment cooperation, would form the core of the EPA which would encompass broader economic ties.

But the source said that senior

officials who had been meeting in Brunei since Tuesday ahead of Friday's ministerial gathering had not been able to reach an agreement.

"Honestly speaking, there is some uncertainty," he said.

Japan has already signed free trade agreements with four Asean members -- Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines -- but wants an accord that will cover all 10 Asean members.

Indonesia and Brunei had expressed agreement "in principle" on a free trade deal with Japan, but at least one less developed Asean member had expressed some concern, the source said.

"They are a bit worried about our exports," he said, mentioning auto parts.

Japan and Asean agreed to liberalise more than 90 percent of merchandise trade in value within 10 years after an EPA took effect.

Tokyo has said it planned to eliminate tariffs on some 92 percent of its imports from Asean bloc in the 10-year period, while Asean aimed to remove tariffs on more than 90 percent of its imports from Japan.

Asean's other members are Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

## Jordan microcredit programme in July

AFP, New York

Jordan's Queen Rania and actress Natalie Portman joined Wednesday in the launch of a major new microcredit programme targeting global poverty that will focus initially on the Middle East.

The Jordanian queen and the US-Israeli actress both spoke at the launch of the Village Banking Campaign, which aims to bring banking services to one million of the world's most destitute families.

As part of the Middle East effort, the queen said FINCA International (Foundation for International Community Assistance), a global microcredit group, plans to start its first operations in Jordan in July.

"I know that creating opportunity in my region is not an option; it is a necessity," the queen said as she unveiled the campaign at New York University at a luncheon attended by Golden Globe-winning Portman, FINCA staffers, business executives and students.

## Prime Bank holds get-together

Prime Bank organised a get-together for its clients and patrons at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka on Monday to celebrate the bank's 12 years of operations, says a press release.

Imam Anwar Hossain, chairman of the bank, was present at the function as chief guest. Vice chairpersons Shahnaz Quashem and Saheda Pervin Trisha, Director Ferdoushi Islam, Managing Director M Shahjahan Bhuiyan, deputy managing directors Nasiruddin Ahmed and Mahbulul Alam were present.

As part of CSR (corporate social responsibility), the bank in the function awarded 18 juvenile artists whose paintings were printed in the bank's desk and wall calendars for 2007.

The bank also awarded nine outstanding women entrepreneurs under "Micro-Credit Award 2007" in collaboration with BRAC, ASA & Proshika.

## Oil above \$64

AP, London

Oil prices rose Thursday after reports of more attacks on oil workers in Nigeria raised worries about supplies.

Light, sweet crude for June delivery rose 40 cents to \$64.08 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange at midday in Europe. The contract on Wednesday fell 72 cents to settle at \$63.68 a barrel.

Brent crude contract for June delivery gained 59 cents to \$66.84 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange in London.

## Uttara Bank declares 20pc cash, 100pc stock dividends

Uttara Bank Ltd has declared a 20 percent cash dividend and a 100 percent stock dividend for its shareholders for the year 2006.

The announcement came at the 24th annual general meeting (AGM) of the bank held on Monday in Dhaka, says a press release.

Md Asaduzzaman, vice chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank, presided over the AGM.



PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Prime Bank awarded 18 juvenile artists whose paintings were printed in the bank's desk and wall calendars for 2007 at a get-together in Dhaka on Monday. The bank organised the get-together for its clients and patrons to celebrate its 12 years of operations.



PHOTO: AIMINLIFE

Geun Mo Kim, director (Research and Development) of US-based IP Ware Inc, TK Kim, international affairs director of the company, and M Shoeb Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Aiminlife.com Ltd, a local job portal, pose for photographs at an agreement signing ceremony recently. Under the deal, IP Ware will provide technical assistance for the development of the career portal.

## CURRENCY

Following is Thursday's (May 3, 2007) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell		CURRENCY	Buy		
TT/OD	BC		TT CLEAN	OD SIGHT DOC	OD TRANSFER
69.7200	69.7500	USD	68.7500	68.7271	68.6813
96.1927	96.2341	EUR	91.9531	91.9225	91.8612
140.3115	140.3719	GBP	135.1831	135.1381	135.0479
58.8925	58.9178	AUD	55.2888	55.2703	55.2335
0.5935	0.5937	JPY	0.5681	0.5679	0.5676
58.3969	58.4220	CHF	55.5017	55.4832	55.4462
10.8642	10.8689	SEK	9.8027	9.7994	9.7929
64.0691	64.0967	CAD	61.4059	61.3854	61.3445
8.9346	8.9384	HKD	8.7700	8.7671	8.7613
46.8045	46.8247	SGD	44.9758	44.9608	44.9308
19.1375	19.1458	AED	18.5670	18.5608	18.5485
18.7359	18.7440	SAR	18.1869	18.1808	18.1687
13.3259	13.3317	DKK	12.0006	11.9966	11.9886
237.7492	237.8537	KWD	236.0827	236.0063	235.8536
Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar					
Indian rupee		Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor. kroner
					NZ dollar
					Malaysian ringgit
40.955	60.65	110.6	34.765	5.9767	0.7385
					3.42

## SHIPPING

### Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 3/5/2007

Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/3	Eid-e-mostafa	Rice(p)	Kaki	Cla	23/4	8/5	1074
J/6	Hansa London	Cont	Mong	Pssl	1/5	5/5	--
J/8	Golden Star	Urea	Sing	Litmond	26/4	7/5	1774
J/11	Cape Spencer	Cont	Sing	Pssl	30/4	--	407
J/12	Banglar Shikha	Cont	P. Kel	Bsc	28/4	3/5	--
CCT/1	Jasco View	Cont	P. Kel	Rsl	30/4	--	--
CCT/2	Rio Lawrance	Cont	Sing	Qcsl	1/5	--	--
CCT/3+2	Wisdom	Cont	Sing	Apl	1/5	4/5	--
NCT/1	Banga Borti	Cont	P. Kel	Baridhi	30/4	4/05	--
NCT/2	Kota Ria	Cont	P. Kel	Pil(bd)	1/5	--	--
CCJ:	Maritime Chiangmai	C. Clink	Tanj	Bsl	29/4	--	--

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Libre	2/5	Yang	Rainbow	R. Seed	--
Banga Borat	3/5	Sing	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Mir Demad	9/5	Viza	Baca	Cont	Kol
Hub Gallardo	3/5	Sing	Seacon	Cont	Sing
Kiani Satu	5/5	Busa	Allseas	Gi	--
Eagle Pride	6/5	Pkl	Ct	Cont	Sing
Dali	4/5	Col	Seacon	Cont	Col
Delmas Komati	5/5	P.kel	Bdship	Cont	P. Kel
Tug Greenville-ii	4/5	Phuk	Asa	Kalimantan Pacific	--
Kalimantan Pacific	4/5	Phuk	Asa	Scraping	--
Tug Inai Teratai-322	4/5	Mala	Ssst	Barge: Inai Kiambang	--
Barge: Inai Kiambang	4/5	Mala	Ssst	--	--
Bi Ro Bong	6/5	Kaki	Hsa	Rice	--
Rubin Nacre	5/5	Aust	Usl	R. Seed	--
Mol Karina	5/5	Haldia	Seacon	Cont	Sing
Ja Vesta	5/5	Sing	Vega	Cont	Sing

### Tanker due

Ama-3	3/5	Belwa	Wh	Cpol(m/3)	--
Gulf Sleb	5/5	Kuwa	Mstpl	Hsd	--

### Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo call	Last Port	Local agent	Date of arrival
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### Outside port Limit

Sea Drill-6 (rig)	Pro. Equip	--	Ibsa	8/1
Gulf Drill-9 (barge)	Pr. Equip	--	Ibsa	3/1
Pacific Steel	P. Equip	--	Ibsa	R/a (29/4)
Pacific Champion	--	--	Ibsa	R/a (27/4)
Wira Keri	--	--	Ibsa	R/a (2/5)
B.W. Havsol	Ammonia	Vize	Mbl	3/5

### Vessels at outer anchorage

#### Vessels ready

Banglar Ummi	S. Lag	Viza	Olm	1/5
Eagle Progress	Cont	P. Kel	Everbest	1/5
Eagle Pistige	Cont	Sing	Qcsl	2/5
B.W. Havsol	Ammonia	Vize	Mbl	3/5
B. Moni	Gi	Yang	Pml	3/5
Cape Bonavista	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	1/5

#### Vessels not ready

Ks Harmony	Cement	Kant	Andl	1/5
Al Sabiyah	Hsd	Kuwa	Mstpl	2/5

### Vessels awaiting employment/instruction

B-Sea	Ballast	Kaki	Intraport	16/3
Asrar-a- Mostofa	--	--	Cla	R/a (17/4)

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



PHOTO: UTTARA BANK

The 24th annual general meeting (AGM) of Uttara Bank Ltd was held on Monday in Dhaka. Md Asaduzzaman, vice chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank, presided over the AGM.

## STOCK