

## Asean urged to free up services sector

AFP, Singapore

Southeast Asian nations should turn their attention to opening up the services sector after accomplishing much in removing tariff barriers to trade in goods, Singapore's trade minister said Wednesday.

Liberating the sector, which generally accounts for 40-50 percent of total economic output among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), will raise competitiveness and help spur growth, Trade Minister Lim Hng Kiang said.

He said tariffs on more than 99 percent of products under the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) have been slashed to between zero and

five percent in the bloc's six more developed members.

Tariffs are to be abolished by 2010 for the six and at a later date for the group's four less developed members.

"We now need to turn our attention to services," Lim said, referring to the sector that covers among others telecommunications, tourism, transport and banking.

"No country today can prosper without an efficient services infrastructure that is free from barriers and burdensome restrictions. Economic performance depends on it," Lim said at a forum on raising the competitiveness of Asean's services industry.

"Producers and exporters of goods from edibles to electronics

will not be competitive without access to efficient banking, accountancy, telecommunications, or transport."

While Asean member have made great strides in reducing tariffs, reforms in the services sector have lagged behind, analysts have said.

Freeing up restrictions in services is crucial for Asean to attract foreign direct investments amid stiff competition from Asian giants China and India, Lim said.

"Liberalising ownership requirements, guaranteeing access to local markets and easing business operations are therefore important for business to flourish," he said.

Lim cited a decision by Vietnam

to allow the entry of Singapore-based healthcare group Thomson Medical into the Vietnamese market and give the Vietnamese people a wider choice.

Thomson Medical in November signed an agreement with the Han Phuc International Woman and Children Hospital Joint Stock Company to manage a hospital for women and children in Vietnam.

Lim said Asean should stick to commitments under a "roadmap" to fully liberalise the services sector by 2015.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.



PHOTO: STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

Standard Chartered Bank and Anwar Landmark Ltd, a real estate company, recently signed an agreement under which the customers of Anwar Landmark will get privileged services from the bank's home loan project. Vikram Issar, head of Consumer Banking of the bank, and Md Tajul Islam, managing director of Anwar Landmark, signed the deal.



PHOTO: STAR

The first phase of the prize giving ceremony of a promotional campaign launched by Pran-RFL Group styled 'Pran Khaiben To Paiben' took place yesterday in Dhaka. Executive Director of Pran Elias Mridha and other senior officials were present at the function. The campaign, which began on March 1, will continue until May 31. Under the campaign, customers can win from Tk5 to Tk5 lakh on purchase of any glass bottled soft drinks such as Pran Up, Pran Cola, Pran Mango Juice and Pran Green Mango Juice.

## CURRENCY

Following is Wednesday's (May 09, 2007) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank.

	Major currency exchange rates		Exchange rate of some currencies		
	BC Sell	TT Buy	Per USD	BDT per Currency	USD forward rate against BDT
US dollar	69.50	68.50	Indian rupee	40.63	1.70
Euro	95.56	91.28	Pak rupee	60.79	1.14
Pound	139.89	134.71	Lankan rupee	110.87	0.62
Australian dollar	58.95	55.33	Japanese yen	0.57	Thaibath
Japanese yen	0.59	0.57	Swiss franc	34.62	1.99
Swiss franc	58.02	55.13	Swedish kroner	9.67	9.67
Canadian dollar	63.96	61.26	Canadian dollar	3.41	20.23
Hong Kong dollar	8.91	8.74	Hong Kong dollar	8.74	Buy
Singapore dollar	46.84	44.99	Singapore dollar	44.99	Sell
UAE dirham	19.08	18.50	1M	68.60	69.61
Saudi riyal	18.68	18.12	2M	68.72	69.82
Danish kroner	13.23	11.91	3M	68.87	70.04
Kuwaiti dinar	236.97	235.24	6M	69.32	70.76

\*All currencies are quoted against BDT

\* Rates may vary based on nature of transaction

\* The forward rates are indicative only and fixed dated

## SHIPPING

### Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 9/5/2007

Berth	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	Bangler Moni	Gi(log)	Yang	PML	3/5	9/5	1639
J/2	Kiani Satu	Gi	Aliseas	5/5	10/5		3634
J/3	Bi Ro Bong	Rice(p)	Kaki	HSA	7/5	11/5	--
J/4	Dolphin-II	Gi	Viza	Sunshine	7/5	11/5	1408
J/6	Mol Karina	Cont	Hald	Seacon	6/5	9/5	--
J/8	Golden Star	Urea	Sing	Litmond	26/4	9/5	730
J/9	Delmas Komati	Cont	P. Kel	Bdship	5/5	10/5	84
J/12	Kota Rukun	Cont	Sing	Pili(bd)	6/5	10/5	203
J/13	Phu Tan	Cont	P. Kel	PSSL	6/5	10/5	193

### Vessels due at outer Anchorage

Name of Vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Precious River	9/5	Sing	Vega	Cont	Sing
Banga Borak	9/5	Sing	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Oel Freedom	10/5	Sing	Pssi	Cont	Sing
Ocean Ever	9/5	Novo	USL	Wheat(p)	--
Kota Ratha	10/5	Sing	Pili(bd)	Cont	Mong
Csav California	12/5	Chnn	PSSL	Cont	Col
Mir Damad	12/5	Viza	BSCA	Cont	Kol
Xpress Makalu	9/5	Col	Seacon	Cont	Col
Bk Ace	12/5	Kand	Rainbow	Salt(ind)	--
Samsun Apollo	10/5	--	OLM	C. Clink	--
Ali Murtaza	13/5	Viza	Sunmoon	Slag	--
Pacific Express	10/5	Sing	Pili(bd)	Cont	Sing
Pac Palawan	11/5	Sing	Cel	Cont(3 Pkg)	Sing

### Tanker Due

Al Kuwaitiil	9/5	Kuwa	MSTPL	Hsd(jp-1	--
Khadijah	10/5	Bela	MTCL	Cpo(m/8/3)	--
Dai Long	11/5	Jakarta	PSL	Naphtha	Doj/7/6
Zhong Hua-7	11/5	BELW	RCL	Cpko/cpstr (m/4)	--
Orestis	13/5	Jebel	Uniglobal	M.C. Oil	--
Vernal Grace	15/5	Indo	RCL	Cpo(m/4)	--

### Vessels at kutubdia

Name Of Vessels	Cargo	Last port	Local agent	Date of arrival

### Outside Port Limit:

### N I L

### Vessels at outer Anchorage

### Vessels Ready:

Tatlim	Cpo	Bela	Jnship	9/5
Maritime Songkla	C. Clink	Tanj	BSL	6/5
Swift	Wheat(g)	Novo	Litmond	6/5

### Vessels Not Ready:

Rubin Nacre	R. Seed	Aust	USL	5/5
Theodor	C. Clink	Kohsi	Saraf	9/5

### Vessels Awaiting Employment / Instruction:

Borak	--	--	FSA	R/a (4/5)
Bangla Jyoti	--	--	BSC	R/a (5/5)
Eid-a-mostafa	--	--	Cla	R/a (8/5)

### Vessels Not Entering:

Libre	R. Seed	Sing	Rainbow/35
Sanim	C. Clink	Thail	Litmond/7/5
Goldensari Indah	R/seedy. Pe	Vanc	Mutual/08/05
Glory Falcon	C. Clink	Mala	Litmond/08/05
Divnogorsk	Scraping	Vladi	Rship/09/05

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

## STOCK</h