

Oil fever subsides

AFP, New York

The fever that gripped oil markets in recent weeks has begun to subside as traders discount the likelihood of a doomsday scenario in Iran, yet many remain cautious due to a variety of geopolitical risks.

Crude oil prices have slumped to their lowest levels of the year after spiking at 69.20 dollars per barrel in New York on January 23, near the all-time highs of 70.85 dollars in August 2005 after Hurricane Katrina.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in March, lost 78 cents to close Friday at 61.84 dollars.

The possibility of international sanctions on Tehran and a cutoff of Iranian oil has been plaguing the

market amid growing concerns about Iran's nuclear energy program.

Iran is the fourth-largest oil producer, pumping some 3.9 million barrels a day, according to US Department of Energy data for January. Of that, some 2.7 million barrels per day are exported.

"The worst-case scenario assumes that a military strike against Iran would occur late in the year," said Diane Swonk, economist at Chicago-based Mesirov Financial.

But Swonk and others argue that Iran needs oil revenues as much as the world needs Iranian oil.

"Iran counts on oil revenues to fund 90 percent of their government spending and, therefore, cannot afford to give up those revenues for

any length of time," Swonk said.

For BMO Nesbitt Burns analyst Bart Melek, the downward price trend came "as the market started to feel increasingly comfortable that there are sufficient inventories to compensate for any potential production losses from Iran."

Even if the United Nations imposes sanctions, Melek said he expected that any such move "would no doubt keep oil from Iran flowing in order to get China (who holds a veto and imports 10 percent of its oil from Iran) to agree."

Yet prices remain at historically high levels, and many market participants are not willing to throw out the "risk premium" due to concerns about Iran and elsewhere.

Nepal to offer VAT rebate

XINHUA, Kathmandu

The Nepali government has decided to provide rebate of one percent on Value Added Tax (VAT) added receipts, a senior government official said here yesterday.

"The decision was taken with an aim to accelerate VAT enforcement to the retail level by encouraging people to demand VAT registered receipts," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Nepal's Council of Ministers, or the cabinet, on Thursday made the decision, which will take effect from Monday, he added.

As per the latest decision, buyers will have to submit VAT registered receipts to receive the rebate. With the decision, the effective rate of VAT has come down to 12 percent from the existing 13 percent.

The government has also decided to appoint 1,000 tax assistants to facilitate the rebate process, initially for three months.

Japan's Kansai Airport trade at record high

ANN/ THE DAILY YOMIURI

Kansai Airport's total trade in 2005 marked a record high of 6.64 trillion yen (US\$56.39 billion), up a 0.05 percentage point from the previous year, marking its fourth consecutive annual increase, according to the Kansai Airport branch of Osaka Customs.

Despite concerns over competition from Chubu Airport, which opened last February, Kansai Airport's market share of overseas cargo has fallen less than that of Narita Airport.

According to the customs branch, the value of exports passing through Kansai Airport fell by five per cent to 4.04 trillion yen, the first decrease in four years. This was attributed to a slump in the semiconductor business and other factors.

However, the import value increased 9.1 per cent to 2.6 trillion yen, due mainly to an increase in the imports of medicine from the United States and European and Asian nations by 22.6 per cent to 317 billion yen. The import value was the largest since the airport opened in 1994.

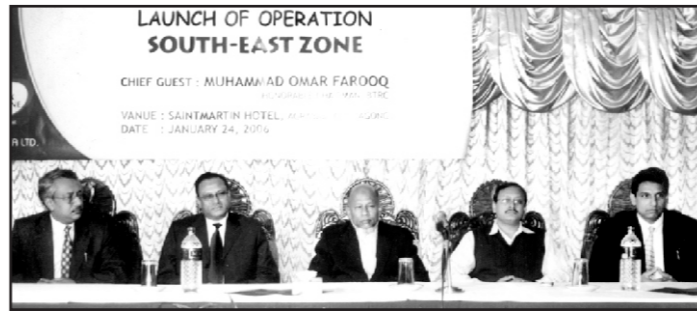


PHOTO: JUBOK PHONE

Private land phone service provider Jubok Phone recently launched its services in the South-East zone of Bangladesh through a function held in Chittagong. Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Muhammad Omar Farooq inaugurated the function, which was attended by Managing Director of the company ANM Golam Sarwar and other senior officials.



PHOTO: IFIC BANK

Mosharrif Hossain, executive vice president of IFIC Bank Ltd, and Salim Miah, managing director of Route Asia Money Exchange Ltd, a UK-based remittance company, sign a drawing arrangement agreement on remittance from the United Kingdom at a function recently. Other senior officials from both the sides are also seen.

CURRENCY

Following is Sunday's (Feb 12, 2006) forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Sell	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
69.6700	69.7000	USD	68.6500	68.6271	68.5814
84.4122	84.4485	EUR	80.6363	80.6094	80.5557
122.6958	122.7487	GBP	118.7027	118.6631	118.5840
52.5381	52.5608	AUD	49.5722	49.5556	49.5226
0.5977	0.5979	JPY	0.5775	0.5773	0.5769
53.6956	53.7187	CHF	52.0273	52.0099	51.9753
8.8994	8.9033	SEK	8.3176	8.3148	8.3093
60.9750	61.0012	CAD	58.9473	58.9276	58.8863
8.9906	8.9945	HKD	8.8353	8.8323	8.8264
43.2599	43.2785	SGD	42.0006	41.9866	41.9586
19.1228	19.1310	AED	18.5395	18.5333	18.5210
18.1265	18.1345	SAR	18.1614	18.1553	18.1432
11.5750	11.5800	DKK	10.5329	10.5293	10.5223
235.1586	235.2620	KWD	233.5378	233.5378	233.5378

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	Malaysian ringgit
44.105	59.88	102.1	39.255	6.7556	0.6786	3.72

Local Interbank FX Trading

Local interbank FX market was subdued on Saturday. Demand for USD remained high in the market.

Local Money Market

Money market was active on Saturday. Call money rate remained unchanged and ranged between 9.50 and 11.00 percent.

SHIPPING

Chittagong Port

Berthing position and performance of vessels as on 12/2/2006

Berth no.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port call	Local agent	Dt of arrival	Leaving	Import disch
J/1	C. Galaxy	Wheat(p)	Novo	USL	4/2	15/2	2742
J/3	Banga Biraj	Cont	Sing	Bdship	6/2	14/2	202
J/4	Marisa Green	Cont	P. Kel	Everbest	7/2	14/2	296
J/5	Qc Honour	Cont	P. Kel	Q CSL	7/2	13/2	296
J/6	San Yang	Salt/igi	Mund	ASA	3/2	12/2	715
J/7	Kola Ratu	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	8/2	15/2	160
J/8	Huai Yang	Urea(b/cic)	Lian	Seacom	29/1	15/2	208
J/9	Royal	Urea(b/cic)	Sing	PSAL	24/1	15/2	1527

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Type of cargo	Loading ports
Diamond	12/2	--	Seacom	Urea (bcic)	--
Royal Crystal	14/2	Viza	Saraf	G. Slag	--
Ocean Hope	12/2	Kant	Bashund	C. Clink	11880 Ctg
Cape Bonavista	12/2	P. Kel	Bdship	Cont	P. Kel
Kola Raina	12/2	Sing	Pil(bd)	Cont	Mong
Karaka Jaya Niaga-iii	12/2	Tuti	Mutual	Sugar	--
Ocean Heart	13/2	Kand	Sigma	Salt	--
Kent	13/2	Kharg	Saber	Scraping	--
Am Nok Gang	15/2	Mong	UCSL	Bag	Usudan
Phu Tan	13/2	PTP	PSL	Cont	Sing
Pu Cheng	14/2	--	Cosco	Gi	--

Tanker due

Al Sabiyah	12/2	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/Jp-1
Acoaxet Lady	13/2	Sin	CTPL	F. Oil (RM/3)
Tabtim	13/2	P. Kel	USL	CPO (RM/4)
Fair Rainbow	14/2	--	ESL	CDSO (RM/3)
San Carlo	14/2	S. Lore	USL	CDSO (RM/3/8)
Zygi	15/2	Kuwa	MSTPL	HSD/MS

Vessels at kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port call	Local agent	Date of arrival
Maris	C. Clink	Thai	Litmond	8/2

Outside Port Limit

Maris	C. Clink	Thai	Litmond	8/2
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Vessels at outer anchorage

Vessels ready	Gi	Yang	PML	7/2
Alaska Dream	Cont	Sing	PML	6/2
Eastern Star	Cont	Sing	APL	8/2
Independent Spirit	Cont	P. Kel	Seacon	9/2
Ambitious	Cont	Sing	Pil(Bd)	9/2
Kola Berjaya	Cont	Sing	Seacon	10/2
Ocean Park	Cont	Ptp	Bdship	11/2

Vessels not ready

Hk Deqin-201	Gi/Sp. TSP	Sing	KDSA	R/A (1/12)
Yaad-e-mohammed	Gi/salt	Kand	Cla	4/2
Gemin-1	Raw Sugar	Durb	Park	6/2
Amanat Shah	Sugar	Tuti	Cla	7/2
Ja Gang	Urea(b/cic)	Sing	Seacom	8/2
Alam Selaras	R. Seed	Alde	Rainbow	9/2
Pha Shwe Gyaw Ywa	Gi(rutsee)	Yang	MTA	9/2

Vessels awaiting employment / instruction

Bumi Jaya	--	Visa	Unicorn	10/11/2004
Dragonis	--	--	Seacom	R/A (10/11)
Xpress Manaslu	--	P. Kel	Seacon	R/A (21/12)
Xpress Resolve	--	Col	Seacon	R/A (21/12)
Yasmina	--	--	PML	R/A (9/1)
Continent-4	--	Cla	R/A	R/A (15/1)
Banglar Jyoti	--	--	BSC	R/A (7/2)

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



PHOTO: STAR

Officials of GrameenPhone Ltd are seen at a function to introduce 'Business Solutions', a new service of the mobile phone operator for corporate users, in Barisal recently.



Pakistani delegates from All Pakistan Textiles Processing Mills Association pose for photographs with the officials of Beximco Textiles Ltd as the delegates visited Beximco Industrial Park at Kashimpur in Gazipur recently. Arshad A Vohra, head of the delegation and chairman of the association, Syed Naved Husain, group director and chief executive officer of Beximco Textiles Division, and AS Rahman, director of Beximco Textiles, among others, were present.

STOCK