Abu Dhabi extends detention of 18 executives

BCCI stole $ 2b from Nayahan's account

LONDON, Nov 11: The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) stole more than two billion Dollars from the personal account of the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the Financial Times said today, reports Reuter.

The paper said in its front-page story that the final figure might be as high as 2.5 billion Dollars and was "believed to be the single biggest theft from an individual customer in the history of banking."

The emirate's ruler, Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al-Nayahan, and Abu Dhabi institutions are majority shareholders in the bank, which was closed on July 5 in a world swoop by banking regulators who suspected a colossal fraud.

The Financial Times published the second of seven articles after what it said was its own three-month investigation.

The paper, quoting sources close to the investigation of BCCI's affairs, said Sheikh Zaid was believed to have placed his entire share of Abu Dhabi's oil revenue with offshoots of the bank for several years.

This share of about eight per cent of the emirate's total oil income ranged between 500 million Dollars and one billion Dollars a year, depending on the oil price.

AFP adds from Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi authorities have extended the detention of 18 former BCCI executives by one month for further investigation, legal sources said Sunday.

"The extension is needed to resume the investigation one source said, adding that inquiries had been temporarily halted.

The 18, including former chief executive officer Swlach Naqvi, were rounded up in a police raid on the Abu Dhabi head office of the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International in September.

Their assets and those of the Pakistani founder of BCCI were frozen in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) a month later.

The 18 have been held at the luxurious police club here but no formal charges have been brought against them. Most of the detainees are Pakistanis and the rest are Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis with British passports.

A relative of one of the detainees said those held were in good condition following a visit to them two weeks ago.

BCCI— with assets of nearly 20 billion Dollars — was closed in Britain and 60 other countries in July after charges of massive fraud.

The Bank of England, which led the anti-BCCI action, gave shareholders until December 5 to devise a rescue package, short of which the institution could face liquidation.

About 77 per cent of the shares are owned by Abu Dhabi ruling family, the Al-Nahayan, and the emirate's investment authority and bankers estimate shareholders will need to provide as much as 12 billion Dollars to resurrect the bank.

But they said they saw no prospects for re-opening BCCI, which has eight branches in the UAE with assets of about 2.7 billion Dollars.

"I don't see any indication the bank will be revived. If it is, this will be against all expectations," one banker said.

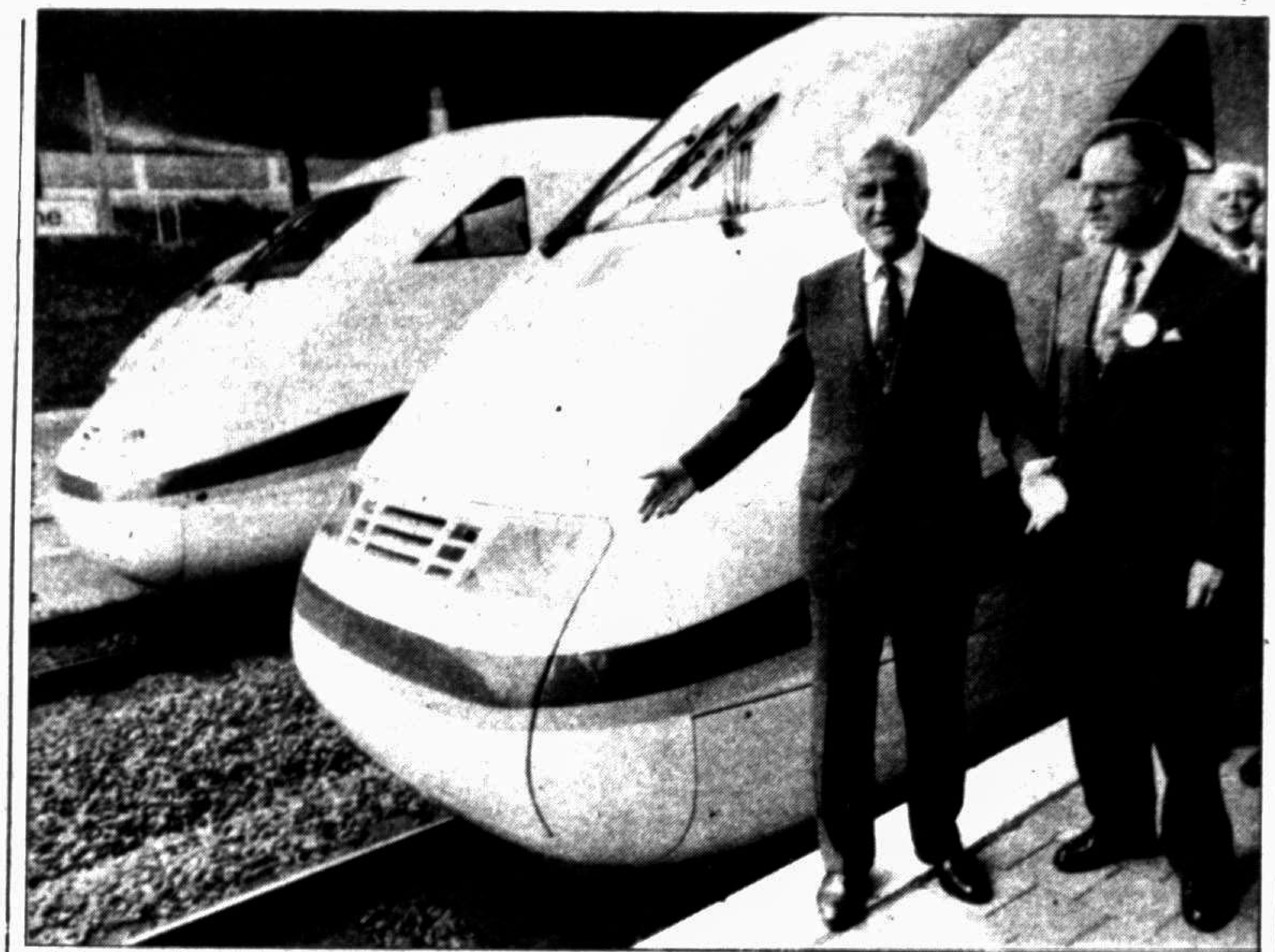
Furniture was moved out of two large BCCI branches here last month while most of the 40 per cent BCCI stake in the Union National Bank (UNB) has been sold.

"The BCCI stake in UNB is being sold quietly. You don't expect the sale to be announced in public or any one could buy," a UAE stockbroker said. "Most of the stake has been sold to national institutions and some businessmen."

Bankers also cited the sacking of 280 BCCI employees in the UAE last month as an indication of shareholder intention to wind up the bank.

In a letter to staff, dated November 5, the Abu Dhabi court receiver said those dismissed were entitled for a month's salary and other allowances.

Most of the sacked staff are Pakistanis and the letter assured them the bank would bear the cost of repatriation.



Federal President Richard von Weizsacker (left) and the Prime Minister of Hesse Hans Eichel (right) opened the new age of rail in Germany at the start of a new timetable, in Kassel. — IN-Press photo

World tea output up by 22.6 m kg

NEW DELHI, Nov11: The World tea crop increased by 22.6 million kilograms in the first eight months of 1991 with the output of black tea being 805.8 million kilograms, reported the Business and Political Observer, today, says Xinhua.

Statistics avilable in Calcutta said that while India and Sri Lanka had been able to gain some increases in their tea output, production in Kenya, Malawi and Bangladesh— between January and August 1991- was lower.

The production statistics of the major black tea producing countries of the world (excluding China) showed that in the period under review India's production stood at 452.2 million Kg, up by 18.3 million Kg, while the Sri Lanka tea output of 168.2 million Kg marked a 8.8 million Kg increase over the same period in 1990.

At this week's auction in Calcutta there was good demand for Orthodox tea only. CTC(crush, tear, curl) and Darjeeling teas had an easy demand.

Committee reviews sick units of textile sector

Star Economic Report

The Sick Project (Textile Sector) Identification Committee met Monday in the Board Room of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) with its Convener A K A Firoze Noon in the chair.

The Committee identified, on a preliminary basis, 386 applications out of a total of 399 applications it received so far.

It decided to visit some industrial projects physically by the members of the committee. Various issues relating to sick projects were also discussed in the meeting. A subcommittee was constituted for formulating recommendations on sick industries.

In the textile sector, 223 applications of 20 loom-capacity units, 45 applications up to 30 looms, 13 applications above 30 units, 30 applications in garments sectors and 71 applications in other sub-sectors were so far received by the committee.

The meeting discussed in details the existing condition of sick projects.

Among others, Director (Finance), Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation Md Ishaque, Representative of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries Md Selimuddin, General Manager Bangladesh Shilpa Bank Mahmudul Karim, General Manager Sonali Bank Chowdhury Abdul Quayum and member, Executive Committee of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry were present at the meeting.

Workshop on credit for women held

The Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) on Monday held a workshop on 'credit for women', a BIBM press release said in Dhaka, reports BSS.

The workshop was presided over by Mr Salahuddin Ahmed, a former Secretary and Secretary General of Swanirvar Bangladesh. Papers were presented at the workshop by Mr K I Khaled, General Manager of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, Dr M Mahbubur Rahman, Action Research Fellow of CIRDAP, Ms Raka Rashid, Project Officer of USAID, Dr Bandana Saha, a Faculty Member of BIBM.

Among the discussants were Dr Sheikh Maqsud Ali, Member Planning Commission, Mr ABM Mahbubul Amin Khan, Director of BIBM, Prof Khaleda Salahuddin, Mrs Gul Afroz Mahbub, Director of Directorate of Women's Affairs, Mrs Rita Afsar of BIDS, Mrs Monjoo Ara Hossain, Secretary of Swanirvar Bangladesh, Mrs Wahida Huq, Senior Program Officer of World Bank.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the World Bank, Bangladesh Bank, Commercial Banks, Planning Commission, BIDS BSCIC NGOs and the faculty members of the BIBM.

Pak export up by 22.8pc

ISLAMABAD, Nov 11 : Pakistan's exports performed well during October, increasing by 22.8 per cent as compared with the figures of the same month 1990, according to official data, reports Xinhua.

Exports in October, the fourth month of fiscal 1991-92 year, amounted to 511 million US Dollars as against 416 million Dollars in the corresponding period of last year, data available today show.

The exports during the month under review also show an increase of 9.7 per cent over the figures of 466 million Dollars in the preceding month of September.

As against this, imports during October amounted to 713 million dollars as against 662 million Dollars in the corresponding month last year, showing an increase of 7.7 per cent. But compared with figures in September this year, the imports in October showed an increase of 19.8 per cent.

The data show that during the first four months of the current fiscal year the exports totalled 1,925 million Dollars as compared with 1,588 million Dollars in the corresponding period of last fiscal year, showing an increase of 21.2 per cent.

Imports during the first four months under review also increased at the rate 25.2 per cent to 2,855 million Dollars from 2,280 million Dollars during the first four months of the last fiscal year.

Stock prices rise after Imelda's return

MANILA, Nov 11: Philippine stock prices went up with business confidence apparently untouched by the return of former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos from US exile, reports AFP.

The composite index at the Manila Stock Exchange rose to 1,031. 74 points Tuesday, up by 5.25 points from Monday, when the widow of deposed President Ferdinand Marcos arrived from Honolulu Monday after nearly six years of exile.

At the suburban Makati Stock Exchange, the composite index went up to 1,039.94 points Tuesday, up by 6.24 points registered on Monday.

Bourse analysts said the Imelda Marcos's homecoming had no bearing on the rise in stock prices.

S Korean farmers launch campaign against US rice

SEOUL, Nov 11: Shouting "No rice imports !" about 1,500 farmers and supporters rallied Monday to launch a signature campaign against US pressure to open South Korea's rice market, reports AP.

The farmers staged a peaceful rally outside the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, marking the start of a 10-day campaign to collect 1 million signatures.

The campaign was timed to a Seoul meeting of trade and foreign ministers from 15 Pacific and Asian nations, including US Secretary of State James A. Baker. The ministers open two days of formal talks on Wednesday.

Farmers planned to set up signature-collecting desks at 5,000 places across the nation, and end the campaign with a major anti- import rally in Seoul on Nov 26.

Price Barometer: Essentials

November—11

RICE	**(Taka per kg)**
Aman (Very fine)	20.00-21.00
Aman(fine)	15.50-16.00
Pajam	13.00-14.00
Ufshi	13.00-14.00
VEGETABLES	**(Taka per kg)**
Potato(White)	8.00
Brinjal	10.00-12.00
Lady's finger	20.00-22.00
Potal	8.00-10.00
Karolla	20.00-22.00
Lalshak	8.00—10.00
Pui Shak	10.00-12.00
Papya	5.00-6.00
Green Banana (Four Pieces)	5.00-6.00
OTHER FOODGRAIN	**(Taka per kg)**
Flour	13.00-13.50
Atta	10.50-11.00
Wheat	8.50-9.00
Suzi	16.00-18.00
FISH	**(Taka per kg)**
Ruhi(big)	110.00-130.00
Katla(big)	90.00-100.00
Hilsha	50.00-55.00
Pangas	80.00-90.00
Shrimp(big)	60.00-70.00
Singi	70.00-75.00
Koi	65.00-70.00
EGG (4pcs)	
Hen	11.00-11.50
Duck	9.50-10.00
Farm	12.00-12.50
PULSES	**(Taka per kg)**
Mash	27.00-28.00
Mashur	30.00-32.00
Moogh	29.00-30.00
Chhola	23.00-24.00
Mator	24.00-25.00
Khesari	14.00-15.00
MEAT	**(Taka per kg)**
Beef	Meatless Day
Mutton	Meatless Day
OIL	**(Taka per Litre)**
Mustard	52.00-64.00
Soyabean	36.00-37.00
Coconut(Colombo)	75.00-80.00
Vegetable Ghee	50.00-52.00
SPICES	**(Taka Per kg)**
Onion	18.00-20.00
Garlic	40.00-44.00
Chillies	80.00-90.00
Turmeric(Round)	58.00-60.00
" (Long)	60.00-62.00
Green chillies	25.00-30.00
Ginger	10.00-12.00
Cinnamon* (10gms)	3.00-3.50
Cardamom* (large)	3.00-4.00
Jhira (50gms)	7.00-7.50

Source : Department of Agricultural Marketing

'Bush will lose unless he focuses on economy'

WASHINGTON, Nov 11: President Bush will lose the 1992 election unless he focuses on the economy, a Republican strategist and former White House political director says, reports AP.

Also Sunday, a member of Bush's Cabinet called on the President and Congress to embrace a package of tax extended unemployment benefits and home- buying incentives to restore the economy to health.

Bush should be saying, "Listen, I'm going to do whatever it takes to stimulate this economy, get people back to work," Republican Party consultant Edward J Rollins said in a television interview Sunday.

Rollins, who was President Reagan's top political operative from 1981 to 1985, said Democrats, in their victorious Senate campaign in Pennsylvania, "attracted back their voters that Reagan had built a coalition around."

"If we let Democrats take back their coalition, take back their, Democrats, we're going to lose," Rollins said.

Asked it that might happen, he replied: "I think it's going to happen unless people start focusing on the issues that matter to people and that's the economy, the economy and the economy."

On CBS- TV's "Face the Nation," both Rollins and Housing Secretary Jack Kemp appeared to take issue with Bush's statement last week their economy "is not in recession" because the situation does not fit the economists' definition of a recession.

"Technically, a recession may be over, but nobody cares," Rollins said.

Kemp said: "This economy, while technically, perhaps, out of recession, it's limping, it's anemic, and it needs some oxygen in the body economic to create more jobs, to create more growth."

The housing and urban development secretary, a longtime advocate of tax cuts to stimulate the economy, repeated that .

He suggested the tax cuts could be coupled with extended unemployment benefits and job- creation and home-buying incentives.

"I think that we could not it this year," Kemp said. He added that the question of whether this could be accomplished "is the real debate."

Argentines see high economic growth

BUENOS AIRES, Nov 11: Argentina's leading businesses see the economic outlook for 1992 as nothing short of spectacular, with Gross National Product (GDP) growth topping three per cent, higher earnings and productivity, low inflation and a budget surplus, a survey published Sunday said, reports AFP.

In a poll of the 500 highest-earning Argentine firms by Price Waterhouse consultants, 23.1 per cent of the businesses predicted 1991 would be a "very good" year, while 62.9 per cent said it would be "good."

Since April, the administration of neo-Peronist President Carlos Menem has forged ahead with a dramatic economic adjustment programme. It has included selling off state-owned businesses, hiking taxes, and paring the government's payroll— moves which have helped lower inflation, along with the fixing of a set Dollar- to- Austral exchange rate.

Sixty per cent of the firms surveyed said the creation of the fledgling South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) comprising Argentina, Brazila, Paraguay and Uruguay would have a "positive" effect on their business.

Plea to recognise rubber as industrial product

BEIJING, Nov 11 : Malaysia has called for natural rubber to be marketed as an industrial product as a means of improving its commodity price, according to an AFP news dispatch from Kuala Lumpur received here today, says Xinhua.

Speaking at a Malaysia Rubber Exchange and Licensing Board (MRELB) dinner late Saturday, Primary Industries Minister Lim Keng urged the change in classification to help secure a fairer price for high quality rubber.

At present, rubber is considered a cheap raw material.

It should instead be classified as an industrial product for final consumption since demand for the commodity is high but the price persistently low, Lim said.

Malaysia, among the world's major producers, has stepped up domestic use of natural rubber and now ranks as the world's seventh largest consumer after the United States, the EC, Japan, China, India and South Korea, the report said.

India gets benefit of reforms

NEW DELHI, Nov 11 : The Indian government is reaping the first fruits of its ambitious programme of economic reforms, but the business community remains cautious, reports AFP.

After winning international praise for its reforms, New Delhi received another boost when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently gave it a standby credit of 2.2 billion Dollars for the next 20 months to help it rebuild its foreign exchange reserves.

Further encouragement came from the World Bank with a structural adjustment loan of 500 million Dollars.

IMF Director Michel Camdessus called the programme "a major effort from a great country," while European Community President Jacques Delors said the policy developments would make possible the continuation of the necessary and welcome moves towards the structural adjustment of the Indian economy."

As soon as it came to power the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao announced in July measures to free industry from smothering regulations, boost competition on domestic markets, free the government from loss-making industries, encourage exports and open the country to foreign investment.

Having thus regained international confidence, New Delhi was able to boost its foreign exchange reserves, with Finance Minister Manmohan Singh announcing reserves of 2.1 billion Dollars, up from 884 million in June.

This allowed the government to buy back 46.9 tons of gold it put up as security with the Bank of Tokyo and the Bank of England for an urgent 400 million Dollar loan last summer.

Singh estimated that the reserves would reach 2.5 billion Dollars by December and that, consequently, the government planned to lift draconian regulations imposed on the financing of imports in May.

Imports were hit hard by these restrictions, which came on top of a complicated authorisation system and heavy customs duties that will remain in place.

Business leaders say that so far India has improved its ability to obtain loans, but not to pay its own way.

One of the main points of the new programme, allowing foreign firms to own a 51 per cent stake in joint ventures here instead of the previous 40 per cent, was welcomed but considered insufficient.

A group of French businessmen on a recent visit said 51 per cent participation was not enough, while restrictions on importing raw materials and composite goods and on sending profits out of India made investment there unattractive compared with most other Asian countries.

"At the moment these are just words. We will wait and see," one Western banker said.

Other local and foreign businessmen said in interviews that they were waiting for the reforms to be implemented before they became involved.

Despite the announced liberalisation on financing imported goods destined for manufacturing of exports, they said, regulations on the use of foreign currencies remained in place.

On November 2, according to Industry Ministry figures quoted in the local press, the government approved 70 joint ventures representing investment totalling 36.7 million Dollars.

Most Asian currencies gain

HONG KONG, Nov 11: Most Asian currencies gained against the Greenback during the week after the US Federal Reserve announced a half-percentage point cut in its discount rate, reports AFP.

Only the New Zealand Dollar and Indonesian Rupiah finished lower.

JAPANESE YEN: The Yen appreciated moderately to close Friday at 130,23 Yen to the Dollar, up 0.51 Yen from 130.74 a week earlier.

The cut in the official US discount rate from five per cent to 4.5 per cent Wednesday had little impact on the Tokyo market, dealers said.

Investors were now watching the course of Japanese interest rates, they said, adding that the central bank of Japan might lower its discount rate this week.

After opening Monday at 129.32 Yen, the Japanese currency moved between 129.30 and 130.48 over the week.

AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR: Despite several bouts of volatility over a one-cent range, the Australian Dollar finished marginally stronger at 78.48 US cents, compared with the previous Friday's close of 77.95 US cents.

A decision by the Reserve (central) Bank to cut official cash rates by one per cent to 8.5 per cent Wednesday continued to narrow support from interest rate differentials, Commonwealth Bank economists said.

The trade-weighted index edged up slightly to 59.1 from 59.0 a week earlier.

SINGAPORE DOLLAR: The Singapore Dollar gained against the Greenback to close at 1.6820 Friday compared with 1.6900 a week earlier.

The OCBC Bank's trade-weighted index for the Singapore Dollar stood at 135.70, up slightly from 135.64 a week earlier. The index is calculated against the currencies of Singapore's top 12 trade partners.

TAIWAN DOLLAR: The Taiwan currency remained strong through the week to close Friday at 26.1165 to the Greenback, up from the previous week's finish of 26.2525.

After opening Monday at 16.16 the local unit picked up steam in light trading, one market analyst said, adding that the upward trend would carry over unless the central bank lowers the official discount rate.

HONG KONG DOLLAR: The Hong Kong Dollar finished stronger at 7.7625-7.7635 to the Greenback, up from 7.7695-7.7705 the previous Friday.

The Hong Kong currency has been pegged at around 7.80 to the Greenback since 1983. The effective exchange rate stood at 111.3 Friday against 111.6 a week earlier.

INDONESIAN RUPIAH: The Rupiah closed weaker at 1,979 to the US Dollar Friday, down from 1,977 a week earlier.

MALAYSIAN RINGGIT: The Ringgit ended the week higher at 2.7435 to the Dollar, up from 2.7500 the previous Friday.

Trading was tight and uneventful, dealers said, adding the several rounds of mild intervention mid-week by Bank Negara, Malaysia's central bank, had helped prop the currency up against a stable Greenback.

NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR: The Kiwi Dollar closed weaker at 55.80 US Cents Friday compared with 55.97 Cents a week earlier.

"The local unit fell toward the end of the week to a low of 55.65 cents before regaining some lost ground as traders bought to cover short positions."

Kuwait's last fire put out but little done to combat pollution

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 11 : A Kuwaiti scientist accused foreign experts Sunday of focusing their efforts on amassing data from the world's biggest oilfield fire but doing little to combat health hazards posed by the war-related disaster, reports AP.

"Foreign experts came here for short periods, took measurements and left," said Sami Al-Yacoub, an environmental chemist with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

"All they really cared for was their research and enriching the libraries of their universities. They treated the Kuwaiti people like guinea pigs."

Al-Yacoub, who is also a member of an independent environmental group, was speaking at a seminar on the effects of the pollution caused by 640 wells set ablaze by retreating Iraqi occupation forces in February.

The last fire was put out last week, but a major clean-up effort has yet to be launched.

The seminar was organized by the Public Health Ministry and representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council, which groups Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman.

Al- Yacoub's comments revived anew debate about allegations that the Kuwaiti government and its wartime allies have not done enough to tackle the environmental disaster or to make people aware of its consequences.

He did not single out any of the various environmental groups which visited Kuwait in the aftermath of the Gulf War. But his comments were clearly at odds with statements made by prominent environmentalists in recent months.

Among them was Paul Horsman, Gulf Coordinator for the Greenpeace organization, who warned after a 10-day visit to Kuwait in September : "Both here and in the United States, there appear to be deliberate efforts to cover up the real environmental consequences of the war.

"The oil well fires are producing massive amounts of sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and oxides of nitrogen — all of which are known to have serious human health impacts."

Independent scientists have in the past accused the government of "politicising" the environmental issue.

But government officials have said that continuous monitoring of the atmosphere showed that the dangers posed by the pollution were no worse than those in any industrialized country.

"There have been several different reports on the effects of the pollution on public health and the environment because the catastrophe is the first of its kind," Health Minister Abdul Wahabal-Fawzan said Saturday.

"The government will spare no effort to mobilize all local and international expertise to deal with this problem," he said in a speech at the seminar.

Al-Yacoub criticized government agencies which have said the pollution did not reach levels hazardous to human health.

"How can anybody be definitely sure that there were no dangers when the composition of thousands of — pollutants is still unknown," said Al- Yacoub.

Doctors have reported a significant increase in the number of people suffering from chest allergies, bronchitis and asthma.

But they differ over what has caused this increase, some citing seasonal changes, others increased pollution.

Al-Yacoub also accused the government of failing to make the public aware throughout the eight months when the skies were dark with toxic clouds carrying millions of tons of soot and pollutants.

A Saudi official at the seminar said his country was preparing to undertake a major study on the effect of pollution on people living in areas of Saudi Arabia affected by the smoke.

"In some areas, marine life was totally destroyed and breeding areas of fish and shrimp were damaged," said Khaleel al-Thakafi.

He added that there was a 40 per cent drop in crop yields in some Saudi areas because of the smoke. "Out marine environment will need more than 20 years to rehabilitate," he said.

Gold & Silver

November—11

Gold	(Taka for 11.66 grams)
Tejabi	6,200.00
Guinea	6,100.00
Silver	200.00

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing