

HYUNDAI
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE**Emirates has unerring eye for Oscar winners**

Emirates, it seems, has an unerring eye for Oscar-winners, the recipients for those coveted statuettes which Hollywood hands out to the film industry's finest at the end of March every year, says a press release.

The airline, itself the recipient of 72 awards, introduced quarterly film festivals in the First Class cabin of its Airbus fleet in 1992, with a collection of films of a particular star featuring in the First Class video library.

The festivals have proved to be winners with passengers, while the stars featured have proved to be winners at the Oscars. For three years running, the star chosen by Patrick Brannely, Emirates Manager Passenger Entertainment, for the film festival starting immediately after the Oscar ceremony, has been an Oscar-winner.

In 1993, the Clint Eastwood Festival was introduced two days after the Hollywood veteran won best director for his film Unforgiven.

Last year, the Steven Spielberg Festival started two days after Spielberg won best director for his film Jurassic Park.

And on April 1, the Tom Hanks Festival started, a few days after Forrest Gump netted six Oscars including best actor for his star.

Emirates First Class passengers will be able to enjoy Forrest Gump on their personal video players, or they can choose Big, in which a child, instantly transformed into an adult by a wishing machine, gets to grips with corporate life, or Philadelphia, which sees Hanks bravely tackle the role of a lawyer with AIDS, defending himself inside and outside the courtroom.

Oil prices hit 5-month high

LONDON, Apr 7: Oil prices hit a five-month high here as US demand for scarce cleaner, greener reformulated gasoline (RFG) drove the market up, reports Reuters.

Brent Crude, the benchmark for most of the world's trade, jumped to a peak of 17.86 dollar a barrel for May on the London futures market, the highest since November last year.

Brent slipped back to 17.78 dollar by 1509 GMT, up 22 cents from Tuesday.

US Energy Department data released on Tuesday showed stocks of RFG fell by 3.9 million barrels over the week, sparking a rush to buy oil futures on the London market ahead of the start of trade in New York.

PIT trading on the New York mercantile exchange saw crude futures hit an eight month high for that market of 19.48 dollar a barrel.

4 RFG has been compulsory in several US cities — including New York since January 1 this year, but attempts to extend the programme have met with protests from some states.

US demand for WTO investigation unjustified: ROK

SEOUL, Apr 7: South Korea said Thursday that a US plan to bring their latest trade dispute before the World Trade Organization is not justified, reports AP.

The dispute is over a US complaint that South Korea imposes unfairly lengthy quarantine procedures on imported US farm products, damaging the freshness of American citrus.

US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said Saturday that Washington has decided to bring the case before the WTO, saying the practices violated trading principles outlined in the new global trade rules.

Foreign Ministry officials said the case is not suitable for WTO mediation, because South Korea has already taken action to correct the problems raised by Washington.

The United States is just bluffing before it starts bilateral talks with us, a ministry official said asking anonymity. The ministry officials said that no US farm products are currently held at the customs to justify the US threat to bring the case to the WTO mediation panel.

Seoul also has notified Washington of its plans to simplify quarantine procedures for US farm products so that they can be distributed more quickly within the country, they said.

Weekly review**DSE loses Tk 119 cr in market capitalisation**

By Sharier Khan

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) lost over Tk 119 crore in market capitalisation last week as all share price index continued to fall for the third consecutive week.

According to market operators, the DSE is going dull as the share prices are undergoing a correction process. Many share prices which had "illogically" gone up by many folds in the previous months, are coming down to their "actual" values, they clarified.

"The slide of index would continue until the market prices of shares come to a single digit," said Imtiaz Hossain of the DSE.

The index fell by 21.60 points or about 3 per cent at the close of this week comparing to the previous week. In three weeks the fall was as big as 70 points which is around 8 per cent.

The DSE closed at 763.06171 points Thursday from the previous week's 784.65736 points. The total market capitalisation stood at Tk 42.14 billion at the closing of the week from the previous week's Tk 43.33 billion.

A total of 4 lakh 93 thousand 717 shares and debentures

were worth Tk 7 crore 62 lakh 54 thousand were traded against 2 lakh 80 thousand 953 shares and debentures worth Tk 6 crore 16 lakh 64 thousand of the previous week.

Market operators point fingers at the inactive role of foreign investors and Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) which were also playing a role in the sliding down of the index.

"Both the foreign investors and ICB are selling shares by huge numbers but they are hardly buying anything," a market operator said requesting anonymity.

The one-year political stalemate which has casted a dark shadow over the economic activities of the country, has also triggered many to sell more and buy less, market operators said.

The share prices of top companies like the Singer or Bangladesh Lamp which have face value of Tk 100 have reached Tk 4690.70 and 2965.26 respectively at the close of the week.

Certain issues are still selling at bubbled up prices, but prices of most other issues are being corrected," said DSE operator Imtiaz Hossain.

Ashraf Textiles was the volume leader of the week as it sold 69122 shares in total at a reasonably stable price.

The Shine Pukur Jute sold some 61520 shares while the Shine Pukur Holdings, which has appeared at the DSE share list from Tuesday last sold over 47,415 shares. The Shine Pukur Holding shares, having a face value of Tk 100 each were being sold at Tk 105.79 each Thursday.

Maq Paper sold some 35660 shares last week. Its share price went down to Tk 150.65 Thursday from Tk 162.34 in the beginning of the week.

The share price of Square slid down to Tk 929.44 each from Tk 1077.58 on Saturday last.

The number of loss incurring issues were much higher than the gaining ones. At the opening of the week on Saturday, 13 issues gained values while 39 incurred losses. On Sunday, 15 gained and 36 incurred loss. On the next day 17 gained and 43 incurred loss, on Tuesday, 22 gained and 43 shares incurred loss, on Wednesday, 27 gained at 43 incurred loss and on the closing day 23 gained and 31 incurred loss.

Prime Bank opens Apr 17

The Board of Directors of Prime Bank Limited decided to inaugurate the bank on April 17, says a press release.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting at the bank's head office in the city yesterday. The meeting was presided over by Dr R A Ghani, Chairman of the bank.

Minister for Finance M Saifur Rahman has been invited to be the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony.

Ford chairman's pay totals \$ 8.1m in 1994

DEARBORN, Mich, Apr 7: Ford Motor Co Chairman and President Alex Trotman's pay doubled to 8.1 million dollars in 1994 as he led the automaker to its most profitable year, reports AP.

A proxy statement released Thursday showed Trotman's base salary — 1.5 million dollars — was the same as in 1993. But he received a bonus of 6 million dollars and stock and other compensation valued at about 590,000 dollars.

More than half of the bonus, 3.6 million dollars, will not be paid until after he retires, and it could be reduced if the company's stock value diminishes. Trotman, who is 61, did not exercise any stock options in 1994. His 1993 pay totaled 3.9 million dollars.

Compensation for Ford Vice Chairman Allan Gilmour, who retired January 1 reached 5 million dollars last year, including his exercise of stock options worth 708,750 dollars. Current Vice Chairman Louis R Roes was paid 3.7 million dollars and Edward Hagenlocker, president of automotive operations, received salary, bonus and other compensation totaling 3.9 million dollars.

In late trading Thursday on the New York Stock Exchange, Ford shares were up 37.5 cents at 26.875 dollars.

Ford earned a record 5.3 billion dollars last year. Its workers received average profit-sharing payments of about 4,000 dollars.

US economy shows signs of slowing

WASHINGTON, Apr 7: The Labour Department issued figures yesterday showing claims for first-time jobless benefits climbing by 3,000 last week, a sign that the US economy may be slowing, reports AP.

The department listed 341,000 seasonally adjusted applications for unemployment insurance, up from 338,000 for the week that ended March 25, unemployment insurance, up from 338,000 for the week that ended March 25, when claims declined by 10,000. The increase was the fourth boost in five weeks for benefits claims.

NEC and Fujitsu also announced Wednesday they would lower their internal currency rate assumptions to 90 yen to the dollar in the six months to September from 100 yen in the six months to March.

The dollar steadied Wednesday at 86.40 yen in Tokyo trading after reaching a record low of 85.55 earlier.

the size of the undertaking," Clarke said.

As of January around 3.97 per cent of the 85.88 billion dollars in total outstanding credits from Indonesia's commercial banks are considered bad loans, or unpaid for at least 24 months, up from 3.88 per cent in September 1994.

BEIJING: Nine Chinese electronic companies have banded together in Beijing to produce automated teller machines and break into the growing ATM market, an official report said Friday.

The new company, Huaxin Financial Equipment System Ltd. Co. was established with support from the Ministry of the Electronics Industry and the Beijing municipal government and unites leading electronics companies to compete more effectively in a market currently dominated by foreign firms, the newspaper China Daily said.

Last year about 2,500 ATMs were sold in China, nearly all

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of them imported models from AT and T, Italy's Olivetti and Japan's Omron.

Huaxin, which will act as a local vendor for foreign firms until it can produce its own machines, plans to make 3,000 ATMs within the next two years. It is also seeking to cooperate with foreign companies in ATM development, production and marketing, according to the report.

Huaxin also plans to develop other related financial equipment systems for the Gold Card project, which aims to connect China's financial services with computers, POS (points of sale), ATMs and credit cards, it said.

TOKYO: Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin will visit Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia next week, before attending a finance ministers' meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in Bali, Indonesia.

According to a Canadian Embassy spokeswoman in Tokyo:

Bank of England governor says Barings breaks law by cash transfer

LONDON, Apr 7: Bank of England Governor Eddie George said yesterday Barings PLC had broken the law by transferring huge amounts of money to its Singapore operation without informing the British Central Bank, says Reuters.

George rejected criticisms of the central bank's own inquiry into the collapse of Britain's oldest merchant bank, saying the investigation was being carried out as quickly as possible and would be completely objective.

He said and initial report establishing the facts would not be completed until early June but told the parliamentary committee cross-examining him on the investigation he could not guarantee that litigation would not prevent its publication.

The central bank governor admitted for the first time that the BOE had not known Barings made cash transfers which amounted to more than double its total shareholders capital when the bank collapsed at the end of February.

Banks are required to inform the BOE in advance of transfers totalling more than 25 per cent of their capital, he said.

"It is a criminal offence to advance the money without no-

tifying us", George said.

"I can be absolutely certain to tell you that we did not know as of February 27 that 443 million pounds (715 million US dollars) plus 317 million (512 million US dollars) were advanced to the bank," he told the House of Commons Treasury and Civil Service select Committee.

Barings' total shareholders funds stood at 308.8 million pounds (498.5 million) in its last audited annual report.

George told the committee this issue would be covered in the central bank's inquiry into the collapse of Barings, which is being carried out by the BOE's nine-member board of banking supervision with the help of outside experts.

A second report to establish the regulatory lessons to be learned will be completed three months after the initial one.

George said ING had the right to make its own decisions about Barings' future and staff before inquires were complete.

He central bank governor reiterated that the complex trading instruments known as derivatives were not to blame for Barings collapse and it was dangerous to think about imposing tougher regulations.

World economy to enjoy robust growth in two yrs

MANILA, Apr 7: The world economy will enjoy robust growth of about three per cent in 1995 and 1996 with both industrialized and developing countries doing well, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said here today, reports AP.

The Philippine-based ADB, in its annual Asian Development outlook report, said that industrial countries would enjoy their strongest growth in five years at 2.7 and 3.3 per cent in 1995 and 1996 respectively, thanks to a relaxed monetary policy and low interest rates.

Germany was forecast to post at least three per cent gross domestic product growth in 1995 and 1996, up from the 2.6 per cent in 1994. Japan's 0.8 per cent growth last year was forecast to increase to 2.1 and 3.4 per cent in 1995 and 1996, respectively.

Growth in the United States was forecast to fall from four per cent in 1994 to 3.0 in 1995 and 2.5 per cent in 1996, although the ADB said it was "a sustainable growth path ... consistent with expansion in capacity ... without stimulating inflation."

Developing nations — excluding the former communist states of Europe — grew at 4.9 per cent in 1994 and are forecast to maintain this level at 4.6 to 4.9 per cent in 1995 and 1996, respectively.

Asia again leads the pack with 7.6 and 7.4 per cent growth projections in 1995 and 1996, respectively, following the 8.2 per cent expansion in 1994.

Africa comes next with growth forecasts of about three per cent in 1995 and 1996 after posting 2.3 per cent growth last year.

Delhi decides against banning chemical dyes to colour textiles.

NEW DELHI, Apr 7: The government has decided against banning chemical dyes that may cause cancer and this may adversely affect textile exports to Europe, news reports said Friday, according to AP.

The government has instead asked Germany, one of the leading buyers of Indian textiles in Europe, to extend for six months the deadline after which Indian textiles would not be allowed in the Times of India reported. The ban was to come into effect in July.

The ban was recommended to the government by India's textile commissioner after a detailed study of the dyes used

to colour textiles.

Resource crunch from poor sale of bonds

Another report says: India's state-owned funds could face a severe resource crunch this year because of poor sales of bonds, a recent study found.

State-run companies raised 32 billion rupees (one billion dollars) during the last year. The government had expected to raise double that amount, said the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy, a Bombay-based think tank.

The study concluded that the shortage of funds was a result of high interest rates and a shortage of money in banks and private companies.

Ethiopia loses 200,000 tons of grain to plant pests annually

ADDIS ABABA, Apr 7: Ethiopia lost 200,000 tons of grain to plant pests annually, according to local press reports Thursday, says Xinhua.

Speaking at a seminar on plant pestilence and parasitic weeds, head of the management and training service in the ministry of agriculture Ato Assefa Feytsa said that 30 per cent of the annual grain production is lost to various types of plant diseases.

While the Ethiopian economy is based on agriculture, Ato Assefa said, efforts to boost productivity in this vital sector are being frustrated by pests and parasitic weeds. He reminded all those involved in research work in plant disease that they should make concerted efforts to make their findings popularised among the peasants.

Although various types of improved seeds have been discovered to boost productivity in the farm sector, many of them could not give the expected results because they were often attacked by plant pests, he stressed.

Professionals drawn from regions and zones attended the seminar. The workshop called on peasants to notify the local agricultural office in time whenever there is a locust invasion, pestilence or whenever plant destroying migrant birds appear.

Indonesian minister seeks Islamic banks' cooperation with other banks

JAKARTA, Apr 7: Indonesia's finance minister on Friday urged Islamic banks around the world to cooperate with other banks, reports AP.

"The globalization of financial markets also means that Islamic banks must operate side-by-side with banks from all over the world," Finance Minister Muhammad said while inaugurating a two-day conference of the International Association of Islamic Banks.

Islamic banking is based on a verse in the Koran in which Prophet Mohammed, the founder of Islam, forbids usury, which is synonymous with interest in Islamic terminology.

As a result, Islamic banks do not pay any interest on deposits or charge interest for loans. But Indonesia's Islamic bank works on the principle of profit-sharing and pays "dividends" to its customers, getting around the question of interests.

Marie said financial markets have become increasingly global, which provides important opportunities to Islamic banks.

Islamic banks should coordinate activities globally, which might create an international banking system that can prosper and grow into the future, he said.

The banking conference, hosted by Bank Central of Indonesia, is being attended by 122 participants from 15 countries including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Indonesia.

With nearly 90 per cent of its 190 million people following Islam, Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world.

Gold emerges big currency crisis winner

HONG KONG, Apr 7: Gold has emerged a big currency crisis winner as the US dollar hits new lows in global markets, investors increasingly switching to the traditional safe haven and sending the price surging, reports AP.

The gold price was quoted trading at 394.00-394.40 US dollar an ounce Thursday on the local market, compared with 376.60-377.00 dollars an ounce a month ago.

The precious metal remained a reliable commodity in world finance dealers said, particularly at time of crisis in the value of the US dollar, which stemmed from the lingering effects of the Mexican peso debacle in December.

Dealers said buyers had been increasingly replenishing their gold portfolios, for both adornment and financial protection, particularly in developing countries where investors were taking advantage of a weaker US dollar to buy more gold.

"Certainly it is a safe haven at a time of the weakening US dollar," said Steve McMamie of Martin Ord Minnet.