

The Daily Star BUSINESS

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BRIEFS

Irqi dinar rises against US dollar

BAGHDAD, Jan 18: The Iraqi dinar rose against the US dollar yesterday on news from the United Nations that Baghdad may be ready to negotiate a limited oil sales deal to purchase badly-needed humanitarian supplies. "A dollar was worth 2,850 dinars yesterday," said Abdulsalit Abdul Jabbar of Yama exchange company in Baghdad. "Today it is offered for 2,250 and no one is buying," reports Reuter.

214 investors' visa in Philippines cancelled

MANILA, Jan 18: The Philippines has ordered 214 foreigners with investors' visas to leave the country immediately after failing to prove they had actually invested here, it was announced Tuesday. Immigration Commissioner Leandro Verceles said the 214-investor visas were cancelled on the recommendation of the Board of Investment which found the foreigners had failed to engage in any business, reports AFP.

Daewoo chief faces arms bribe charges

SEOUL, Jan 18: The Chairman of South Korea's giant Daewoo Group will be tried from January 26 on charges of offering bribes for arms deals during former president Roh Tae-Woo's administration, a court official said on Wednesday. Kim Woo-choong was indicted last month on charges of giving Roh's former chief aide for security and foreign affairs, Kim Chong-Hwi, 50 million won (63,000 dollar) in return for favours, reports Reuter.

Canada, Indonesia sign economic accords

JAKARTA, Jan 18: In an attempt to expand economic relations, Indonesia and Canada signed agreements Wednesday on investment, trade and avoidance of double taxation. Canadian Minister for International Trade Roy MacLaren and Indonesian Acting Foreign Minister Susilo Sudarmo also signed a memorandum of understanding on air transport, cultural and fishery cooperation. Minister of State Mardjono said President Suharto welcomed an offer by Canada to help build urban transport systems in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country, reports AP.

Apple reports \$69 million loss

CUPERTINO, California, Jan 18: Apple Computer said yesterday it would cut 1,300 jobs as part of a reorganisation plan in response to a 69 million dollar quarterly loss. The computer maker, which has been profits squeezed by price wars in the United States and Japan, said its restructuring would cut eight per cent of its worldwide workforce over the next 12 months. Apple said it would take a charge of at least 125 million dollars against earnings to cover reorganisation costs, reports AFP.

Israel welcome ROK investment

SEOUL, Jan 18: Israeli Finance Minister Avraham Shochat and his South Korean counterpart agreed to continue economic cooperation in talks Wednesday. Shochat and Rha Woong-bae, minister for finance and economy, also discussed the need for signing agreements to avoid double taxation and provide protection for investors, the finance ministry said. Shochat also told Rha that continued participation by South Korean firms in Israel's economy was welcome, reports AP.

Call to lift trade restrictions on Iraq

LONDON, Jan 18: On the fifth anniversary of the Gulf War, left-wing politicians from several countries appealed to Britain on Wednesday to end its support for tight UN-imposed trade restrictions on Iraq. "Half a million babies under five have died of malnutrition in Iraq in the five years since sanctions were imposed," British lawmaker Tony Benn told The Associated Press. "The Iraqi people have no power to get rid of (Iraqi president) Saddam Hussein. It is time to end this terrible situation," said Benn, who comes from the left flank of Britain's main opposition Labour Party, reports AP.

India's bribery scandal likely to trigger another fall on BSE

BOMBAY, Jan 18: India's latest political scandal is seen as more bad news for the country's turbulent exchanges and could trigger another fall on the Bombay bourse ahead of general elections, analysts said yesterday, reports Reuter.

"Politics is expected to get dirtier as we approach the elections and this could be the spark that will trigger a fall in the markets," said Ravi Gopalakrishnan, India strategist at UBS securities in Bombay.

He said the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) index was likely to drop further to around 2,600 points ahead of a general election due in April.

The BSE index fell through the 3,000-point barrier on Wednesday on news of the bribery scandal and was 24.03 points lower at 2,991.45 in mid-session trade. It has fallen 23 per cent since the beginning of 1995.

Federal police on Tuesday charged seven political leaders, including six former cabinet ministers, in connection with a 18 million dollar

Analysts said the new political scandal would deal a further blow to Indian stock markets which are not expected to attract much foreign investment ahead of elections.

"In comparison with other Asian markets we look bad. We're not attracting any special interest at the beginning of the year and are just getting a bit of stray attention from foreign funds," said Sanjeev Sanghvi, head dealer at brokers James Capel Batlivala and Karan.

Most international investors have underweighted

India on political uncertainties, continued currency weakness and recent controversies surrounding the country's largest private sector firm, Reliance industries.

"We are nowhere in the picture. Profit-taking from the US stock market has gone to other emerging markets. Not many people feel India is attractive at this point," Gopalakrishnan said.

A recent Reuter poll of 25 leading securities houses forecast the BSE index would be at 3,069 points by the end of March. Forecasts ranged from 2,600 points to 3,300 points.

Some analysts said investors would take the latest political scandal in their stride.

The market has gone beyond reacting to these crisis. It may fall marginally but there won't be too much of a hullabaloo," said KR Bharat, Deputy Managing Director at Peregrine India.

"There are bound to be allegations and counter allegations before the elections but they will not have too much of an impact," he said.



Dr R A Ghani, Chairman of the Prime Bank Limited, inaugurating the 1st managers' conference at its city head office yesterday. Lutfar Rahman Sarker presided over the conference.

S Arabia using extra oil income to rebuild foreign financial reserves

ABU DHABI, Jan 18: Saudi Arabia is using extra oil income to rebuild its foreign financial reserves after they plummeted to serious levels because of large payments of the Gulf War, bankers said yesterday, reports AFP.

The kingdom, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, earned around 3.8 billion dollars in additional revenue in 1995 due to higher crude prices but nearly two billion dollars were set aside for those reserves.

Bankers said the sum could have been used to have a projected budget deficit of 15 billion riyals (four billion dollars) in 1995 as part of reforms launched a few years ago to repair economic damage caused by weak oil prices.

The projected 1995 budget deficit remained almost unchanged but I do not consider it actual (real) because revenues were higher and part of the increase is still in the state coffers," a Riyadh-based Saudi banker told AFP.

The remaining increase was used to cover slightly higher expenditure across the board. It includes around 900 million dollars in the last payment for an external debt and higher interest rates on internal debt."

From 7.4 billion dollars at the end of 1994, Saudi Arabia's financial reserves with the International Monetary Fund grew to 9.4 billion dollars at the end of October, according to the bankers, who quoted IMF figures.

The reserves had been as high as 25 billion dollars in the early 1980s before they

dived to a record low of 5.9 billion dollars in 1992, when Riyadh had to withdraw from its overseas assets to finance the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion forces after seven months of occupation.

Bankers said Saudi Arabia's decision to rebuild its reserves was intended to restore international confidence in its economy and ensure enough coverage for its import, estimated at 23.5 billion dollars in 1995.

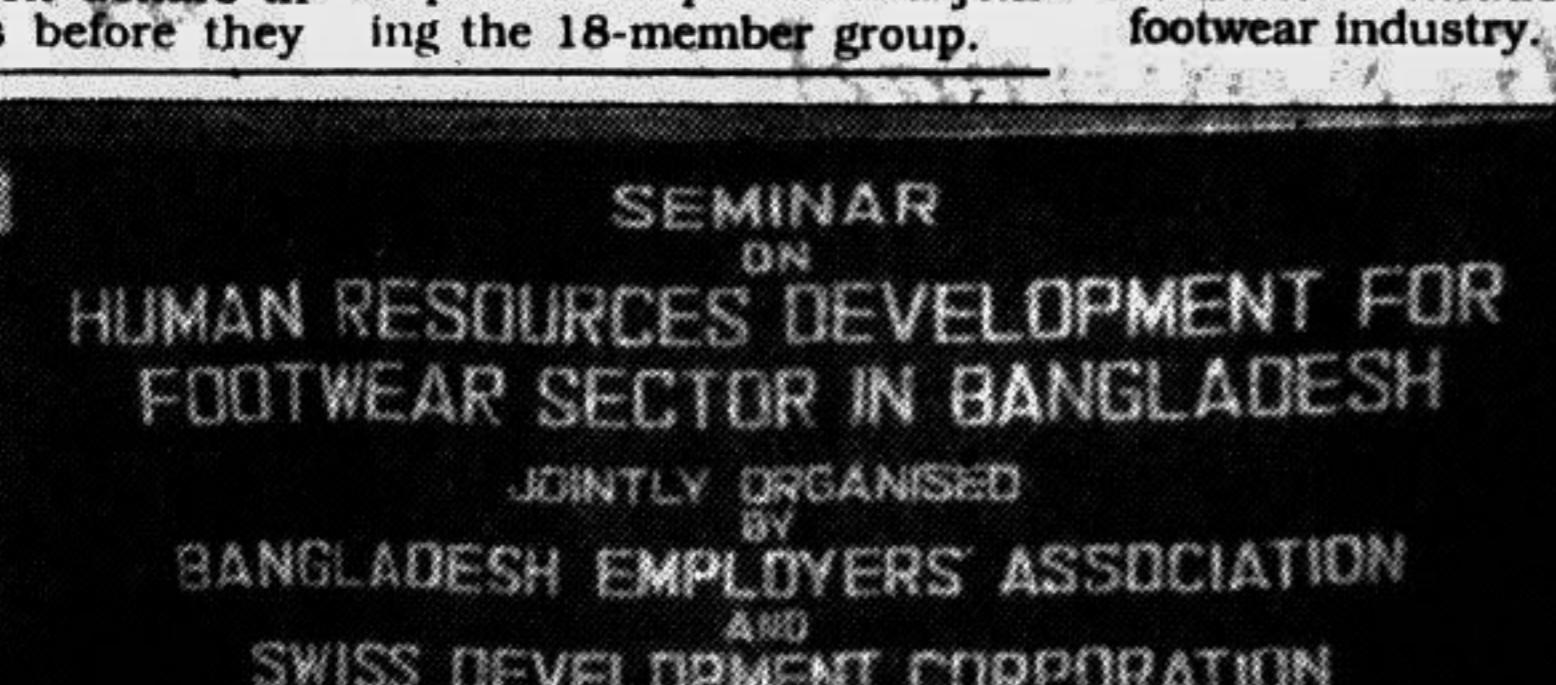
The current level of reserves is enough to cover imports for a period of five months, which is good in global standard," one banker said.

Bankers said they expected the budget would be in a better shape in 1996 after the kingdom completed repayment of the 4.5-billion-

Pakistan hopes to join APEC

TOKYO, Jan 18: Pakistani Foreign Minister Aseff Ahmad Ali said today his country hoped to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in the future, Foreign Ministry officials said, reports AFP.

Ali told his Japanese counterpart, Yukihiko Ikeda, that Pakistan was "interested in APEC" and hoped to strengthen ties with the Asia-Pacific region while calling for Japanese cooperation in joining the 18-member group.



Picture shows (from L to R) A Shahasranaman, Dr Peter Arnold, Laila Rahman Kabir, Paul J Baily and R Subramanian attending a seminar on human resources development for footwear sector in Bangladesh at MCCI auditorium in the city yesterday.

Child labourers' school in West Bengal

CALCUTTA, Jan 18: A light has appeared at the end of the tunnel for child labourers in hazardous industries, shackled with poverty and illiteracy, with the West Bengal government deciding to open special day schools for them from mid-February under a central scheme, reports PTI.

The state's Labour Minister, Santi Ranjan Ghatak, held a meeting with the District Magistrates of North and South 24 Parganas, North and South Dinajpur, Midnapore, Murshidabad and Burdwan here yesterday.

He said, about 40 schools will be opened in each district for child labourers, for which rupees nine lakh will be spent for each district.

The state government, Ghatak, said, has urged the centre to bear 50 per cent of the cost, instead of the present 10 per cent to facilitate immediate opening of schools where the child labourers will be imparted non-formal education and vocational training. "They will be given rs 100 per month, mid day meals and proper medical care," each school will admit 50 children.

A project society has been formed to run the schools, with district magistrates functioning as chairmen and the Zila Sabhadsipat, NGOs, trade union representatives and education department officials as members of governing bodies.

To a question, he said, primarily those districts having 50,000 child labourers as per the 1981 census will have such schools.

The state government has granted rupees five lakh for launching a campaign for motivating factory owners and parents of child labourers.

The number of issues traded totalled 83, of which 28 gained, 46 incurred losses and the prices of nine issues remained unchanged.

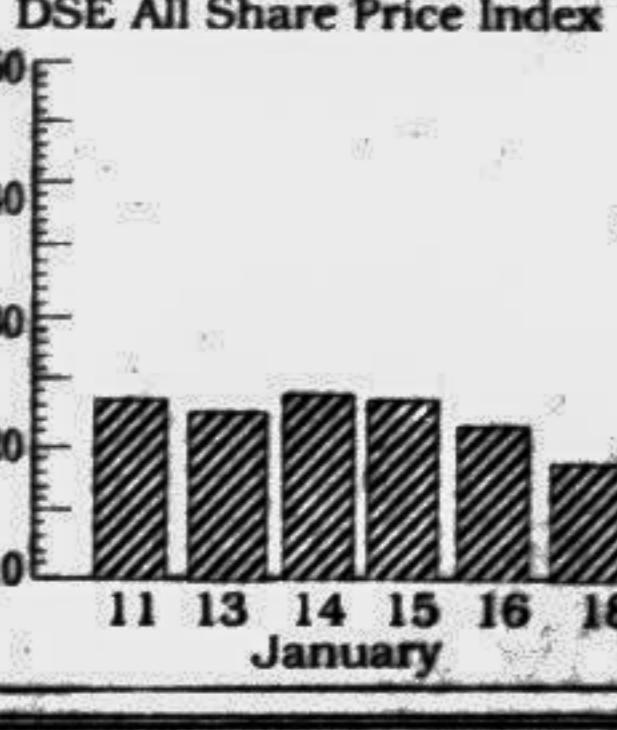
Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on January 18, '96
Index falls by 3 points

Star Report

The Dhaka Stock Exchange All Share Price Index posted another fall of 2.87 points, decreasing to 818.87 from 821.66.

The transactions in vol-



ume dropped by 42.88 per cent from 150528 to 85986 and the value showed a decline of 39.61 per cent to Tk 1.78 cr from Tk 2.94 cr.

Total market capital dropped to Tk 5310.90 cr from Tk 5326.99 cr.

Volume leaders of the day were: Maq Paper (152690), Beximco Pharma (11200) and Apex Weaving (8986).

Singer Bangladesh led the losers with a fall of Tk 96.56 per share while no issue gained significantly.

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Trading at a glance

Company	Change	Number
Mithun Corporation	950(G)	220
B Dying	15,000(L)	220
Delta Millers	2,820(L)	220
Apex Weaving	500(L)	8986
Dandy Dying	1,000(L)	200
Beximco Textiles	750(G)	100
BD Zipper	65(G)	200
Beximco Denim	3,890(G)	1400
Prime Textile	6,090(G)	1350
M Hossain Garments	890(L)	384
Sajib Knitwear	2,310(L)	1050
Beximco Pharma	1,220(L)	11200
ACI Limited	630(L)	800
Petro Synthetic	1,000(L)	100
Reckitt and Colman	440(L)	450
Kohinoor Chemical	1,000(L)	105
IBN Sina Pharma	00	00
Rahman Chemicals	10,000(L)	10
Bangladesh Chemical	3,930(G)	150
Wata Chemical	100(G)	40
Beximco Infusions	3,000(G)	20
National Polymer	3,060(L)	950
Beximco Synthetic	2,430(L)	880
Orion Infusion	10,270(L)	1780
Maq Paper	10,270(L)	152690
Apex Tannery	11,510(L)	410
Bata Shoe	2,500(L)	1640
GQ Ball Pen	3,180(L)	30
Monna Ceramic	15,350(G)	340
Milan Tanneries	00	545
Beximco Ltd	870(L)	2400
Chittagong Cement	3,190(G)	905
Apex Footwear	4,420(L)	750
Eastern Housing	430(G)	4720
Confidence Cement	5,120(L)	200
Meghna Cement	9,030(G)	700
Lexco Limited	32,960(L)	1300
Green Delta	5,000(L)	10
United Insurance	00	70
Janata Insurance	00	20
Phonex Insurance	330(G)	180
Easland Insurance	1,000(G)	20
Central Insurance	1,730(L)	60
Rupali Insurance	00	20
Federal Insurance	720(L)	350
Reliance Insurance	4,680(G)	3774
Purabi Insurance	10,000(L)	25
Delta Life	8,700(L)	235
B Textile (Deb)	6,670(L)	2
B Denim (Deb)	50,000(L)	4

Prime Bank's first managers' confce held

The first managers' conference of Prime Bank Limited was held at Bank's Head Office yesterday, says a press release.

Chairman of the Board of Directors Dr R A Ghani inaugurated the conference while Managing Director Lutfar Rahman Sarker presided.

In his speech, Lutfar Rahman Sarker facilitated the branch managers for their commendable performance in earning considerable amount of profit for the bank only within nine months of starting operation.

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr R A Ghani, in his inaugural address, reminded the branch managers that role of the clients and constituents of the bank were mostly instrumental for overall success of the bank.

Hasif A Choudhury, PCA, Chairman, BASC Board of Directors was presided over the ceremony and awarded the certificates to the participants.

Workshop on effective selling held

The closing certificate awarding ceremony of the five-day training workshop on "Effective Selling" organised by Bangladesh Advisory Services Centre (BASC) was held at BASC training hall yesterday, says a press release.

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Exchange Rates

The following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates to public for some selected foreign currencies with Bangladesh Taka effective date: