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Price: Tk. 25,000

HYUNDAI

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

British beef EC adopts plan to partially lift ban today

BRUSSELS, Jan 13: The European Commission will on Wednesday adopt a proposal to lift the ban on British beef for certain categories of meat from Northern Ireland, European sources said Monday, reports AFP.

The proposal, which has to be approved by EU governments before being implemented, represents the first significant step towards a relaxation of the worldwide embargo on British government revealed a possible link between BSE (mad cow disease), and a fatal human brain condition.

The move to ease the ban comes after a panel of scientists that advises the commission gave conditional approval last month to Britain's proposals to resume exports of meat from cattle aged between six and 30 months from herds that have been certified as BSE-free.

EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler's decision to seek an easing of the ban first for northern Ireland reflects the fact that the province has had a much lower incidence of BSE than mainland Britain.

Northern Ireland also has the advantage of having had a computerised cattle tracing system in place since 1988, making it much easier to establish the history and movements of individual cows.

The rest of Britain has only compulsory cattle passports since July 1996.

Currency steady in Asia

SINGAPORE, Jan 13: Asia's currencies stood steady today as stock markets across the region recovered after a day of carnage and key market players passed to seek clues on expected reforms in troubled economies, reports AFP.

"It's a kind of breather after the plunges yesterday in most stock markets that also dented sentiment for currencies said Alison Seng, analyst with US Research House Standard and Poor's MMS in Singapore.

Dealers said the Indonesian rupiah was traded slightly higher at 8,400 against the US dollar from Monday's close of 8,600 amid signs that Indonesia's International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored stabilisation programme was not in jeopardy.

Last week, the rupiah nosedived to an unprecedented 11,000 against the dollar after Indonesia's national budget presented by President Suharto did not underline Jakarta's seriousness in implementing economic reforms as required by the IMF which bailed out the largest Southeast Asian economy from collapse.

"The recovery in regional stock markets lent an element of stability to the currencies but this could be mainly a short-term kind of respite because question marks are still hovering around the Indonesian situation," said Maya Pinto, regional economist with British finance house IDEA.

Analysts said the markets would be waiting for announcements after IMF chief Michel Camdessus held talks with President Suharto on Thursday.

The Singapore dollar, which plunged to a close of 1,802 against the greenback a day earlier, recovered to 1,795 while the Malaysian ringgit also rose to 4,570 from 4,680.

The Thai baht offshore rose to 54.00 against the dollar from 56.10 while the South Korean won dipped to 1,754 against the greenback from 1,738.

The Taiwan dollar was up to 34,380 from 34,481 against the greenback while the Philippine peso gained a little to 43.50 from 43.95.

EU chief sees no real impact of Asia's crisis on Europe

TOKYO, Jan 13: European Commission President Jacques Santer said today there was no real impact on Europe at the moment from Asia's financial crisis, reports Reuters.

Santer said while Europe was greatly concerned about the crisis, the fact that Asia accounted for only nine per cent of the European Union's trade minimised any effects.

"Of course, we are concerned about the crisis," Santer told the news agency's financial television in an interview.

"But on the other hand we must say that at this moment there is no real impact of this crisis on the economic development of the European Union because our whole trading relationship with Asia is nine per cent," Santer said.

"So it (the financial crisis) would have a marginal effect on Europe."

Santer also said that although European banks had the world's biggest exposure in loans to Asia, the money was mainly in the "strong economies" of Hong Kong and Singapore.

PM assures quick approval Merchant banks to come soon

By M Shamsur Rahman

The merchant banks are likely to begin operation soon after the expected clearance from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a few days, sources said.

The prime minister is learnt to have assured a quick disposal of the file lying with PMO for past three months.

The assurance came when the newly-elected Chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) Md Rakibur Rahman informally met the prime minister.

ter to donate money on behalf of the exchange for her relief fund.

According to the sources, the prime minister has also agreed to sit with the DSE councillors to discuss ways and means to stabilise the stock market. The PM also expressed her concern at the present condition of the market, and hoped the government steps being taken would help create confidence among investors.

"All-out support will be

given for the development of the market. The file will be released within the earliest possible time so that the merchant banks can start functioning," one source quoted the prime minister as telling DSE office-bearers.

Rakibur Rahman said DSE councillors hoped to meet the Prime Minister sometime after the December 15 three-nation business summit.

Meanwhile, formalities are

being done to lift the circuit breaker as agreed at a meeting between the DSE and the SEC last week.

"We have already sent the proposal to SEC and we hope the circuit breaker will be lifted within the next 10-15 days," Rakibur Rahman said.

In another development, the six-member DSE task force, headed by councillor Yussuf Abdullah Harun who is also FBCCI president, yesterday failed to come up with any con-

crete decision on automation. The meeting sources said talks were continuing, and that they might reach a compromise solution by next week.

The task force, formed on December 29 to deal with already-delayed automation process, came up with a set of recommendations, approved by the new DSE Council for an amicable solution with the Tandem, the American firm doing the work.

Dhaka to get \$34m from IFAD for rural infrastructure

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will provide \$33.95 million US dollars (Tk 138.77 crore) for rural infrastructure development in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

This was disclosed at a meeting between IFAD president Fawzi H Al-Sultan and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman at the latter's secretariat office yesterday said an official handout.

The fund will be utilised for the rural development programmes to increase agricultural production, promote rural transportation system and create marketing facilities for the growers' produce.

The programmes will be implemented in greater Rangpur, Dinajpur, Mymensingh and Jamalpur districts.

These include small water resources development project, crop diversification, cyclone shelter projects in coastal belt, Netrakona Integrated Agricultural Development and Irrigation Management and rural in-

frastructure work.

IFAD also showed keen interest for further investment in rural development, particularly poverty alleviation programme of the rural women community and disadvantaged group and their empowerment, haor development for small fisheries projects and construction work of complete Union Parishad Complex.

Talking to the IFAD president Zillur Rahman said the main target of present government is to make every village of the country self-reliant by boosting agricultural production and building up strong rural infrastructures.

Zillur said the government has decided to set up complete Union Parishad Complex in the country from where the rural people will get all types of services and support for their welfare.

The complex will render support to the rural people in different fields like agriculture, fisheries, livestock, primary

health care, education, family planning, sanitation and other social improvement activities, he added.

The LGRD Minister said all these initiatives are aimed to create dynamism in the rural economy by increasing the purchasing capacity of the rural people through their empowerment and creation of income-generating activities.

He sought financial and technical assistance of IFAD for the surface water irrigation management programmes in the rural areas to increase agricultural production and build up food security.

IFAD president Fawzi H Al-Sultan praised the government efforts for establishing elected representative system at the grassroots level like Gram Parishad for welfare and development of the rural people.

He assured all possible cooperation for rural infrastructure development and agricultural production.



Md Showkat Ali Chowdhury, Director of Eastern Bank Limited, inaugurated the bank's 18th branch at O R Nizam Road in Chittagong recently. M Khairul Alam, Managing Director (Acting) and M Hedayatul Islam, Executive Vice President of the bank are also seen in the picture.

Micro-credit for income generation BRDB disbursing Tk 284cr this FY

The government is disbursing Tk 284 crore as small credit in income-generating activities for poor people under Bangladesh Rural Development Board's (BRDB) poverty alleviation project during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman stated this at a reviewing meeting of BRDB here yesterday.

The board has already distributed about Tk 128.79 crore during the first six months of the current fiscal year and recovered Tk 127.33 crore which was 99 per cent of the total recovery.

It disbursed Tk 232 crore among the poor in income-generating activities and recovered Tk 205 crore in 1996-97 fiscal.

The meeting was informed that out of 16 development projects undertaken in the 1997-98 fiscal, eight are directly involved in poverty alleviation programmes.

BRDB incorporated about 14.96 lakh assetless men and women with self-employment and income-generating activities in the current fiscal. About 28 per cent of them have managed to bring back solvency in their families.

The 15 lakh organised members under the poverty alleviation programmes of BRDB have formed their own capital of Tk 60.25 crore.

The board so far provided training to about 12 lakh people in its three training centres for

their skill development and creating job opportunity.

The meeting was told that the construction of 'Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Training Centre' with an expenditure of Tk 16 crore has already begun and is expected to be completed in 1998-99 financial year.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, secretaries of LGRD, Fisheries and Livestock ministries, high officials of LGRD Ministry and heads of the concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Hashimoto tells Clinton

Japan worried about SEA financial crisis

TOKYO, Jan 13: Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told US President Bill Clinton in a telephone conversation today that Japan was worried about the financial crisis in Southeast Asia, a Japanese government source said, reports Reuters.

Hashimoto also pledged to Clinton that Japan would continue to take all steps needed to support those nations which are in economic trouble, the source said.

Battered Asian stock markets rebound

HONG KONG, Jan 13: Buoyed by a recovery on Wall Street, battered stock markets rebounded across Asia Tuesday, led by a surge in prices in Hong Kong, Indonesia indicated it is willing to adopt tough reforms needed for its economic recovery, reports AP.

Hong Kong's key stock index climbed 7.4 per cent, closing higher for the first time this year despite the previous day's collapse of a major Hong Kong investment house.

In Japan, an armed man burst into the 15-storey building housing the Tokyo Stock Exchange and took a Finance Ministry official hostage in a dramatic standoff.

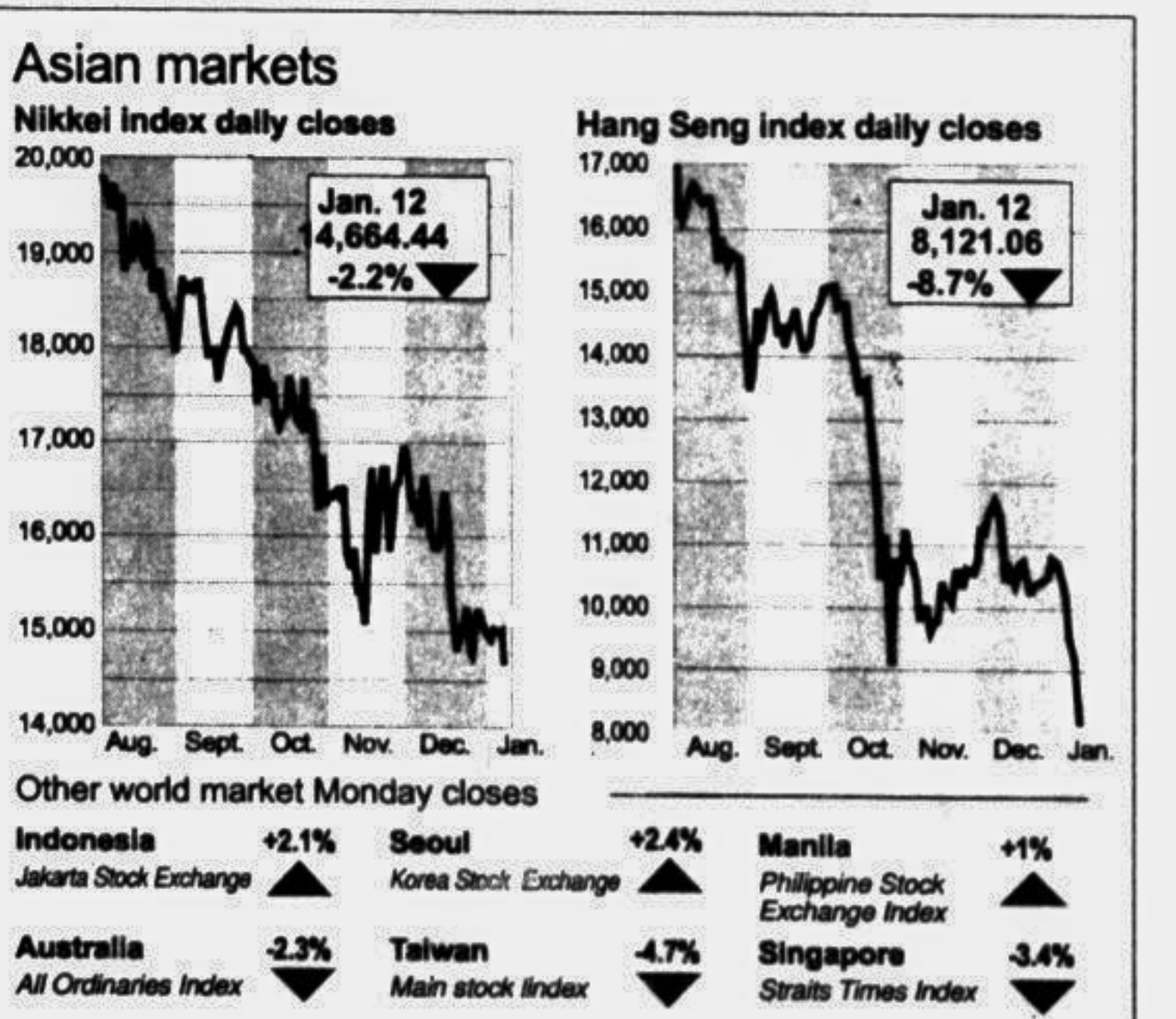
The man barricaded himself in an office several floors above the stock market and reportedly demanded a meeting with Japan's finance minister.

But no violence was reported, and even though he demanded that trading be stopped, it continued until the normal closing. The Nikkei Stock Average of 225 issues gained 91.50 points, or 0.62 per cent, to 14,755.94.

The market recovered even though the Japanese government said the economy remains at a standstill, with corporate and individual sentiment deteriorating.

On Monday, the government also said the amount of bad loans held by ailing Japanese financial institutions has surged to nearly three times the previous estimate. The loan mess is part of Japan's general economic malaise.

In Hong Kong, anxious in-



uation. The company was heavily exposed in Indonesia, one of the biggest victims of the plunge in East Asia's currency, and stock markets.

In Jakarta, a senior US Treasury Department official, Lawrence Summers, met Indonesian President Suharto Tuesday to hammer home the need for a major economic overhaul to bring the world's fourth largest country back from the brink.

Summers, sent on a tour of Asia by US President Bill Clinton, emerged saying Suharto "recognises the need to take strong steps" to overcome his nation's economic crisis.

Indonesia's rupiah plummeted to a record low last week on fears that Suharto's government was not complying with commitments made to the International Monetary Fund in exchange for the 40 billion dollars economic bailout put together in October.

In the past two days, Suharto has assured IMF officials, and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, that he is committed to making big, painful changes.

Peregrine invested heavily in Indonesia, including in a taxi company, Steady Safe, that closed reportedly owing Peregrine US \$260 million dollars. Amid the Asian stock market gains, Jakarta's main index climbed 9.1 per cent.

Elsewhere, Thailand's main market index gained 2.9 per cent, Taiwan's closed up 1.87 per cent, Manila's surged 3.8 per

cent, Sydney's index climbed 1 per cent, while New Zealand shares gained a modest 0.08 per cent.

In Seoul, shares gained 1.7 per cent after IMF chief Michel Camdessus praised South Korea for taking steps to lure back foreign investors but said the country still has a long way to go to put its economy back on track.

Hong Kong's rebound came despite an announcement by Moody's Investors Service that it was considering downgrading its rating of Hong Kong's ability to repay foreign debt.

The US-based firm, which rates the ability of companies and countries to repay debts, said the review was prompted by concerns that East Asia's economic turmoil may have tough consequences for Hong Kong. But it also said Hong Kong's economic fundamentals remained strong.

Summers, the US treasury official, will meet Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa and financial officials Wednesday to discuss steps to help Asia recover. US Consul-General Richard Boucher said.

But Hong Kong investors said they were still far from recouping their losses.

"The market is up, but it still doesn't make up for what I've lost in the past weeks, especially yesterday," said Yam Tse-chuen, a 52-year-old investor watching prices rise on a monitor in a bank.

"Most of the stocks aren't even above half of what I paid for them. I don't know what I'm going to do," he said.

Exchange Rates

Following is the Tuesday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka.

Central Bank USD/BDT Rate: Buying-BDT 45.30/Selling-BDT 45.60

Selling		Currency		Buying	
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean	OD Slight DOC	OD Transfer	
45.6000	45.7000	USD	45.2600	45.0850	44.9866
74.6084	74.6738	GBP	73.0496	72.7672	72.6083
25.2944	25.2765	DEM	24.7593	24.6636	24.5694
0.3462	0.3465	JPY	0.3390	0.3367	0.3360
31.1672	31.1945	CHF	30.4781	30.3903	30.3229
22.4043	22.4239	NG	21.9922	21.9072	21.8275
25.7095	25.7320	SGD	25.2004	25.1030	25.0064
7.5247	7.5313	FRF	7.4075	7.3789	7.3592
32.0196	32.0477	CAD	31.3001	31.1791	31.0466
5.7075	5.7125	SEK	5.6154	5.5937	5.5794
29.6333	29.6593	AUD	28.4685	28.3585	28.1616
9.9261	9.9348	MYR	9.7965	9.7587	9.7437
5.9030	5.9082	HKD	5.8362	5.8137	5.8032
12.2413	12.2520	SAR	12.0053	11.9589	11.9423

US. Dollar		Libor	
BUYING	SELLING	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS
Cash	45.20	USD	5.58594
Notes	45.20	USD	5.57813
TC	45.05	GBP	7.42188
			7.49609
			7.48828
			7.47656

Exchange Rates of Some Asian Currencies Against US Dollars		INDONESIA		PHILIPPINE	
INDIAN RUPEE	PAK RUPEE	THAI BAHT	MALAYSIAN RINGGIT	INDONESIA N RUPIAH	E PESO
39.875/39.8950	44.006	55.05/55.80	4.6000/4.7000	8200/8700	43.45/43.65

Market Commentary
Trading in the local foreign exchange market was dull Tuesday. In the interbank market, USD traded between BDT 45.31 and BDT 45.34. The money market was also quiet and call money rate ranged between 5.75 pc and 6.5 pc. The international foreign exchange markets were calm. The Asian stock markets gained, which gave support to the Asian currencies. Pound sterling rose due to purchase by UK investors. Market awaits the outcome of US Deputy Treasury Secretary's Asian tour, which is expected to result in more steps to help the region. In European trading, USD traded at 131.72/131.75 against Yen, 1.8183/88 against DEM, while GBP traded at 1.6336/46 at 1050 GMT.

Shipping Intelligence

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 13.1.98						
Berth No.	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Date of Leaving
J/1	Brave Pescadores	GI	Sento	Radiant	24/12	15/1
J/3	Linghai-18	C.Clink	Sing	MBL	10/12	23/1
J/4	Arktis Queen	GI	P.Kel	Sunshine	30/12	14/1
J/5	Sarah-1	GI	Yang	Cross	30/12	22/1
J/6	Arktis Trader	GI	Sing	Sunshine	1/1	15/1
J/7	Al Shams	GI	Viza	Prog	26/12	20/1
J/8	Feng Chi	GI	Sing	Prog	31/12	22/1
J/9	Qing Yang	GI	Sing	BDShip	29/12	16/1
J/10	QC Teal	Cont	Sing	QCS	9/1	18/1
J/11	Padma	Cont	Sing	RSL	4/1	16/1
J/12	Manaslu (Cont)	Cont	Sing	RSL	30/12	14/1
J/13	Sea Elegance	Cont	Sing	PIU(BD)	1/1	14/1
CCT/2	Banglar Moni	Cont	Sing	BSC	2/1	
CCT/3	Sophie Schulte	Cont	Sing	RSL	3/1	13/1
RM/14	Jin Cheng Jiang	PSSP	Sing	TMIL	28/12	18/1
CCJ	Petchmanee	C.Clink	Sing	Seacom	31/12	16/1
GSJ	Grigoroussa	Wheat(G)	Mong	LAMS	30/12	13/1
TSP	Kapitan Boeck	R.Phos	Hamr	Litmond	5/1	15/1
RM/3	Venessa	CPO	P.Kel	Rainbow	6/1	13/1
RM/4	Won San	Cement	Long	USTC	6/12	16/1
RM/5	Al Saliyah	HSD	Kuwt	MSTPL	5/1	13/1
DD	Banglar Gourab	Repair	Fang	BSC	17/11	13/1
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	IDLE	Fang	PSAL		
RM/8	High Mountain	Cement	Kind	PSAL	R/A	16/1
RM/9	Banglar Kallol	Repair	B.Abbas	Move	17/12	16/1
CUFJ	Yafeng	Cement	Land	Delmore	R/A	16/1
KAPCO (R) Trans Glory	Urea	Hald	BDShip		7/1	13/1
El. Oceancho	P.Mat	Sing	MBL		30/9	

vessels due at outer anchorage						
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port	
Vanessa 1/1	13/1	COL	Baridhi	Cont	COL	
RGR	14/1		Oil	GI		
Lefort 6/1	14/1	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	
Baltimar Venus	14/1	Yand	Litmond	GI (Copro)		
Gretke Oldendorf	14/1	-	Rainbow	R.Seed		
Feng Yan	14/1	Shanghai	Baridhi	GI		
Al Swannuz	15/1	-	ASLL			
Banga Biraj 11/1	16/1	Sing	BDShip	Cont	Sing	
IB Everett	15/1	Sing	Everett	GI		
Cape Hatters 12/1	15/1	Sing	Para	Cont	Sing	
Kota Cahaya 5/1	15/1	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont	Sing	
San Pablo (Roro) 24/31/12	17/1	Col	IF	Vehi		
Tamdhun (48) 7/1	17/1	-	Simni	R.Coch/GI		
Hai Mao	18/1	Mong	MBL	Scraping		
Bonanza	18/1	Sing	MBL	GI (P. Equip)		
Kota Berjaya 19/1	19/1	Sing	PIL (BD)	Cont	Sing	
Sea Horse	21/1	Sing	Seabcom	GI (Copro)		
Ou Pu 21/01	21/1	Sing	APL	Cont	Sing	
Sotoon	22/1	-		Scraping		