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BUSINESS

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HYUNDAI

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

Chirac arrives in India tomorrow to discuss trade

PARIS, Jan 22: French President Jacques Chirac heads off on a three-day state visit to India Saturday with one goal in mind: pumping up his country's lagging trade performance in the democratic world's biggest pool of potential customers, says AFP.

Accompanying the French head of state will be high-powered delegation including three ministers — foreign affairs, research and technology, and economy and industry — and the heads of 23 of France's biggest enterprises.

"The size of this delegation underlines the interest French economic circles have in India and the confidence they place in the country's future," Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna told a press conference Wednesday.

Politics will also be seen to take a back seat when the presidential entourage lands not in New Delhi but in Bombay, India's commercial heart, Chirac will be met there by the governor of Maharashtra state, P C Alexander.

He will be greeted by his Indian counterpart, K R Narayanan, in New Delhi on Sunday, before attending Republic Day celebrations, marking India's transition to a Republic on January 26, 1950, as guest of honour.

India has been celebrating its 50th year of independence from British rule since last August.

In an interview from Paris to the Indian newspaper, the Hindu, Chirac cautiously backed Indian aspirations for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

BB treasury bills auctioned

The 79th auction of the 90-day treasury bill, the 70th auction of the 30-day and the 180-day treasury bills and the 44th auction of the one-year treasury bill of Bangladesh Bank were held on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Twenty-three bids for a total of Tk 501 crore of 30-day bill and two bids for a total of Tk one crore of 90-day bill were offered.

All the bids were accepted. No bid was offered for the 180-day and one-year bills, said a BB press release.

The weighted average prices of the accepted bids against the 30-day and 90-day bills were Tk 99.34 and Tk 97.83 per 100 taka respectively.

The corresponding yields are 7.99 per cent and 8.88 per cent per annum.

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Milo plant in Bangladesh

Star Business Report

Milo, a sweet chocolate drink, will now be produced in Bangladesh.

Coming from Australia, Milo, a Nestle product, has long been considered as an energy and health beverage since its launching in 1934 in New South Wales.

"We have invested nearly Tk 15 crore in the new plant and buildings," said Nestle Bangladesh Ltd managing director Nick JS Miller at a ceremony at Hotel Sheraton.

In Bangladesh, Transcom Ltd began marketing Milo in 1990. From now on, Milo will be produced at its Sripur factory that will also produce Nestomalt, another popular drink of Nestle.

Also speaking on the occasion were Nestle's marketing manager John Lewer, product manager Kazi Khalid Mahmood, Transcom's general manager Mesbahur Rahman distributed raffle prizes among the winners. The programme was followed by a lunch.

Bulbul to promote Nestle products

BSS says: Vice captain of Bangladesh cricket team Aminul Islam Bulbul has tied with a multinational company, Nestle Bangladesh Limited for three years to promote its products in the country.

The company yesterday launched its locally packed potential food drink "milo" at a hotel here with Bulbul batting a nestle ball.

Vice President of Bangladesh Cricket Board Raisuddin Ahmed was present.

BKB disburses Tk 52.27cr loan in 11 S dists

MADARIPUR, Jan 22: Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Barisal region, has so far disbursed Tk 52.27 crore loan out of the total target of Tk 140.79 crore among the farmers of 11 Southern districts in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

According to bank sources, a total of 1.32 lakh farmers of the region will be benefited. The amount has been disbursed through its 191 branches in the last six months till December.

The districts under this programme are Barisal, Bhola, Feni, Khulna, Jhalakati, Baranagar, Pirojpur, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur and Rajbari.



HARD TO GET: A week away from Eid-ul-Fitr, home-bound people queue at Kamalapur Railway Station for inter-city train tickets yesterday.

Asian stocks tumble

HONG KONG, Jan 22: Asian stock markets tumbled Thursday amid fears that the collapse of Indonesia's currency could trigger further economic instability across the region, reports AP.

Hong Kong's main stock index shed 3.9 per cent because of fears over the Indonesian rupiah, the shaky health of Hong Kong's brokerage industry and a one per cent overnight fall on Wall Street.

Taiwan's main stock index dropped 0.1 per cent, while Sydney's index fell 0.9 per cent. Malaysia's index also shed 2.6 per cent as investors reacted to the downturn on other Asian markets.

Indonesia's rupiah collapsed to another record low Thursday amid fears about huge private sector debt and the nation's political future.

The currency crashed to 14,550 rupiah against the US dollar in a mad rush that started as soon as trading opened.

"It seemed like pure panic," said Chia Woon Khien, an analyst with SE Bankers in Singapore, where rupiahs were also sold off.

The rupiah recovered to around 12,000 in afternoon trading after Indonesia's central bank reportedly intervened by selling dollars. The rupiah has lost an astonishing 85 per cent of its value in the past seven months.

Indonesia's main stock in-

Mediator presents new Bosnian currency

SARAJEVO, Jan 22: Bosnia's top international mediator on Wednesday presented a currency for all of the country, designed to be used by Serbs, Croats and Muslims alike, reports AP.

The mediator, Bosnian High Commissioner Carlos Westendorp imposed the new currency on Tuesday, after the three ethnic groups failed to meet a January 20 deadline for agreeing on the money.

Although the Bosnian war ended in 1995, disputes over symbols by all groups and separatist tendencies among Serbs and some Croats have blocked agreement on a common currency, which would be a symbol of Bosnian unity.

Indian rupee continues to hold up against dollar

BOMBAY, Jan 22: The Indian rupee continued to hold up against the dollar today following stabilising measures last week by the central Reserve Bank of India (RBI), dealers said, reports AFP.

Pradeep Sharma at the foreign exchange and travel house Thomas Cook said: "The rupee opened at 38.90 to the dollar, marginally down from today close of 38.75.

Britain won't rejoin ERM

BRUSSELS, Jan 22: Britain on Wednesday rejected suggestions it will have to rejoin the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) to qualify for membership of the single currency, reports AFP.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown told the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Committee that the Maastricht Treaty required potential Euro members to have had stable exchange rates, rather than making ERM membership compulsory.

"Exchange rate stability is the most important criteria laid down in the treaty and that is what we will have as a country," Brown said.

FedEx to equip cargo jet fleet with advanced safety systems

Federal Express Corp. has initiated a voluntary programme to equip its cargo jet aircraft fleet with three advanced safety systems, making it the first air cargo carrier to voluntarily undertake such an extensive safety equipment initiative, says a press release issued from Memphis, US recently.

Beginning this year, the most advanced version of the Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAB II) will be incorporated into the FedEx fleet. This systems will have a unique upgrade feature making it capable of using the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) navigation and collision-avoidance technology, ADS-B, which is based on satellite systems already in orbit, is now being developed in several joint government-industry programmes.

Singer opens 67th showroom at Savar

Singer Bangladesh Limited, opened its 67th showroom-cum-sales centre at Savar Bazar Road, Savar, Dhaka on Wednesday, says a press release.

M A Siddiqui, marketing manager of the company formally inaugurated the showroom.

Executives of Marketing and Marketing Services Department of Singer Bangladesh Limited were present.



Md Abdul Hye, owner of Khaza Store, Narayanganj, is seen receiving the first 'Milo Winners' Prize from Nestle Managing Director Nick JS Miller at a city hotel yesterday.

Rupiah crashes again

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Jan 22: Indonesia's currency went into freefall within minutes of the start of trading Thursday despite sweeping reforms enacted by President Suharto to arrest the Southeast Asian nations' economic crisis, reports AP.

At one point the hapless currency crashed to 14,400 rupiah to the US dollar. It was its third consecutive all-time low in as many days and down sharply from its closing level Wednesday of 11,550 rupiah.

The rupiah has lost about 83 per cent of its value since a currency crisis hit the region in July.

Dealers said the rupiah was sold off in exchange for US dol-



Jan Bove (2nd-L), Resident Representative of International Monetary Fund and R Maksud Khan (2nd-R), President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), held a discussion meeting at the DCCI office yesterday. DCCI Senior Vice-President Masudur Rahman (R) and Vice President Zafar Osman (L) were also present.

India targets 25pc of global spices market

CHENNAI, Jan 22: India has set a target to export of 25 per cent of the value of the total global spices trade of 1.7 billion US dollars from the country by the year 2000, says PTI.

At present India exports spices worth 340 million US dollars and the aim was to reach a target of 500 million US dollars by 2000, Spices Board Chairman V Jayashankar and Chairman of Exporters' Forum George Paul told a news conference here today.

Jayashankar said a three-day 'world spice congress' would begin in the city tomorrow. Over 120 delegates from 33 countries and 200 delegates from India would participate in the congress, the fourth in the series, and being held for the first time in Chennai.

Jayashankar said the three congresses held in Bangalore, Goa and Kochi earlier helped setting up of joint ventures, besides making 'great strides' on the export front.

"This congress will also give room for further development and setting up joint ventures," he said.

The earlier congresses had delegates only from spice buying countries and now for the first time spice producing countries would also participate.

Bank holiday

Bangladesh Bank and all scheduled banks will remain closed today and on January 27 on the holy occasions of Jummatul Wida and Shab-e-Kadr respectively, said a Bangladesh Bank press release, reports UNB.

GCC economies set to slow down sharply

ABU DHABI, Jan 22: The economies of six Gulf Arab states are set to sharply slow down in 1998 although some of them boosted oil output and projected higher spending, economic experts said on Wednesday, reports AFP.

After two years of galloping growth, the economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will increase by around 2.3 per cent in current prices this year while real growth could be much lower.

The combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the 17-year-old political, defence and economic alliance is forecast to expand to around 260.5 billion dollars in 1998 from 254.5 billion dollars in 1997.

"The oil sector is expected to decline in the GCC this year because of a projected weakening in crude prices," said Henry Azam, chief economist and assistant general manager at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

"This will offset the increase in oil production and high growth rates in other sectors, especially in the private sector," he said in a study published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Daily Al-Khaleej.

A breakdown showed Saudi Arabia's GDP, by far the biggest in the Middle East, is projected to increase by around two per cent in 1998 compared with 7.1 per cent in 1997 and 8.6 per cent in 1996.

The UAE's economy will likely grow by 2.5 per cent compared with 4.4 per cent and 10.9 per cent in the previous two years. In Kuwait, growth in the GDP will slow down to around two per cent from 4.5 per cent and 16.8 per cent.

The economies of Oman and Bahrain will also be much slower, growing by nearly three per cent and two per cent respectively.

Qatar's GDP will record high growth of eight per cent but the level is way below the 17 per cent rate recorded in 1997 and 12 per cent in 1996.

Economists attributed the high rates in Qatar during those two years to strong crude prices, record oil production and the export of liquefied natural gas from its giant north field after the partial completion of LNG ventures.

"Oil prices are expected to be lower this year but the Gulf economies will likely record positive growth rates, although lower than the previous year," said Mohammed Al-Amiri, chief economist at the Emirates Industrial Bank.

"This is due to the continuous expansion in the private sector and non-oil sectors mainly light industry and services."

Crude prices were as high as 20 dollars in 1996 and 19 dollars in 1997 as they were strengthened by higher global demand, tensions between the United States and Baghdad, the absence of sanctions-hit Iraq from the oil market for most of 1996, and compliance by major Gulf producers with output quotas assigned by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

But prices this month tumbled by more than three dollars to one of their lowest levels in four years despite peak seasonal demand.

The slide was due to excess supplies by the 11-nation OPEC following its November agreement to hike its official output ceiling by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels per day (BPD).

Other factors included Iraq's recent agreement with the United Nations to resume crude exports, the economic crisis in Southeast Asia, and a mild winter in the northern hemisphere.

Emirates service to Malta from March 30

Emirates, the award-winning international airline of the UAE, will commence a twice-weekly service to Malta on March 30, says a press release.

The airline will operate the Airbus A300-600R aircraft configured in three classes of 18 First, 35 Business and 163 Economy class seats.

Malta, south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea, will be served from Dubai via Athens. It will be Emirate's 44th destination and the 12th in the airline's European network.

Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Emirate's Chairman said: "We are grateful to the government of Malta and the civil aviation authorities for granting Emirate's the right to operate services."

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Credit Suisse says Asian crisis to depress global demand

ZURICH, Jan 22: The economic crisis in Asia is proving more entrenched than expected and will depress global demand, Credit Suisse said on Wednesday when it downgraded its growth forecasts, says AFP.

The Zurich-based group forecast that the economies of industrialised nations would grow by 2.2 per cent this year from 2.8 per cent estimated in the Autumn, several months after currency and stock market turbulence had erupted in Asia.

Growth would be 2.2 per cent during 1999 from a previous forecast of 2.3 per cent, Credit Suisse said in its quarterly economic forecast.

The financial markets will feel the impact from Asia, "interest rates are likely to sink worldwide further than previously expected, and will trend downwards" it said.

Credit Suisse estimated growth this year in Switzerland at 1.4 per cent compared with 0.6 per cent in 1997, when the economy limped out of a six-year recession.

The effects of the crisis in Asia would start to break the economy as the year progressed and growth in 1999 would be one per cent.



Opening ceremony of the 67th Singer showroom-cum-sales centre at Savar, Dhaka.

Exchange Rates

Following is the Thursday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka
Central Bank USD/BDT Rate: Buying-BDT 45.30/ Selling-BDT 45.60

TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer
45.6600	45.7000	USD	45.2600	45.0850	44.9866
75.0194	75.0851	GBP	73.4570	73.1730	73.0132
25.3104	25.3326	DEM	24.8136	24.7177	24.6232
0.3630	0.3633	JPY	0.3541	0.3528	0.3520
31.1885	31.2158	CHF	30.4987	30.3807	30.2532
22.4484	22.4680	NLG	22.0351	21.9499	21.8700
26.0319	26.0547	SGD	25.4556	25.3571	25.2592
7.5434	7.5500	FRF	7.4282	7.3995	7.3797
31.7967	31.8245	CAD	31.0852	30.9650	30.8338
5.7218	5.7268	SEK	5.6224	5.6006	5.5863
30.5465	30.5733	AUD	29.3737	29.2602	29.0613
10.0795	10.0883	MYR	9.7754	9.7376	9.7226
5.9091	5.9143	HKD	5.8423	5.8197	5.8092
12.2742	12.2849	SAR	11.9735	11.9273	11.9107

Usance Export Bills

TT DOC	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
45.1654	44.8828	44.5057	44.0719	43.6005	42.5444

Exchange rates of some Asian Currencies against US Dollars						
Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won	
38.74/38.77	44.006	54.20/54.70	4.5500/5.0000	12100/12500	1754/1760	
Market commentary						

Exchange rates of some Asian Currencies against US Dollars
Indian Rupee / Pak Rupee / Thai Baht / Malaysian Ringgit / Indonesian Rupiah / Korean Won
38/7438/77 / 44/006 / 54/2054/70 / 4.55005/0000 / 12100/12500 / 1754/1780

Market commentary
Trading in local foreign exchange market was active on Thursday. In the interbank market demand for USD was high. It was traded between BDT 45.36 and BDT 45.42. Payment of treasury bills equivalent of BDT 502 crore pushed call money rate up to a high of 11 pc against previous day's high of 6.5 pc. Average call money rate ranged between nine and 10 pc.

In international foreign exchange markets USD fell sharply against DEM on perceptions of brightness in German economy. USD softened against Japanese Yen, but there is a mixed view about dollar's tone against Yen. Though Yen is firm due to optimism on the economic outlook and hopes of fresh reform packages by Japanese government to revive its economy, renewed concerns for Southeast Asian currencies, particularly Indonesian rupiah which fell to a new low of 13000 per USD and Thai baht which fell to 54 per USD kept pressure on the Japanese currency. At 1040GMT USD traded at 1.8062/72 against DEM, 126.86/91 against Yen and GBP traded at 1.6408/18 against USD.

Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Sarah-1	GI	Yang	Cross	30/12	25/1
J/2	IB Everest	GI	Sing	Everett	15/1	25/1
J/3	Sea Energy	GI	Sing	Prog	8/1	28/1
J/4	Bonanza (48)	GI	Sing	MBL	17/1	22/1
J/5	Norbulk Oak	GI	S Hai	Prog	1/1	26/1
J/6	China star	GI	Sing	Everett	6/1	24/1
J/7	Krik	GI	Mad	Od	15/1	26/1
J/8	Peng Chi	GI	Sing	Prog	31/12	23/1
J/9	Bharatendu	GI/GL	Mad	SSL	5/1	25/1
J/10	B Romil (Flag)	Cont	Sing	BSC	21/1	26/1
J/11	Leorort	Cont	Sing	RSL	14/1	26/1
J/12	Linghai-18	Clink	Sing	MBL	10/12	25/1
J/13	Banga Biraj (PRT)	Cont	Sing	Bdship	18/1	25/1
CCT/1	Cape Hatteras	Cont	Sing	RSL	15/1	26/1
CCT/2	Ultima	Cont	Col	Bardhi	7/1	24/1
CCT/3	Johanna	Cont	Sing	RSL	10/1	23/1
RM/14	Kuryong	Cement	Sing	Delmore	9/12	30/1
RM/15	B Manushu	Repaier	CCT	BSC	R/A	24/1
RM/4	Zhong Hua-1	CO	Sand	TSI	22/1	23/1
RM/5	Nidia	Cld	Kwua	MSTP	16/1	24/1
DD	B Urm	Repair	idie	BSC	R/A	1/1
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	idie	PARA	PSAL	8/5/95	-
RM/9	B kallol	Repair	BABB	BSC	17/12	1/2
Kafco (U)	Star Entares	Urea	hald	Everett	19/1	23/1

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	LP	Agent	Cargo	L Port
Stoon	22/1	-	Simni	For Scraping	-
Laut timur	22/1	Sing	B Bay	For Surve	Purpose
Kota Alam 6/1	23/1	Sing	PI (BD)	Cont	Sing
Baltimar Neptune	23/1	Sing	AASS	GI(Copra)	-
Mythyang-2	27/1	Sing	PSAL	Cement	-
S Elegance 14/1	25/1	Sing	PI(BD)	Cont	Sing
Greke Oldendorf	28/1	Sing	Bainbow	R Seed	-
Manasul 21/1	25/1	Sing	Bardhi	Cont	-
Nan Du Jiang	26/1	Sing	USTC	Clink(M Jetty)	Col
Padma 19/1	26/1	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
QC Teal 18/1	27/1	Sing	QCSC	Cont	Sing
Diligence Cont/18	27/1	Sing	QCSC	Cont	Sing
K Bintang 18/1	27/1	Sing	PI(BD)	Cont	Sing
B Momi 15/1	27/1	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
B Kiron	27/1	Mong	BSC	-	-
B Gourab 24/21/1	27/1	Mong	BSC	-	-
Hai Mao	27/1	Mong	MBL	For Scraping	-
Eastern Explorer	27/1	Sing	B Bay	For Surve	Purpose
Ne Cygnus 148/18/1	28/1	Kaus	Prog	GI(S Coll)	-
Dewagn-1	29/1	Col	AML	GI/GL	L Kara
Imregina 19/1	30/1	Sing	PI(BD)	Cont	Sing
Sea Harvest	30/1	Sing	USTC	Cement	-
QC Pintal 21/1	3/2	Sing	BBA	Vehi	Sing
Asian Harp (roro/24/13/1)	4/2	Sing	QCSC	Cont	-
Sin Hai 21/1	5/2	Sing	RML	Clink	-
Alving	23/1	Sing	RML	Clink	-

Tanker due:

Julie-N	25/1	Sirra	ECSL	HSD(RM/5	W/LT
Bunga Melawis DUA	31/1	Sing	SEA Glory	CRO	-

Vessels at Outer Anchorage

Ready On					
Feng	GI	S Hai	Baridhi	R/A(13/1)	14/1
K Cahaya	Cont	Sing	PI(BD)	R/A(11)	15/1
K Berjaya	Cont	Sing	PI(BD)	R/A(11)	19/1
Sweet Lady	Urea	Mad	Anel	R/A(11)	19/1
Da Fu	Cont	Sing	API(B)	R/A(11)	20/1
Tamdu (48)	GI	BABB	Everett	R/A(11)	22/1
Sea Horse	GI	Sing	Seacom	R/A(11)	22/1

Vessels not ready

Vessels awaiting employment/instruction				
a Feng	Cement	Karid	Delmure	R/A(13/1)
anglar Asha	-	-	BSC	R/A(14)
Jyoti	-	-	BSC	R/A(15/1)
Shourabh	-	-	BSC	R/A(18/1)