

# Renewed weakness in US hi-tech shares hits Asian markets

## Korea Composite Index tumbles 7 pc

SINGAPORE, Oct 17: Most Asian stock markets fell today as high-tech stocks were hit by renewed weakness in their US counterparts, with Korea's key index tumbling nearly seven per cent.

Renewed jitters over slowing earnings in the computer sector and analysts' warnings on Wall Street about the weakening outlook for microprocessor markets were expected to hit European stocks as well later in the day, says Reuters.

The euro, still reeling from reported comments by European Central Bank President Wim Duisenberg that he had asked the US administration to temper its language when referring to a strong dollar policy, was at \$0.874 at 0645 GMT, within half a cent of its record low.

Asia's biggest loser was the Korea Composite Stock Price Index, which slumped 6.77 per cent on the day to 512.85 points, mostly owing to losses in Samsung Engineering and Hyundai Electronics - two of the world's largest chip makers.

Samsung, the world's largest memory chipmaker, dropped 13.29 per cent to 137,000 won per share, while Hyundai Electronics, the world's largest maker of dynamic random access memory chips, fell 14.7 per cent to 9,600 won despite reporting a 66 billion-won profit for the third quarter.

Tokyo's Nikkei average fell 1.11 per cent to 15,340.22, just above Friday's 19-month closing low of 15,330.31 as many technology shares were battered.

Internet investor Softbank shed 9.14 per cent to 7,950 yen. But optical fibre makers managed to rally after sector leaders Furukawa Electric raised its earnings forecast.

Furukawa rose 10.28 per cent to 3,110 yen.

Pension funds are the sole potential buyers now. But even they are reluctant to enter the market, using surging oil prices and the turbulence in US stocks markets as an excuse to stay out," said Hitoshi Ichio, a strategist at Commerz Securities.

Hong Kong's Hang Sen fell just 0.49 per cent to 14,899.91. The downside was limited by a strong performance from heavyweight stock HSBC Holdings, which rose 1.89 per cent to HK\$108 off the back of the London listed shares on Monday.

Taiwan, heavily weighted toward high-tech stocks, was saved by government intervention allowing the TAIEX to close 1.27 per cent higher at 5,702.36.

Singapore stocks, however, followed the broader regional trend. At 0730 GMT, the key Straits Times index was down 2.40 per cent at 1,838.12 points.

Reinforcing worries about the computer market, Singapore's Trade Development Board reported that disk drive exports from the island dropped 12.5 per cent in September from a year earlier.

But high-tech stocks have some friends, such as Mark

Browning, the Singapore country head, sales and marketing for the Templeton Asset Management.

The fundamentals in the tech sector have not changed. We believe the recent sell-off has been overdone," he said on Monday. He said a lot of the volatility was funds cashing in stocks for year-end bookkeeping.

Manila stocks fell to two year lows on growing worries the country's political crisis will hurt the economy. The peso, at 48.42 at 0255 GMT, was supported by a massive hike in overnight interest rates.

Manila's benchmark 33-share composite index dropped 23.37 points, or 1.8 per cent on the day, to 1,271.75 after earlier hitting a low of 1,261.70 - the lowest since October 1998.

Investor sentiment has been soured by the political crisis in which President Joseph Estrada is facing calls for his resignation in the face of allegation he received kickbacks from gambling lords.

# Oil prices up as ME summit struggles to reach deal

SINGAPORE, Oct 17: Oil prices were higher in Asia today as leaders at a Middle East summit in Egypt struggled to reach an accord on how to end 19 days of Israeli Palestinian violence, says Reuters.

Benchmark US light sweet crude futures were at \$33.26 per barrel, up 34 cents from New York's settlement. Prices had slid \$2.07 in New York trading to end at \$32.92.

"Prices fell yesterday because of the initial impact - with the Middle East summit starting and people expecting some news, they got scared and sold," an New York based broker said.

"But nothing's come out yet (from the summit) and people are not seeing any reason for prices to fall, so they've bought it back up."

The unresolved Middle East tensions are stoking fears of supply shortages as the United States, the world's largest oil consumer, heads into peak winter demand season with thin stocks.

"Whatever happens, the oil market will remain tight over the coming winter" said London-based Centre for Global Energy Studies (CGES).

The world's largest oil exporter Saudi Arabia has made assurances about adequate supplies.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said on Sunday the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was concerned about high prices and could decide to raise output before its November 12 meeting.

But CGES said in its monthly oil report that oil prices would begin to ease once the peak winter demand season drew to a close and OPEC would have to react promptly to cut output in the first half of 2001 to prevent a price collapse.

Should OPEC fail to reduce output next year, prices will collapse as stocks rise, falling below \$12 a barrel on average in 2001," CGES said.

## Exchange Rates

Following are yesterday's Standard Chartered Bank foreign exchange rates of major currencies against Taka.

Central bank buying and selling rate of USD:BDT 53.85/BDT 54.15.

TT/OD	Selling		Currency	Buying		
	BC			TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
54.2500	54.2800		USD	53.8150	53.6464	53.5779
46.6863	46.7732		EUR	44.9156	44.7322	44.6556
79.0721	79.1141		GBP	77.2696	77.0031	76.9485
29.4201	29.4446		AUD	26.4250	26.3325	26.2524
0.5091	0.5092		CHF	0.4909	0.4907	0.4907
30.8155	30.8400		HKD	30.1325	30.0380	29.9635
5.1469	5.1521		SEK	5.3566	5.3390	5.3220
36.0187	36.0432		CAD	35.1668	35.0732	34.9900
6.9924	6.9937		INR	6.8889	6.8512	6.8338
31.411	31.4326		SGD	30.2747	30.2309	30.1163
14.8919	14.9095		AED	14.5023	14.5242	14.4838
14.5799	14.5983		SAR	14.2402	14.2035	14.1853

US dollar export bills

TT/DOC	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
53.7041	53.3727	52.9304	52.4217	51.8688	50.6303

Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Mal Ringgit	Indo Rupiah	NZ Dollar
46.2846/31	58.40/58.50	43.23/43.27	3.7993/3.8005	8885/8890	0.3943/0.3950

US Dollar LIBOR

Cash rate	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months
53.8150	54.2800	54.2800	54.2800	54.2800
53.9550	54.2600	54.2600	54.2600	54.2600

## Siemens holds workshop for Grameen Phone dealers

Siemens Bangladesh Ltd., the transnational company with the largest share of the Bangladesh mobile handset market, organised a workshop for Grameen Phone (GP) dealers in the city on Monday says a press release.

Feroze Ahmed, General Manager of the company, inaugurated the workshop.

Held at the Brac Centre auditorium, it was participated by over one hundred and fifty dealers, their representatives and Grameen Phone executives.

Tofazzal Hossain, Head of Mobile Phone Sales, made the main presentation at the workshop.

Siemens is a 135-year old company operating worldwide and has been serving the people of Bangladesh for 35 years.

Aminur Rashid, Consumer Product Head, and Mahbub Hossain, DGM sales of Grameen Phone, were also present.



Feroze Ahmed, General Manager of Siemens Bangladesh Ltd, inaugurates a workshop for Grameen Phone dealers at Brac Centre auditorium in the city on Monday. Also seen in the picture are Aminur Rashid, Consumer Product Head, Tofazzal Hossain, Head of Mobile Phone Sales, and Mahbub Hossain, Deputy General Manager (Sales) of Grameen Phone.

## Indian, Mexican share World Food Prize

NEW YORK, Oct 17: The World Food Prize was awarded Monday to scientists from Mexico and India for their work in discovering how to dramatically boost the nutrition level of corn by adding key amino acids, reports AP.

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual World Food Prize - little known despite its \$250,000 honorarium - will be shared by scientists Evangelina Villegas de Mendez and Surinder K. Vasal of India.

Their internationally funded work at a research center in Mexico led to Quality Protein Maize, a nutritionally potent strain that already is saving lives of malnourished children in Africa, Asia and Central America, said Kenneth Quinn, a former US ambassador to Cambodia and president of the World Food Prize Foundation.

Quinn described the World Food Prize as a prize for "breakthrough achievements" in enhancing the world's food supply through scientific research in agriculture, food and nutrition.

The food prize was conceived by Norman Borlaug, 1970 Nobel laureate as father of the worldwide "green revolution." Borlaug, now 86, attended the awards luncheon.

UN representatives, government officials and business leaders also were among those gathered at the luncheon.

Speaking at the luncheon, US secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman reminded the audience that most of the world's people do not eat meals like those served at New York City's luxurious Rainbow Room.

"The \$150 you'd pay for dinner here would buy the chickens to feed 15 Southeast Asian families for an entire year," he said.

Glickman said he didn't want his 300-plus listeners to "feel guilty," but merely wanted to illustrate "the wide gap between the world's haves and the have-nots."

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer)  
Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project  
House # 450, Road # 31, New DOHS, Mohakhali  
Dhaka-1206. Tel: 8813815, Fax: 880-02-8813646.  
E-mail: pdamwsp@bol-online.com

## Specific Procurement Notice Invitation for Bids (Re-Bidding) Bangladesh

Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project  
Credit No 3124-BD  
Procurement of Arsenic Field Test Kits

- IFB No PD/BAMWSP/329 Dated: 10.10.2000
- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for supplying sufficient number of test kits enabling purchaser to conduct 5 million tests at the field level.
  - The Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer) of "Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project" now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of sufficient number of Arsenic field test kits enabling purchaser to conduct 5 million tests at the field level. However, each test kit should have a minimum capacity to perform 50 tests.
  - Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the guidelines: procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits (January 1995, revised January and August 1996, September 1997 and January 1999), and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as established by the credit. The following countries are ineligible source countries under the credit: The Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Singapore, United Arab Emirates & Iraq. This list is additional to the list of ineligible source countries under para 1.6 and 1.8 of the World Bank's procurement guidelines.
  - Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project and inspect the bidding documents at the office of the Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer), Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, House # 450, Road # 31, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1206 from 0900 to 1700 hours on all working days.
  - A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application to the office of the Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer), Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, House # 450, Road # 31, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1206 and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tk 2,000.00 (Taka two thousand) or US \$40 (US \$ forty). The method of payment will be in the form of Pay Order or Bank Draft in favour of the undersigned. The document may be sent by courier service for overseas delivery as well as for local delivery. In the case of delay in delivery by the courier service, the purchaser shall not be held responsible.
  - Bids must be delivered to the office of the Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer), Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, House # 450, Road # 31, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1206 on or before 1500 hours on December 19, 2000. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Tk 13,00,000.00 (Taka thirteen lac) or US \$24,000.00 (US \$ twenty-four thousand) or an equivalent amount of US dollar in a freely convertible currency. The bidder must provide at least 5 (five) samples of proposed test kit along with the bid, during its submission, failing of which bids shall be treated as incomplete. Late bids will be rejected.
  - Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the office of the Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer), Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, House # 450, Road # 31, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1206 at 1510 hours on December 19, 2000.

Farid Uddin Ahmed Mia  
Project Director (Addl Chief Engineer)  
G-1815 Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project

## 'Asia still sticks to free trade path'

TOKYO, Oct 17: Asia's appetite for the tough task of opening up protected markets will be tested if economic growth flags, but for now experts see scant evidence that the region's commitment to free trade is crumbling, reports Reuters.

Ten Asian leaders will join their 15 counterparts from the European Union in Seoul later this week for a biennial summit at which they are expected to make a ritual call for a new round of world trade talks to be launched as soon as possible.

To some diplomats, this professed eagerness to tear down global barriers is hard to square with recent signs of regional slippage of free trade.

First Malaysia asked other ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) members for more time to lower auto tariffs a move that particularly angered neighbouring Thailand, which has grand ambitions for its own car industry.

Then earlier this month, at a meeting in the northern Thai resort of Chiang Mai, members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) said they needed more time to study a proposed free trade area with Australia and New Zealand.

"I get the impression that the resistance to liberalisation is

growing," a European trade diplomat said. "If they're not prepared to open up to their neighbours, who are they prepared to open up to?"

Steve Parker, a trade economist with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) in Tokyo, said there was perhaps more rhetoric about the need to help vulnerable industries adjust to increased foreign competition.

"But in the broader picture, there's tremendous amount of regional liberalisation that's occurring because of the broad application of the AFTA," Parker said. Under AFTA, the six founding members of ASEAN have pledged to reduce tariffs on 95 per cent of their trade to five per cent by 2002. The International Monetary Fund has also been instrumental in pushing for more open markets as part of the recovery programmes it has overseen since Asia's 1997 financial crisis.

"I'm hard-pressed to find any backsliding," Parker said, noting that Malaysia was asking for more time but was not proposing beefed-up protection for the Proton, its national car.

Diplomats fear that other countries will emulate Malaysia

and seek exemptions for uncompetitive industries.

But Frances Perkins, head of the East Asia Analytical Unit in Australia's department of foreign affairs and trade, was confident that Asia would not slide into tit-for-tat protection.

"Our reading of the region is that free trade is still moving ahead. A lot of tariffs have come down dramatically since the crisis," she said. "Pretty much all of these governments have finally accepted the lesson that unilateral reductions in trade barriers are to their advantage."

Nor was ASEAN's decision to study a free trade deal with Australia and New Zealand, rather than open negotiations right away, a setback. "We interpreted that as reasonably positive. We hadn't expected anything more at this stage," Perkins said.

Ultimately, analysts said, ASEAN has little choice but to keep opening up if it wants to attract foreign capital.

"If ASEAN hesitates now at this critical point, significant investment opportunities will be missed, as investment dollars look for a new home in other promising and growing markets," Stephen Collins, president of the Automotive Trade

Policy Council in Washington, an industry lobby group, wrote recently in the Asian Wall Street Journal.

Governments are particularly aware that the magnetic appeal to investors of China, especially in labour-intensive industries and electronics, can only grow once Beijing joins the World Trade Organisation.

A report prepared for the ASEAN Chiang Mai meeting showed that the 10-nation grouping had attracted just 17 per cent of foreign direct investment flows into emerging Asian economies this year, compared with 61 per cent for China - an exact reversal of the proportions in the early 1990s.

Parker at the ADBI said ASEAN states increasingly recognised that they could not aspire to be technology leaders for the foreseeable future. As such, their economic fortunes would depend on how well they fit in with multi-national production networks.

"They're in a catch-up game that becomes a lot easier if they can do it in partnership with multinationals. But in order to do that, of course, they've got to have open environments," he said.

## Re-Tender Notice for Sale of out of Ordered 1 (one) No. Pick-Up, 1 (one) No. Pajero Jeep & 1 (one) No. Motor Cycle

Managing Director, Jamuna Fertilizer Company Limited, Tarakandi, Jamalpur invites sealed quotations for sale of out of ordered 1 (one) No Pick-Up, 1 (one) No. Pajero Jeep & 1 (one) No. Motor Cycle under tender enquiry no JFCL/MPIC/Scrap/02/2000/580 dt 01.10.2000 on "As it is where it is basis." Tender documents will be received up to 11.00 AM of 01.11.2000 in the office of (1) General Manager (MPIC), MPIC Cell, BCIC, BCIC Bhaban, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka, (2) Addl Chief Manager (MPIC), JFCL, Tarakandi, Jamalpur and will be available on payment of Tk 100/- (one hundred) only (non-refundable) from (1) Controller of Accounts, BCIC, BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka, (2) Sr General Manager, BCIC Branch Office, 6 No Agrabad, Chittagong and (3) General Manager (A&F), Jamuna Fertilizer Company Limited, Tarakandi, Jamalpur. No tender document will be sold on the opening day of tender.

BCIC-904-9/10/2000  
JFCL-24699-12/10  
G-1813

Md Nazrul Islam  
Dy Chief Chemist (MPIC)  
for Managing Director.

## Euro not key to firms' competitiveness: EIU

LONDON, Oct 17: Europe's single currency may hog the headlines, but other factors such as labour costs and globalisation are far more important for companies' international competitiveness, a report by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) published today said.

The report said the euro was barely affecting decisions on corporate location or on mergers and acquisitions, ranking way down the list of factors which are key to investment decisions.

"At opinion polls and the recent Danish referendum showed, the euro remains an unloved currency. Its slide against the dollar has been a public relations disaster," the report by Robert Cottrell, Brussels correspondent of the Economist, and European business analyst Gerry Blanchard, said.

Since the euro was controversially launched in January 1999 it has shed more than 25 per cent in value versus the dollar. In September, the world's most powerful central banks intervened to buy the troubled currency, but their impact was muted.

While companies may be relatively unmoved by Europe's new currency, and the public largely unimpressed, the authors of the report argue the euro has secured some real achievements in its brief life.

"Its institutions are performing respectably, it has deepened Europe's capital markets, and the Eurozone economy is growing solidly," the report says. "There are signs that the euro is acting as a catalyst to encourage much-needed reforms in Europe's product and labour markets."

There is a tendency to exaggerate both the euro's triumphs and its troubles," said Daniel Franklin, editorial director of the Economist Intelligence Unit, noting that the euro may simply intensify the challenges that Europe would be facing anyway.

The report goes on to argue that countries outside the currency zone, such as Denmark, Sweden and the UK, are likely to stay out for years to come.

The Danish referendum has made it harder for pro-euro campaigners in Sweden and UK.

## Shipping Intelligence

### Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 17.10.2000.

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L. Port	Local call agent	Date of Leaving arrival
J/2	Sea Bailo	Gl(YC)	Darb	Rainbow	4/10 17/10
J/3	Hyderabad	Rice(P)	Para	BSC	30/9 22/10
J/4	Ipana	Rice(P)	Yang	MTA	10/10 19/10
J/5	Haus	Salt(TCB)	P. Kel	SBS	26/9 23/10
J/6	Pi Aspiratun	Rice(P)	Yang	Sunshine	3/10 22/10
J/7	Pacific Emerald	Gl(Copra)	sing	Allseas	21/9 18/10
J/8	Triumph Kaoshiung	Gl	Yang	RML	16/10 20/10
J/9	Banglar Shikha	continue	Sing	BSC	20/9 17/10
J/10	Bright Sea	C. Clink	Krab	MBL	30/9 17/10
J/11	Acturia	continue	Sing	QCSSL	13/10 19/10
J/13	Orient Independence	continue	P. Kel	Bdship	10/10 16/10
CCT/1	Kota Berjaya	continue	Sing	PiliBD	13/10 18/10
CCT/2	Banga Bonik	Cont	Sing	Bdship	14/10 19/10
CCT/3	OsgAlpha	Cont	P. Kel	Rslit	16/10 19/10
RM/14	Ganda Satria	Tsp(P)	Indo	Delmore	8/10 19/10
RM/15	North Star-II	Cement	Sbs	R/A	19/10
Cj	St. Aubin	C. Clink	Krabi	Everett	14/10 20/10
Rm/4	Eltann	C. Clink	Sing	PSAL	3/10 22/10
Dj	Banglar Jyoti	C Oil	-	BSC	R/A 18/10
DDJ/1	Seabulk Command	-	K. Dia	IBS	R/A -
DDJ/2	Sea Bulk Danab	-	-	IBS	R/A -
-	Smil Lloyd-110	P. Mat	Sing	Arafaen	R/A -
RM/8	Novo Vonger	Cdso	Darb	Rainbow	4/10 18/10
RM/9	Banglar Groub	Repair	-	BSC	R/A 20/10
Kafco/U	Diler-4	Urea	Vts	MBL	14/10 20/10
Kafco/A	Gaz Kandl	Ammonia	Para	MBL	13/10 16/10

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Banglar Kallol	17/10	-	BSC	Steel+Ash	-
Amrita Jaya (24) 11/10	17/10	Yang	ASA	continue	Sing
Sea Denasty	17/10	Jaya	OTBL	Ballast	-
Martina Prima	16/10	Sing	OTBL	-	-
Ibn Outalbah	18/10	Tampa	Litmond	TSP(Bul.K)	-
Xpress Resolve(cont) 10/10	18/10	sing	RSL	Continue	Sing
Yasmina	18/10	Okha	SMSL	Continue	Sing
Banga Birol (cont) 9/10	20/10	Sing	Bdship	Continue	Sing
Banglar Robi (Cont) 9/10	18/10	Sing	BSC	Continue	Sing
Chu Hong (cont) 9/10	18/10	-	QCSSL	Continue	Sing
Tug Britoil-35	12/10	Indo	OTBL	-	-
Sally-II	16/10	Indo	OTBL	Scraping	-
Banglar Moni	23/10	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing
OsgArgosy (cont) 12/10	20/10	Cbo	Everbest	Continue	Col
Mary Nour	21/10	Lang	BVL	Cement	-
Asian Leader (Roro) 24/20/10	21/10	-	JF	Vehi	-
Thor Eagle (480) 16/10	21/10	-	TSL	Proj mat	-
Boxer Capt Cook (cont) 12/10	22/10	-	Bdship	Continue	Sing
Mergui	22/10	Mong	MTA	Rice(P)	-
QC pntail (Cont) 12/10	26/10	-	QCSSL	Cont	Sing
Enos	19/10	Basu	SMSL	Urea(Bag)	-
Jitrong Balsam (cont) 16/10	24/10	Sing	Nel	Continue	Sing
Kota Cahaya (Cont) 16/10	23/10	Sing	PiliBD	Cont	Sing
Kota Nagai (Cont) 16/10	23/10	Sing	PiliBD	Cont	Sing
Xpress Padma (Cont) 16/10	24/10	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing
Xpress Makalu (cont) 7/10	25/10	-	Everbest	Continue	Col
Arabella (Cont) 16/10	26/10	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Orient Independence (Cont) 16/10	26/10	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Banga Blyoj (Cont) 16/10	26/10	-	Bdship	Cont	Sing
Xpress Renown (Cont) 16/10	31/10	-	RSL	Cont	Sing

### Tanker due

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L. Port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Agawam	18/10	Juba	ECSL	HSD	-
Golden Express	19/10	Sing	ECSL	LBO	-

### Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	Last port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Energy Explorer	-	-	BBAAL	5/4
Isnuva	-	-	BBAL	17/8
Dea ch				