

WorldCom faces delisting From Nasdaq

AFP, New York

Bankrupt telecom giant WorldCom was to be delisted from the Nasdaq stock exchange as of Tuesday, the Nasdaq market announced Monday.

The move followed the company's failure to comply with the Nasdaq listing requirement that a company must remain current in its periodic filings with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Nasdaq also said it voiced concerns about the company's ongoing bankruptcy proceedings.

Separately, WorldCom said it expects that its securities will trade on the Pink Sheets under the symbols WCOEQ, MCWEQ and MCEPEQ following the delisting.

In late June, WorldCom revealed that it had an unprecedented 3.85 billion dollars of accounting discrepancies that wiped out its 2001 profits. The company then filed for Chapter 11 protection under US bankruptcy law, allowing it to keep operating as it reorganizes its finances.

White Products opens showroom at Motijheel

White Products & Electronics Ltd, a sister concern of Rangs Electronics Ltd and sole distributor of world famous Sony audio video products, opened its new showroom at Motijheel in the city recently, says a press release.

The General Manager of Ashahi Quatshu Corporation and representative of Japanese Yuasa Battery and Toyo Tire, Ito Suzuki, inaugurated the showroom.

The Managing Director of Rangs Group of Companies, Aktar Hussain, Directors Sachimi Hussain and Mahbul Gani, Director of White Products & Electronics Ltd Sabur Ahmed, Sales Manager Md Iqbal Khan, Managing Director of Aponjhon Nazrul Islam, high officials of Rangs Group of Companies and dealers of Toyo Tire of the city were present on the occasion.

White Products & Electronics Ltd has been marketing the world famous Japanese Yuasa battery and Toyo tires in Bangladesh and also providing necessary after-sales service.

The Managing Director of Rangs Group of Companies mentioned in his speech that besides appointing new dealers the company is also planning to open more showrooms so that our patrons and customers could get the Japanese Yuasa battery and Toyo tires more easily.

BP quarterly profit falls by one third

AFP, London

British oil major BP announced Tuesday a fall of about one third in second-quarter profit from the year-earlier period but said conditions had improved from the first quarter.

Pro-forma profits, adjusted to take account of exceptional items, fell by 36 per cent to 2.11 billion dollars from the year-earlier period but rose by 38 per cent from the first quarter of 2002.

For the first half, pro-forma profit dropped 47 per cent from the year-earlier period to 3.76 billion dollars.

"Although the upstream and downstream business environment showed some improvement over the first quarter, the half year's trading conditions were significantly less favourable than a year ago," said chief executive John Browne.

Dynegy to sell Northern Natural Gas

AFP, Houston, Texas

Energy group Dynegy said Monday it has agreed to sell its Northern Natural unit to MidAmerican Energy Holdings for 928 million dollars in cash.

Dynegy had obtained the pipeline system as collateral for a 1.5 billion dollar investment in Enron as the two firms planned a merger before Enron filed for bankruptcy last year.

Asian shares jump as US markets soar

Investors keep seatbelts fastened in case of further turbulence

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian share markets jumped on the global recovery bandwagon Tuesday after huge gains in US markets but investors kept their seatbelts fastened in case of further turbulence.

Gains in Asian markets were more low key than the fireworks seen in US and European markets Monday, partly reflecting their more restrained losses as panic selling gripped US and European markets earlier this month.

Although they welcomed further proof Wall Street and European bourses are finding their feet again, Asian investors are yet to be fully convinced further storms are not on the way.

"It is premature to judge that the equity market (in the US) is now fully free of downside risk," said Takmasa Niimura, general manager of the equity department at Yamamaru Securities.

"In fact, new money is apparently not coming into the equity market there," he added.

The Nikkei-225 average of the Tokyo Stock Exchange ended up 337.05 points or 3.5 per cent, edging over the psychologically important 10,000 level to 10,013.99.

On Monday the Dow Jones industrials index soared 447.49 points -- its third highest points gain ever -- or 5.4 per cent to close at 8,711.88 and the Nasdaq jumped 73.13 points or 5.8 per cent to 1,335.25.

The broad-market Standard and Poor's 500 rallied 46.12 points or 5.4 per cent to 898.96.

While some US analysts are predicting more gloom, others said the past few sessions has set the stage for recovery.

"We believe a tradable rally began from Wednesday's intraday low," said Alfred Goldman of AG Edwards.

"After having the weekend to reflect on this week's activity and the ability of the market to rally late on a Friday, investors will likely get more aggressive on the buy side."

In Australia, Ord Minnett Securities dealer Jon Hancock struck a more cautious note.

He said the rally on Wall Street may be the result of concerted buying from fund managers, who do not want to see the market languish for an extended period.

"I don't think it will be sustainable. I think the market will correct again in the next few weeks," he added.

Australia's SP/ASX 200 index closed up 48.6 points or 1.6 per cent at 3,083.8.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index closed up 179.26 points or 1.8 per cent at 10,155.25.

Impressive gains were also seen elsewhere in the region

South Korea's composite index closed up 3.4 per cent at 724.08.

"Investors are very excited today over the across-the-board rally but I'm not sure how long the excitement will last... it's very volatile and unpredictable," Kyobo Securities market analyst Choi Seong-ho said.

Taiwan's weighted index closed up 3.0 per cent at 5,005.04 but in Singapore early gains were whittled away with the Straits Times index closing up 0.7 per cent at 1,516.15.

Citigroup chairman and chief executive Sanford Weill said in an affidavit released Monday that he had "no personal knowledge" about transactions between Enron and an offshore entity called "Delta."

Weill's affidavit, which has been released by Citigroup, was delivered to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

Subcommittee Chairman Carl Levin wrote to Weill and JP Morgan Chase chief executive William Harrison last week, requesting that they answer questions about offshore companies that he believes Citigroup and JP Morgan used to assist Enron with loans kept off Enron's books.

A similar affidavit signed by Harrison said JP Morgan did not control another offshore vehicle called "Mahonia," which is also being investigated by the panel for its secretive deals with Enron.

Weill's affidavit said he has directed the chief financial officer of Citigroup's Corporate and Investment Bank, Barbara Yastine, to review the matter further and to provide the subcommittee with more detailed information.

Levin contended that Citigroup used Delta, which is registered in the Cayman Islands, to help Enron facilitate hidden hundred-million-dollar loans, and that JP Morgan used Mahonia for similar purposes.

However, Citigroup's Yastine said in an affidavit attached to Weill's affidavit that Citigroup did not control Delta and does not directly or indirectly own Delta.

She said that Citigroup has paid certain administrative and attorneys' fees for Delta, but stressed that "Delta was established in such a way that Citibank has no ownership in or personal affiliation with Delta."

Subcommittee investigators say Enron obtained 4.8 billion dollars from Citigroup through Delta in the course of 14 transactions.

The announcement confirms a shift in policy by France's new center-right government, which faces serious financial constraints in fulfilling campaign promises to cut taxes and social charges while boosting spending on security.

Paris must also respect a euro-zone commitment to keep its public deficit under three per cent of annual gross domestic product, and to move toward a surplus, which analysts say will be hard to do if tax cuts are implemented.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said privatization of state-owned firms would be studied on a "case-by-case basis", taking into account the interests of the companies in ques-

tion and their growth potential.

"Such a policy can only take shape over the duration of the legislative term," Raffarin noted in a major policy speech delivered on July 3, characterizing the government's approach to the issue as "pragmatic."

Two weeks later, the finance ministry announced it had invited investment banks to put forward offers for advising on the partial privatization of 13 companies -- state-owned energy giants Electricite de France and Gaz de France, along with 11 companies in which it has a stake, including Air France.

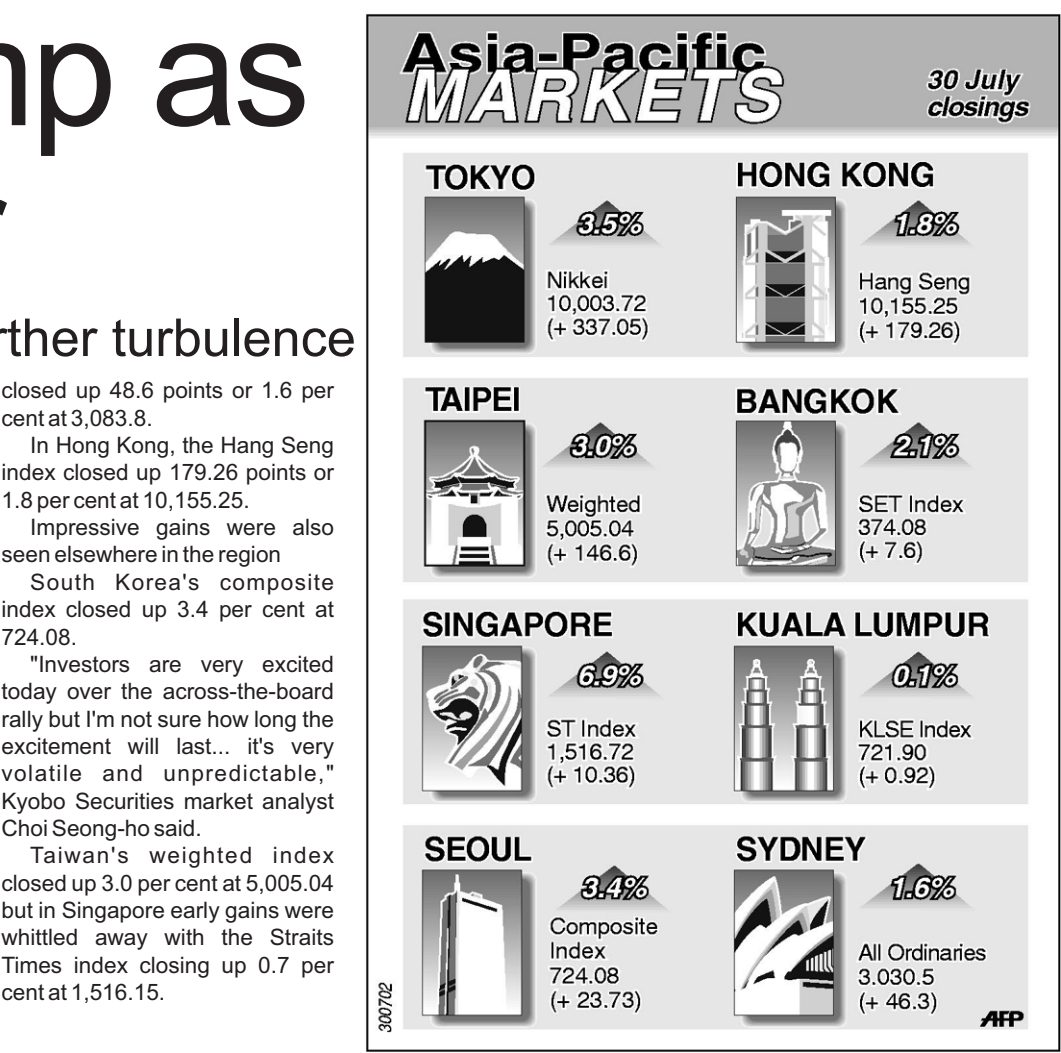
Malaysia plans to develop its capital market to bolster economic growth after a slowdown in new foreign direct investments in certain sectors as China emerges as a popular investment destination in Asia, a senior official said Tuesday.

Mustapa Mohamed, executive director of the National Economic Action Council, which is set to chart growth strategies, said Malaysia had to reduce its reliance on foreign investment to drive economic growth.

The coming years would pose a challenge as Malaysia would have to retain existing foreign investment as China further liberalises its markets after gaining World Trade Organization entry, he said.

"There is a need to reduce dependency on foreign direct investments, even if it plays an important role in the country's economy, by identifying new sources of growth and aggressively develop these new sectors... and the capital market will have to gear itself for a greater role for domestic investment in the overall economy," he said at a seminar.

Mustapa said Malaysia has introduced the 10-year capital market masterplan, to enhance the market because "a healthy and



S & P boosts Canada credit rating to AAA

AFP, New York

Standard and Poor's on Monday boosted its long-term foreign currency sovereign credit rating on Canada to its highest grade, "AAA" from "AA+" citing the nation's improved financial health.

"The sovereign upgrade reflects the results of many years of restructuring in both the private and public sectors that has created a more resilient economy with low inflation, fiscal and current account surpluses, and a healthy trade sector," said S and P analyst Joydeep Mukherji.

"Canada's general government debt, which includes all levels of government, is projected to fall below 60 per cent of GDP this year from 90 per cent five years ago, while public-sector external debt may fall below 35 per cent of current account earnings from over 70 per cent over the same interval."

Enron-offshore entity transactions Citigroup, JP Morgan CEOs claim innocence

AFP, Washington

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France to give up majority stake in Air France

AFP, Paris

France announced Monday it would give up its majority stake in state-controlled airline Air France, in what could be the start of a sweeping effort to sell off government holdings.

The French state will "reduce its capital interest while remaining one of the company's main shareholders," the economy and finance ministry said in a statement, in a process to begin "when market conditions permit."

A ministry spokesman explained that the government's "working hypothesis" was that its stake in Air France -- currently at 54.4 per cent -- could drop below 20 per cent.

Malaysia eyes capital market to fuel economic growth

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia plans to develop its capital market to bolster economic growth after a slowdown in new foreign direct investments in certain sectors as China emerges as a popular investment destination in Asia, a senior official said Tuesday.

Mustapa Mohamed, executive director of the National Economic Action Council, which is set to chart growth strategies, said Malaysia had to reduce its reliance on foreign investment to drive economic growth.

The coming years would pose a challenge as Malaysia would have to retain existing foreign investment as China further liberalises its markets after gaining World Trade Organization entry, he said.

vibrant capital market is one of the engines that powers economic growth."

The masterplan identifies visions, objectives, strategies and priorities, and recommends measures for the future development of the capital market, he said.

Mustapa said the plan recognises the bond market has much potential for growth, while over-reliance on equity and bank financing in the absence of a deep and liquid bond market raises vulnerability to sudden shifts in capital flows.

The volatility in US capital markets has not significantly affected the domestic economy, which was still on track to achieve its projected 3.5 per cent growth this year, he said.

Mustapa said Malaysia expects economic growth to improve in the second half of this year compared to the first half, supported by continued reasonable growth in exports and the services sector.

The United States and Japan continue to rank as the top two investor countries, with total investments of 3.3 billion each (868 million dollars), the ministry of International trade and industry announced in its 2001 report.

Toshiba's net loss declines

AFP, Tokyo

Toshiba Corp. said Tuesday its net loss declined in the first quarter to June due to a pickup in demand, but the electronics giant still suffered from the sluggish Japanese and US economies.

The Japanese firm suffered a net loss of 18.8 billion yen (156.6 million dollars), down from the 33.4 billion yen loss incurred in the same period last year.



Picture shows participants of a training course on "Credit Management" organised by United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL) Training Institute with Muhammad Sajid-ul Haq, managing director, Mirza Mahmud Rafiqur Rahman, vice-president, and A H M Nurul Islam Choudhury, principal of the training institute, at the certificate awarding ceremony held on Monday.

Brazil joins 7 WTO states against US steel tariffs

AFP, Geneva

Brazil on Monday joined a complaint lodged by seven other members of the World Trade Organisation against US tariffs on steel imports, trade sources said here.

Brazil formally asked the WTO to set up a panel under its disputes settlement procedure to examine the controversial US measures, which Brazil claims are in breach of WTO rules on fair trade.

The United States slapped tariffs of eight to 30 per cent on some types of steel imports on March 20.

The US said the Brazilian challenge to its "safeguard" measures was regrettable, but added that it would not oppose the establishment of the panel, according to trade sources.

Brazil told the WTO that the US measures caused considerable disruption to the world steel market and had a significant impact on its exports, the sources added.

The South American trading giant joined China, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea and Switzerland, who have already lodged their formal complaint against the US steel measures.

The move effectively marks an end to bilateral consultations between the US and Brazil to try to find another way out of the dispute.

On Monday, the WTO named the three panelists who will tackle the high-pressure dispute.

The panel, whose deliberations are strictly confidential, will be chaired by Stefan Johannesson of Iceland, with Mohan Kumar of India and Margaret Liang from Singapore as panel members.

ASEAN endorses Singaporean as Secy general

AFP, Bandar Seri Begawan

Ex-Singaporean diplomat Ong Keng Yong was endorsed Tuesday as the new secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by the 10-member grouping's foreign ministers.

Ong, who is press secretary to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, will assume the ASEAN post from Filipino free-trade campaigner Rodolfo Severino on January 1.

ASEAN leaders at their meeting in Cambodia in November are expected to formally appoint the 48-year-old Ong to the powerful post in the Jakarta-based ASEAN secretariat.

"We have agreed to recommend to our leaders the appointment of Mr Ong Keng Yong," Brunei's foreign minister Prince Mohamed Bolikhah told reporters.

Ong is a law graduate from the University of Singapore and obtained a post-graduate degree in Arab studies from Georgetown University in Washington.

He was attached to the Singaporean embassies in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and the United States and later became Singapore's ambassador to India and Nepal.

Ong, in addition to being the prime minister's press secretary, heads Singapore's grassroots People's Association, an organisation designed to "bring people closer to one another and to the government."

ASEAN, formed in 1967, groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Toyota raises global sales target

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's top automaker Toyota Motor Corp. said Monday it expected sales volumes this year to rise five per cent more than earlier expected due to the budding global economic recovery.

Toyota revised up its global sales projection by 200,000 vehicles to 6.19 million units.

The firm expects to produce 6.28 million vehicles, up eight per cent or 280,000 from an earlier forecast. It also aims to export 1.85 million vehicles this year, up seven per cent or 270,000 from its original forecast.

"After reviewing our forecast, which was announced at the end of last year, we have seen a gradual improvement in the economy and we expect that to continue," said a company spokesman.

"Fortunately so far this year our sales have grown steadily," she said.

In 2001, the Toyota group sold 5.93 million vehicles, produced 5.85 million and exported 1.75 million.

Despite the upgrade, company vice president Ryuji Araki said Toyota had no plans to alter its year to March earnings forecasts.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank.

Selling	Currency	Buying
TT/USD	BC	TT Clean
58.5500	58.5800	OD Sight/Doc
58.2982	58.3281	OD Transfer
92.4563	92.5037	57.4308
32.2728	32.2893	55.4322
0.4911	0.4913	56.3659
39.7569	39.7773	88.9374
6.2374	6.2406	30.7083
37.4792	37.4984	0.4754
7.5141	7.5180	0.4754
33.3371	33.3542	38.3438
16.0724	16.0806	6.0397
15.7371	15.7452	6.0220
		6.0148
		36.3742
		36.3670
		7.3772
		7.3556
		32.5185
		32.4230
		15.5109
		15.4924
		15.1748

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Nor kroner	NZ dollar	AUD
48.745	59.525	96.165	41.800	7.7010	0.4691	0.54295

The local interbank foreign exchange market was active on Tuesday. Demand for dollar was steady. Demand for BDT for overnight borrowing at call stabilised and the call money rate was between 4.5 per cent and 5.00 per cent for the day.

Dollar continued its upsurge on Tuesday. It rose to its highest level in more than three weeks against the yen and crossed the 120 level. Euro briefly fell below 98 cent. The Wall Street rally is considered to be the driving force behind the strengthening of the dollar. Market is waiting for the Second Quarter US economic growth data due on Wednesday.