World stocks rise in festive cheer

REUTERS, Paris

World stocks held near the previous day's two-year high on Friday while oil hit fresh two-year peaks after strong US data this week encouraged investors to maintain their risk positions into 2011.

Thursday's US data showing that demand for a range of longlasting US manufactured goods surged in November and consumer spending rose for a fifth straight month reinforced expectations for strong economic growth in the fourth quarter.

"We've had a good run, helped by quantitative easing and better economic data," said Bernard McAlinden, investment strategist at NCB Stockbrokers in Dublin. "We've broken out of ranges, and it can go higher in 2011."

The MSCI world equity index edged higher to just below Thursday's peak, which was its highest since September 2008, set just

before the collapse of Lehman Brothers. The index is up 9.6 percent this year.

Fund tracker EPFR said investor focus shifted from bonds to equities in the final weeks of 2010, with equity funds globally taking in a net \$4.5 billion for the week ending December 22. Bond funds saw redemptions totalling \$2.3 billion.

The Thomson Reuters global stock index dipped slightly, but the FTSEurofirst 300 index rose about 0.1 percent.

Ratings agency Fitch downgraded Portugal on Thursday, citing burgeoning debt levels and a tough financing environment, a move analysts said was largely expected by investors.

The downgrade puts Fitch's rating for Portugal on a par with Moody's A1 rating, but still two notches above that of Standard and Poor's A-minus.

Trading was very light, with markets closed in Germany, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, Austria, Hungary, and Iceland. US markets were also closed to observe the Christmas holiday.

Emerging market stocks fell slightly.

US crude oil rose more than 1 percent to \$91.41 a barrel as unusually cold weather fuelled demand and depleted supplies.

Snow and more frigid temperatures were predicted in parts of Europe over the weekend, threatening to prolong chaos at airlines and rail networks and further boost fuel demand.

The bund future fell 32 ticks.

The US dollar fell less than 0.1 percent against a basket of major currencies, while the euro was mostly unchanged at \$1.3114.



NCC BANK

NCC Bank Ltd Vice Chairman Md Harunur Rashid MP inaugurates the bank's 79th branch at Rampur in Tangail on Thursday. Nurul Amin, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank was also present.

Wal-Mart invests in Chinese e-commerce firm

REUTERS, Shanghai

Wal-Mart Stores Inc, the world's largest retailer, has invested in China's top online seller of consumer electronics and communication products, in a push to extend its reach to more Chinese buyers.

Chinese online business-toconsumer (B2C) company 360buy Jingdong Mall secured \$500 million in funding from six strategic partners, including Wal-Mart, a 360buy spokeswoman said on Friday.

Wal-Mart's investment amount was not disclosed but the company has been eager to tap into the pocketbooks of China's burgeoning middle nology research firm. class, and earlier this year launched in China an e-commerce site for its Sam's Club warehouse stores.

"It's a smart move for them (Wal-



Mart), because 360buy, in my opinion, is one of the best B2C online companies in China today," said Michael Clendenin, managing director of RedTechAdvisors, a tech-

360buy Chief Executive Liu Qiangdong told a press conference on Thursday that the funds would be used to build logistics centers in China, local media reported.

China's massive e-commerce market is highly fragmented and competitive, where 360buy battles Taobao, a unit of Alibaba Group and E-Commerce China Dangdang Inc for dominance. 360buy had 14.1 percent of China's B2C market in the third quarter while Dangdang had 3.7 percent, according to data from Analysys International.

Weekly Currency Roundup

Dec 19-23, 2010 **International Markets:**

This week marked another volatile week for currencies. After having hit all time lows against the Swiss franc, the euro recovered on Wednesday, boosted by a news report that China was ready to buy significant amounts of Portuguese sovereign debt. The Jornal de Negocios daily reported China is looking to buy between 4 billion euros (\$5.26 billion) and 5 billion euros of Portuguese sovereign debt to help the country ward off pressure in debt markets, though it gave no details of its sources. China's central bank declined to comment on the report which said the deal reached between the two governments will lead to China buying Portuguese debt in auctions or in the secondary markets during the first quarter of 2011. Despite the bounce, investors are nervous about the single currency's prospects given the euro zone's debt problems. Latest blows this week to the 16-member club's struggling, heavily-indebted economies have came from Moody's, which warned it might cut Portugal's rating, and Fitch, which said the same about Greece. The Australian currency was underpinned by further gains in equities and commodi-

ities index reached a two-year peak. Local Money Market:

Call Money rates came down this week from the extremely high rates the previous week. Local Market FX:

ties, suggesting improving risk appetite as

analysts revise up forecasts for growth in

2011. On Tuesday the S&P 500 finally

recovered all the ground lost since the

Lehman debacle, while the CRB commod-

The USD moved in a steady range. However buying pressure picked up as week went on, and the market tightened significantly at the end of the week.

-- Standard Chartered Bank



Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury MP, chairman of the standing committee on textile and jute ministry and sponsor director of United Commercial Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's 101st branch at Dampara in Chittagong on Thursday. M Shahjahan Bhuiyan, managing director of the bank was also present.

Oil mixed in Asia for Christmas

AFP, Singapore

Oil prices were mixed in quiet Christmas eve trade in Asia, coming off two-year highs buoyed by upbeat US consumer confidence figures, analysts said. New York's main contract, light sweet

crude for delivery in February, shed 13 cents to 91.38 dollars per barrel in the afternoon after hitting 91.63 dollars in intraday trade on Thursday, its highest level since October 2008.

Brent North Sea crude for February delivery advanced 31 cents to 94.56 dollars. Its price had soared to 94.54 dollars in intraday trade Thursday -- a level also last seen in early October 2008.

Crude prices were being supported "as confidence among US consumers advanced to six-month highs, signalling that people will spend more, fuelling more fuel demand", the Commonwealth growth as well as energy demand.

Bank of Australia said in a report.

A University of Michigan survey released late Thursday showed consumer confidence in the world's biggest oil user hitting six-month highs in December. The index placed consumer sentiment

for this month at 74.5, as compared with November's 71.6 level. "Consumer confidence improved in

December to its best level in six months and its second highest level since the start of 2008," the survey said.

"The gain was due to improved employment expectations that made consumers more willing to spend and adopt more favorable prospects for the overall econ-Consumer confidence in the US eco-

nomic recovery increases the likelihood

Investors enter 2011 in bullish mood

REUTERS, London

Investors are entering 2011 in a relatively bullish mood, raising equity holdings to a 10-month high, increasing exposure to highyield credit and cutting back on government debt, Reuters polls showed on Wednesday.

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Within bond portfolios, however, concern about the cost of US Treasuries and the stability of euro zone debt, did not show up dramatically.

Allocations to emerging market debt were cut instead.

Surveys of 55 leading invest-

Record Date of EGM: 03.01.11.

ment houses in the United States, Europe ex UK, Japan and Britain showed investors holding 54.1 percent of a typical mixed-asset portfolio in stocks in December. That was up from 53.2 percent

in November and the highest since 55.4 percent in February. Bonds were cut to 33.9 per-

cent, the lowest since February, from 34.2 percent in November. Cash was at 3.9 percent, down from 4.6 percent.

A combination of improving economic data and a belief in future, robust, corporate earn-

for equities over the past few months. The MSCI all-country world stock index was flirting with levels last seen in September 2008 on Wednesday.

"People are coming off the sidelines and buying stocks," said Keith Wirtz, president and chief investment officer at Fifth Third Asset Management in Cincinnati.

There was also sign of risk appetite in an increased exposure to riskier, higher yield bonds.

At the same time concerns

ings has lifted investor appetite have risen that yields on benchmarket government bonds are too low, providing little return and threatening a sell-off.

> Investors in the Reuters polls did cut back overall exposure to bonds. But when it came to the money left for bonds they favoured US and euro zone government debt over most emerging markets, which have been very popular this year.

> Exposure to emerging market debt was 8.1 percent of a bond portfolio for the month, compared with 9.6 percent a month earlier.



Bangladesh Thai Aluminium Ltd Chairman Zahid Malaque and TMSS Executive Director Hosne-Ara-Begum exchange documents after signing a deal in Dhaka on Tuesdday. TMSS will use Thai aluminium on construction of its different establishments.

SSTOCK

Weekly News from Trade Servers

KPCL: The company has informed that the 10th EGM of the company will be held on 23.01.2011 at 11:00 AM at Bashundhara Convention Centre, Bashundhara R/A, Baridhara, Dhaka to pass the following resolutions: (1) to insert object clause iii (24) and (25) in the Memorandum of Association of the Company after clause iii (23) subject to permission of the Honorable High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and (2) to provide corporate Guarantee in favor of Standard Chartered Bank to secure credit facilities for Khulna Power Company Unit II Ltd. (KPUL), a subsidiary of the Company. Record Date for EGM: 30.12.10.

SANDHANINS: The company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has approved the following decisions: (1) to fix Record date on 30.12.2010 in connection with the change in denomination of share value from Tk. 100.00 to Tk. 10.00 each having the existing market lot of 50 shares and (2) to form a subsidiary company in the name of "Sandhani Life Housing and Development Company Ltd. (Proposed)" for Real State and Development activities after taking proper permission from all regulatory authorities concerned. The authorized capital of the said company will be Tk. 50.00 crore and paid-up capital will be Tk. 10.00

SEC NEWS: As per SEC Order No. SEC/CMRRC/2001-43/80 dated December 19, 2010, the maximum rate of margin loan for Merchant Banker (Portfolio Manager) has been re-fixed @ 1:1.5 by SEC until further order. Based on this, Merchant Banker (Portfolio Manager) can provide loan to their clients up to that ratio. In case of considering market price of portfolio/securities, the Instruction no. 7 of SEC (Merchant Banker & Portfolio Managers) Rules, 1996 has been suspended until further order. This shall have effect from December 20, 2010. This Order shall supersede the previous Order No. SEC/CMRRC/2001-43/74 dated December

RAHIMAFOOD: The Company has further informed that due to unavoidable circumstances the date of its 20th AGM has been shifted from 26.12.2010 to 27.12.2010. AGNISYSL: The Company has further informed that SEC vide its letter dated 15.12.10 has extended time for subscription for rights issue of the company up to

30.12.2010. ASIAINS: The Company has further informed that the subscription period for rights issue will be from 31.03.2011 to 25.04.2011. Record date for entitlement of rights share: 06.01.2011. The purpose of issuance of rights shares is to enhance financial strength and expansion of business of the company.

HAKKANIPUL: The company will be placed in "B" category from existing "A" category with effect from 19.12.2010 as the Company declared cash dividend @ 5% for the year ended on June 30, 2010. The Stock Brokers and Merchant Bankers are requested not to provide loan facilities to purchase shares of Hakkani Pulp & Paper Mills Ltd. between 1st to 30th trading day after change of categorization of the said securities i.e. starting from 19.12.2010 as per SEC.

PADMAOIL: The Board of Directors has recommended cash dividend @ 100% (Tk. 10.00 per share of Tk. 10.00 each) for the year ended on June 30, 2010. Date of AGM: 05.03.11, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: Main Installation, Guptakhal, Patenga, Chittagong. Record Date: 06.01.11. The company has also reported EPS of Tk. 21.69, NAV per share of Tk. 81.94 and Net Operating Cash Flow per share of Tk. 182.00 for the year ended on June 30, 2010.

SAFKOSPINN: The Company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has taken the following decisions subject to approval of shareholders in the EGM and the respective Regulatory Authorities: (1) to change denomination of shares from Tk. 100.00 to Tk. 10.00 each and market lot from 50 to 100 shares and (2) to increase Authorised Capital of the company from Tk. 20.00 crore to Tk. 100.00 crore. In this respect the company shall also amend its relevant

Clauses/Articles of Memorandum and Articles of Association. Date of EGM: 25.01.11, Time: 11:30 AM, Venue: Mill Premises, Noyapara, Saiham Nagar, Habigonj.

RUPALILIFE: The company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has approved the revaluation of Fixed Assets of the company from Tk

102,170,462.00 to Tk. 331,995,000.00 resulting a revaluation surplus of Tk. 229,824,538.00. The revaluation of the Fixed Assets of the company has conducted by the Trust Inspection Services Ltd. ACI: The Company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has decided to acquire sizable amount of land in Sonargaon, Narayanganj that will allow ACI to setup a new Pharma facilities in near future. The company has further informed that the approximate size of land to be acquired is 40 bighas and approx-

imate cost for acquisition of land is Tk. 300.00 million. SAIHAMTEX, DULAMIACOT: Trading of shares of Saiham Textile Mills Ltd. and dulamia cotton resumed from 22.12.10 and 23.12.10 respectively in view of

completion of investigation by DSE management RUPALIBANK: As reported by the Issue Manager of the Bank, total 24,480 shares had been sold out of 30,68,750 shares upto 22.12.2010.

PEOPLESINS, PRIMEBANK: The companies have informed that SEC has accorded its consent to change in the denomination of share value (face value) of the company as well as market lot of shares. DACCADYE, SAIHAMTEX: The Company has informed that it has credited the bonus shares to the respective shareholders' BO Accounts.

SAFKOSPINN: The Company has further informed that the EGM of the company will now be held on 03.02.2011 instead of 25.01.2011 and Record date will be 12.01.2011 instead of 03.01.2011 to comply with Regulation 36 (A) (4) of DSE Listing Regulations. Other information of the EGM will remain unchanged as announced earlier. AMBEEPHA: The Company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has decided, among others, to carry out the revaluation of fixed assets (com-

prising thereon the Land, Factory Building, Plant and Capital Machinery) of the company, by appointing an assets revaluation company. EBL: The Bank has informed that the Board of Directors of the Bank has taken the following decisions: (1) The Board has approved the revaluation of the Assets (EBL own Plots of Land) of the Bank as certified by the Auditors M/s. Rahman Rahman Huq, Chartered Accountants, from Tk. 1,402,988,617 to Tk. 3,141,251,513

with a revaluation gain of Tk. 1,738,262,896.00, (2) to purchase a commercial floor space of 4,100 sft. (approx) at Azimpur, Dhaka at the cost of Tk. 6.06 crore (approx.) including registration and other incidental costs for the use of the Bank subject to prior approval of Bangladesh Bank and (3) to set up a Joint Venture Life Insurance Company in Bangladesh and also the proposal to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in this regard sharing 25% of Paid up Capital by EBL for setting up the proposed Joint Venture Life Insurance Company in Bangladesh with some local and foreign institutions subject to prior approval of the respective Regulatory Authorities. PRAGATIINS: The Company has informed that the Board of Directors of the company has taken the following decisions subject to approval of shareholders in the

nation of shares from Tk. 100.00 to Tk. 10.00 each and market lot from 10 to 100 shares. Accordingly the relevant Clauses of Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company will be amended. Date of EGM: 27.01.11, Time: 4:00 PM, Venue: Pragati Insurance Bhaban, 20-21, Kawran Bazar, 4th Floor, Dhaka. Record Date of EGM: 02.01.11.

EGM and the Regulatory Authorities: (1) to increase Authorised Share Capital of the company from Tk. 50.00 crore to Tk. 200.00 crore and (2) to change denomi-

Sponsor's Buy/ Sell: FUWANGFOOD Mr. Hsu Chin Hua has intention to sell 2,41,500 shares while Mr. Arif Ahmed Chowdhury has intention to buy 2,41,500 shares (In the Block Market) of the company. DBH Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd. has intention to buy 25,000 shares.