

Asian stocks mixed

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian shares were mixed on Friday as sentiment was weighed by news that Chinese inflation was at its highest for more than two and a half years.

Tokyo was subdued ahead of the start of the earnings season next week and due to ongoing concerns over the economic impact of last month's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

Shanghai gained 0.26 percent, or 7.89 points, to close at 3,050.53 despite data showing the politically sensitive consumer price index rose 5.4 percent in March -- the fastest pace since July 2008 -- and 5.0 percent in the first quarter. Hong Kong ended flat, edging down 5.93 points, to 24,008.07.

Economists had predicted March inflation at 5.3 percent. Both readings are well above Beijing's 2011 target of four percent. Prices rose 4.9 percent in February.

The March reading -- the highest since July 2008 -- comes despite leaders' attempts to cool prices with four interest rate hikes since October as well as other measures such as raising the amount of money banks must hold in reserve.

The data was compounded by food prices soaring 11 percent in the first quarter while housing costs rose 6.5 percent.

Shanghai shares moved in and out of positive territory throughout the day and closed higher as hopes for upcoming corporate results and bargain hunting offset the inflation fears.

Tokyo fell 0.65 percent, or 62.40 points, to 9,591.52, with attention turning to the beginning next week of the corporate earnings season, which will give an early indication of the economic effects of the March 11 quake-tsunami.

Traders were also keeping an eye on the continuing struggle at the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, where workers are still trying to stop radioactive leaks into the Pacific.

Sydney finished 0.66 percent, or 32.1 points, lower at 4,852.1 and Seoul closed flat, edging down 0.56 points to 2,140.50.

Asia was given a weak lead from Wall Street, where the Dow gained 0.12 percent, the broader S&P 500 was flat and the tech-heavy Nasdaq edged down 0.05 percent.

Traders digested news that new claims for US unemployment benefits rose unexpectedly, to 412,000 last week, an increase of 27,000 from the previous week.

The Labor Department said the jump was thanks to a cyclical trend that is normal towards the end of a quarter, but markets were only partly consoled by that reading.

Sentiment was also weighed by news that Internet giant Google's earnings came in slightly below expectations. The search engine fell 5.36 percent in after-hours trading.

On currency markets the yen was at 83.24 against the dollar, up from 83.64 late Thursday in New York, while it stood at 120.41 to the euro, up from 120.97 in New York Thursday.

The euro was trading at \$1.4461 in morning Asian trade, down from \$1.4486 in late US trade Thursday.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in May, rose 15 cents to \$108.26 a barrel and Brent North Sea crude for May gained 20 cents to \$122.20 in the afternoon.

Gold closed at \$1,473.00-\$1,474.00 an ounce in Hong Kong, up from Thursday's close of \$1,462.50-\$1,463.50.

In other markets:

Singapore fell 0.18 percent, or 5.62 points, to 3,153.30. Kuala Lumpur closed down 0.25 percent or 3.86 points at 1,521.94.

Plantations giant IOI Corp slid 1.6 percent to 5.41 ringgit, while gaming firm Genting Malaysia fell 1.6 percent to 3.68 and national automaker Proton climbed 5.5 percent to 3.43 ringgit.

Mumbai closed down 1.57 percent or 310.04 points at 19,386.82 as investors unwound positions ahead of the weekend and on lower-than-expected quarterly earnings from leading outsourcer Infosys Technologies.

Bangkok was closed for a public holiday.



RUBYCEMENT
HeidelbergCement Bangladesh Ltd (HCBL) and Project Builders Ltd (PBL) have recently entered into a deal under which PBL will use RubyCement for the construction works of its Newmooring container terminal project at Chittagong port. Ramakanta Bhattacharjee, deputy managing director of HCBL, and Aminul Islam, managing director of PBL, attended the programme.



UBICO
UAE-Bangladesh Investment Company Ltd (UBICO) and Industrial Promotion and Development Company of Bangladesh Ltd (IPDC) have recently signed a deal in Dhaka under which UBICO will finance joint investment activities to develop SME projects/business under the supervision of IPDC. SM Akbar, managing director of UBICO, and Humaira Azam, managing director of IPDC, inked the deal.

Chinese social network Renren files for IPO

AFP, Washington

Renren, China's most popular social network, filed for an initial public offering in the United States on Friday hoping to raise as much as \$583 million.

Renren, in papers filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), said it plans to list on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol RENN.

It said it will issue 53.1 million American Depository Shares priced between \$9 and \$11 a share.

In the papers filed with the SEC, Renren said it had 117 million activated users as of March 31 and has been adding approximately two million new users a month over the past three months.

Renren reported net revenue of \$76.5 million in 2010, up from \$46.7 million the previous year, and a net loss from continuing operations last year of \$61.2 million.

The Chinese site, whose name means "everyone," was founded in 2005 and is the top social networking site in China, where government censors have blocked Facebook.

Citing its risk factors in the SEC documents, Renren said it may face "potential competition from global social networking service providers that seek to enter the China market."

"The websites of some global social networking service providers, such as Facebook, are currently not accessible in (China)," it said.

Telefonica mulls 450-million-euro handout

AFP, Madrid

Spanish telecoms giant Telefonica said Friday it may give shares worth 450 million euros to its senior employees, one day after it announced a 20-percent cut in its domestic workforce as a cost-cutting measure.

The "incentive plan", which would benefit "around 1,900 managers" over five years, is to be voted on at the next shareholders' meeting on May 17, Telefonica said.

"The maximum amount of the plan is set at 450 million euros (\$650 million)," it said.

Telefonica announced this week it would pay its shareholders a minimum divided of 1.75 euros per share from 2012, or almost 8.0 billion euros per year.

The group said Thursday it plans to cut its

workforce in Spain by about 20 percent, or some 6,000 people, over the next three years.

The head of the group's business in Spain, Guillermo Ansaldi, said the job cuts would allow the company to gain "flexibility".

Telefonica employs some 30,000 people in Spain out of a total global workforce of 269,000 people.

The head of the UGT union, Candido Mendez, described the announcements as "shameful."

Employment Minister Valeriano Gomez said Thursday "it is not a good moment to carry out staff adjustments of such a significant size," with unemployment last year at a 13-year high of more than 20 percent.

Merck pays J&J \$500m in drug row settlement

AFP, Paris

Merck said Friday it has agreed to pay fellow US pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson \$500 million to end a two-year tussle over profit-sharing deals for two anti-inflammatory drugs.

The resolution ends a dispute over the Remicade and Simponi drugs, which treat chronic inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, which began in May 2009 when J&J launched an arbitration process.

Johnson & Johnson "will... receive a one-time payment of \$500 million (346 million euros) in April 2011," the companies said in a statement.

Friday's deal also amends the marketing rights for the two drugs between the two companies.

Under the new terms, Merck keeps its right to market the drugs in Europe, Russia and Turkey while Johnson & Johnson retains the marketing rights in the United States.

Stock

Weekly News from Trade Servers

PHOENIXFIN: The Board of Directors has recommended stock dividend @ 35% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 13.06.2011, Time: 12:00 noon, Venue: "Hall of Fame", Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. Record Date: 27.04.2011. The Company has also reported EPS of Tk. 45.60, NAV per share of Tk. 306.12 and NOCFPS of Tk. 35.76 for the year ended on December 31, 2010. The Board has also approved for issuance 20,000,000 no. of fully convertible 10% cash dividend, Preference Shares of Tk. 100.00 each totaling Tk. 200.00 crore of which 40% of the issue be reserved for existing shareholders, 40% for Public Offering and rest 20% to be made through Private Placement. This Preference Shares shall be converted into Ordinary Shares after expiry of two years from the date of issuance of said shares. Conversion shall be made at 30% discount to the average trading price of the DSE during the 06 (six) months preceding the date of the meeting of the Board deciding such conversion or Tk. 1,300.00 per share of face value at Tk. 100.00 each whichever is higher subject to approval of shareholders and Regulatory Authorities. Another record date for entitlement of the proposed preference shares to be notified later on after obtaining approval from SEC.

ASIAPACINS: The Board of Directors has recommended cash dividend @ 10% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 03.07.2011, Time: 4:00 PM, Venue: "Multipurpose Hall" IDEB Bhaban, 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka. Record Date: 18.04.2011.

BDFINANCE: The Board of Directors has recommended stock dividend @ 22% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 21.06.2011, Time: 10:00 AM, Venue: Institution of Diploma Engineers, Kakrail, Dhaka. Record Date: 28.04.2011. The Company has also reported net profit after tax of Tk. 246.14 million, EPS of Tk. 5.59, NAV per share of Tk. 21.17 and NOCFPS of Tk. (6.82) for the year ended on December 31, 2010 as against Tk. 80.47 million, Tk. 1.83, Tk. 15.04 and Tk. (10.27) respectively for the year ended on December 31, 2009.

LAFSURCEML: The Board of Directors did not recommend any dividend for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 16.06.11, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: Harmony Hall, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. Record Date: 27.04.2011. The company has reported consolidated NAV of Tk. 2,768.48 million, consolidated EPS of Tk. (28.22) and consolidated NOCFPS of Tk. (17.38) for the year ended on December 31, 2010. The company has also reported NAV of Tk. 4,229.04 million, EPS of Tk. (9.02) and NOCFPS of Tk. 3.92 for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

SAFKOSPINN: The Board of Directors has recommended stock dividend @ 16% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 26.05.2011, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: Mill premises, Noyapara, P.O. Saitamnagar, Habiganj. Record Date: 04.05.2011. The company has also reported EPS of Tk. (5.98), NAV per share of Tk. 50.15 and NOCFPS of Tk. 4.04 for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

ACTIVEFINE: The Board of Directors has recommended stock dividend @ 15% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 09.06.2011, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: Institution of Diploma Engineers, Kakrail, Dhaka. Record Date: 27.04.2011. The company has also reported EPS of Tk. 3.12, NAV per share of Tk. 15.04 and NOCFPS of Tk. (0.08) for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

ICBIBANK: The Board of Directors did not recommend any dividend for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 21.06.2011, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: "Golf Garden", Army Golf Club, Airport Road, Dhaka. Record Date: 05.05.2011. The bank has also reported net profit after tax of Tk. (1,358.24) million, EPS of Tk. (2.04), NAV per share of Tk. (8.73) and NOCFPS of Tk. (0.28) for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

NORTHRNINS: The Board of Directors has recommended stock dividend @ 12% for the year ended on December 31, 2010. Date of AGM: 20.06.2011, Time: 11:00 AM, Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Carnival, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. Record Date: 27.04.2011. The company has also reported EPS of Tk. 11.19, NAV per share of Tk. 118.50 and NOCFPS of Tk. 21.63 for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

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ULC: As per un-audited quarterly accounts for the 1st quarter ended on 31st March 2011 (Jan'11 to March'11), the company has reported net profit after tax of Tk. 52.43 million with basic EPS of Tk. 9.93. However, considering proposed bonus share @ 75% for the year 2010, restated EPS will be Tk. 5.67 as on 31.03.2011.

CTGVEG: As per un-audited quarterly accounts for the 3rd quarter ended on 31st March (July'10 to March'11) operating profit/ (loss) was Tk. 78.77 million with EPS of Tk. 65.65 for the period of nine months.

CMCKAMAL: The company has further informed that Securities and Exchange Commission vide its letter dated 07.04.11 has agreed to extend time for subscription for rights issue of the company up to 28.04.2011.

BWDWELDING: The company has further informed that the 13th AGM of the company will now be held on 16.05.11 instead of 17.04.11. As per regulation 30 of DSE Listing Regulations, the Company has informed that a meeting of Board of Directors of: ACTIVEFINE will be held on April 12, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. MERCINS will be held on April 14, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. BDLAMPS will be held on April 11, 2011 at 3:30 p.m. to consider, among others, audited financial statements of the Company for the year ended on December 31, 2010. ICIBANK will be held on April 12, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. CENTRALINS will be held on April 18, 2011 at 3:30 p.m. SQUARETEXT will be held on April 19, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. RECKITTBN will be held on April 17, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. HEIDELBCEM will be held on April 19, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. to consider, among others, audited financial statements of the Bank for the year ended on December 31, 2010.

TAKAFULINS, PURABIGEN, KEYACOSMET, KEYADERTERG, MODERNDYE, NHFIL, HAKKANIPUL, IPDC, BAYLEASING, BSC: In response to a DSE query, the company has informed that there is no undisclosed price sensitive information of the company for recent unusual price hike.

DUTCHBANGL: SEC has formed an enquiry committee to investigate in certain allegations in respect of unusual trading in shares of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd. in the stock exchanges.

SAFKOSPINN: In response to a DSE query, the company has informed that the stock dividend @16% will be distributed from General Reserve and Tax holiday Reserve of the company amounting to Tk. 2,86,29,184.00 subject to approval of shareholders in the AGM to be held on 26.05.11.

SALAMCRST, LANKABAFIN: The Company has informed that it has credited the Bonus shares to the respective shareholders' BO Accounts.

FUWANGFOOD: The Company has informed that it has credited the Rights shares to the respective shareholders' BO Accounts on 12.04.2011.

CONTININS: The Company has informed that it has credited the Bonus shares to the respective shareholders' BO Accounts on 12.04.2011.

PRIMEBANK: The Bank has requested the concerned shareholders to collect their cash dividend warrants for the year 2010 from 13.04.11 to 21.04.11 from the Share Department during the office hours on all working days.

PRIMEFIN: The company has further informed that the Board of Directors has decided to follow the direction of Bangladesh Bank to increase the Authorized Share Capital of the company from Tk. 100.00 crore to Tk. 300.00 crore instead of Tk. 100.00 crore and same would be placed for rectification of the shareholders in the next AGM.

BANKASIA: The Bank has informed that it has finalized the purchase of land measuring 10.20 decimals, along with three storied building and all structures constructed thereon with all rights, interests, easements and benefits attached thereto, situated at 64, Elephant Road, Dhaka at a total cost of Tk. 15.00 crore. The deed of sale was concluded on 10.04.11.

CONFIDCEM: The Company has informed that the Company