

**CRUDE OIL PRICES HEAD FOR NEW HIGHS,
BUT EQUITY MARKETS ARE UNDAUNTED**

No Real Joy From March's Labour Situation In The US

Share prices ended little changed, last Monday, compared with the previous Friday's closing level, as it appeared that the US equity markets were running out of steam ... or something.

On The New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average ended the trading day at 11,145.82 points, up 36.50 points, equivalent to a gain of about one third of a percentage point.

Over on The NASDAQ, its Composite Index lost 3.05 points, or about 0.13 percent, coming to rest at 2,336.74 points.

There appeared to be little to stimulate the world's largest equity markets, one way or the other.

News Wise

- **General Motors Corporation** announced that it will be selling a 51-percent stake in General Motors Acceptance Corporation for \$US14 billion. The buyer is a consortium, headed by hedge fund Cerberus Capital Management LP. The announcement by General Motors was merely a confirmation of that which had been muted in certain circles for some weeks; and,
- **Sales** of General Motors's motor vehicles as well as those of Ford Motor Company continued to lose ground to competitors, during the month of March. For General Motors, sales fell by about 14 percent in March, Year-On-Year, and for Ford, sales of its motor vehicles were off by about 4.60 percent. However, sales of DaimlerChrysler's motor vehicles rose by about 2 percent in March, compared with the like month in 2005.

On The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the price of crude oil rose, but only by the fractions.

For delivery in May, the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil was \$US66.74, up about 0.17 percent on the last quote of Friday, March 31, 2006.

As for delivery in June, the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil came in at \$US68.04, an increase of about 0.16 percent on the last settlement of the previous Friday.

In Europe, the second quarter of 2006 got off with bang as investors piled into stocks and shares, listed on the largest equity markets in eurozone.

A fresh wave of merger and acquisition news swept through trading floors, rekindling investors' enthusiasm for speculation.

Investors appeared to be completely unconcerned that the **E**uropean **C**entral **B**ank (ECB) and The **B**ank of **E**ngland (BoE) were both, holding interest-rate meetings, later in the week.

This was how the key indices of the most-important European bourses ended last Monday night:

Amsterdam's AEX Index	Plus	0.56 percent
Great Britain's FTSE 100 Index	Plus	1.00 percent
Germany's Frankfurt XETRA DAX Index	Plus	0.90 percent
France's CAC 40 Index	Plus	0.65 percent
Switzerland's Swiss Market Index	Plus	0.49 percent
Italy's MIBTEL Index	Plus	1.00 percent

News Wise

- Bank of England Governor, Mr Mervyn King, maintains that **high-energy costs** are likely to cause inflation to rise in the United Kingdom – and might well pose a threat to the overall economy. Buying power by consumers could also be curtailed, he warned.

In Asia, key indices of the major stock markets made material gains, last Monday, as the international dust settled on a number of nagging issues which had been worrying investors:

1. The Iran situation and its ambitions to join the international nuclear '*club*';
2. The ever-rising price of crude oil;
3. A feared slowdown of the US economy as consumer spending dries up; and,
4. Higher interest rates.

In the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), key indices of both equity markets made very useful gains.

On the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, the Hang Seng Index, which is the key index of this market, rose about 1.64 percent to 16,063.75 points.

It was the first time since February 2001 that the Hang Seng Index had pierced the 16,000-level.

The Total Turnover was about \$HK31.72 billion.

The ratio of gaining counters to losing ones was about 3.02:One.

The Ten Most Active counters were:

HSBC Holdings plc (Code: 5)	Up 0.85 percent to \$HK131.00 per share
China Construction Bank Corporation (Code: 939)	Down 0.69 percent to \$HK3.60 per share

CITIC International Financial Holdings Ltd (Code: 183)	Up 38.13 percent to \$HK4.80 per share
China Mobile (Hongkong) Ltd (Code: 941)	Up 3.19 percent to \$HK42.05 per share
PetroChina Company Ltd (Code: 857)	Up 3.09 percent to \$HK8.35 per share
Hunan Nonferrous Metals Corporation Ltd (Code: 2626)	Up 7.89 percent to \$HK3.075 per share
China Life Insurance Company Ltd (Code: 2628)	Up 2.04 percent to \$HK10.00 per share
Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (Code: 13)	Up 0.77 percent to \$HK71.70 per share
China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Code: 386)	Up 2.22 percent to \$HK4.60 per share
Cheung Kong (Holdings) Ltd (Code: 1)	Up 1.76 percent to \$HK83.70 per share

As for the Main Board's double-digit movers of the day, there were a total of 37 counters that fitted that bill, with 5 of their number, losing 10 percent or more of their respective market capitalisations.

Solartech International Holdings Ltd (Code: 1166) was the biggest winner of the day as investors pushed up its share price to 91 cents, up 44.44 percent.

Everbest Century Holdings Ltd (Code 578) was the biggest loser of the day as its share price fell to 30 cents per share, off 27.71 percent.

Over on The **G**rowth **E**nterprise **M**arket (The GEM) of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, its Growth Enterprise Index gained 2.39 percent, exactly, running up to 1,299.80 points.

The Total Turnover on this market was about \$HK247.02 million.

Gaining counters outran losing ones by the ratio of exactly 1.40:One.

The 5, most-active counters, in terms of their respective turnovers, only, were:

B and B Group Holdings Ltd (Code: 8156)	Up 5 percent to \$HK3.10 per share
TOM Online Incorporated (Code: 8282)	Up 7 percent to \$HK2.55 per share
Wumart Stores Incorporated (Code: 8277)	Up 1 percent to \$HK27.25 per share
Phoenix Satellite Television Holdings Ltd (Code: 8002)	Up 3 percent to \$HK1.49 per share

CK Life Sciences International (Holdings) Incorporated (Code: 8222) Up 4 percent to 94 cents per share

The GEM's biggest movers of the day included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Advanced Card Systems Holdings Ltd	8210		25.93	0.06
Byford International Ltd	8272		20.00	0.20
Chinainfo Holdings Ltd	8206	10.10		1.09
Chinasoft International Ltd	8216	14.29		1.12
Co-winner Enterprise Ltd	8108	17.14		0.082
G.A. Holdings Ltd	8126	19.05		0.125
Global Link Communications Holdings Ltd	8060	23.08		0.048
KanHan Technologies Group Ltd	8175		26.25	0.177
Northeast Tiger Pharmaceutical Company Ltd	8197		16.67	0.05
Proactive Technology Holdings Ltd	8089		16.67	0.05
Prosperity International Holdings (Hongkong) Ltd	8139	33.33		0.60
Satellite Devices Corporation	8172	22.22		0.022
Shine Software (Holdings) Ltd	8270	16.67		0.175
Soluteck Holdings Ltd	8111		11.76	0.06
Sys Solutions Holdings Ltd	8182	10.00		0.033
SYSCAN Technology Holdings Ltd	8083		13.33	0.052
Thiz Technology Group Ltd	8119	22.22		0.11
Tiger Tech Holdings Ltd	8046		15.38	0.022
Ningbo Yidong Electronic Company Ltd	8249		19.74	0.305

Zheda Lande Scitech Ltd	8106		15.79	0.16
Zhejiang Prospect Company Ltd	8273		12.50	0.70

On Japan's 3 equity markets, things were popping as investors rushed in to pick up some of their favourite stocks and shares.

On The Tokyo Stock Exchange, its TOPIX Index reached the 14-year high of 1,754.64 points, up about 1.53 percent on the day, following the release of The Bank of Japan's TANKAN Report, a survey on the state of the Japanese economy as seen through the eyes of industrial leaders and consumers. (Please see [News Wise](#), below)

Gaining counters outnumbered losing ones by the ratio of about 6.31:One.

The Nikkei-225 Stock Average, which is a much-narrower gauge of trading in blue chips, listed on the First Section of The Tokyo Stock Exchange, gained about 1.60 percent, ending the trading day at 17,333.31 yen.

News Wise

- The quarterly **TANKAN Report**, a survey of business sentiment in Japan, prepared by The Bank of Japan, has stated that, for the January-March quarter, business sentiment continued to improve and that capital spending picked up throughout the entire economy. However, high oil prices are taking their toll of the economy as business confidence among large manufacturers waned; and,
- The Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry, a branch of the Government of Japan, announced that the **Consumer Price Index** for February rose, Year-On-Year, about 0.50 percent to 97.60 points.

In other Asian equity markets, this was how their key indices ended, last Monday night:

The HKSAR	Plus 1.64 percent to 16,063.75
Indonesia	Plus 0.48 percent to 1,329.31
Japan	TOPIX Index Plus 1.53 percent to 1,754.64 Nikkei-255 Stock Average Plus 1.60 percent to 17,333.31
Malaysia	Plus 0.17 percent to 928.23
The Philippines	Minus 0.28 percent to 2,189.77
Singapore	Plus 0.60 percent to 2,548.68
South Korea	Plus 1.48 percent to 1,397.75

Taiwan	Plus 0.71 percent to 6,660.76
Thailand	Plus 0.74 percent to 738.67

Tuesday

A retreat in crude-oil prices on international commodity markets helped to turn key indices on equity markets of the US, last Tuesday.

After a slow start, investors, noting that oil prices were softening, initiated a mid- morning, a rally that carried on until the close of the trading day.

On The New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose about 0.53 percent to close the day at 11,203.85 points, while, on The NASDAQ, its Composite Index hit a new, 5-year high of 2,345.36 points, a one-day gain of about 0.37 percent.

On The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil for delivery in May was \$US66.23, down about 0.76 percent on Monday's closing level.

For June delivery, the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil was \$US67.66, off about 0.56 percent on the last settlement of Monday.

News Wise

- **Maxtor Corporation**, a Los Angeles-based computer, disk-drive producer, announced that it would be sacking 900 of its workers in Singapore. Maxtor is being acquired by Seagate Technology.

Key indices of European bourses all rose, last Tuesday.

What touched off a great deal of excitement on European bourses was the takeover by The National Bank of Greece of Finansbank, a bank in Turkey.

The general thinking was that it appeared that Greece was about to make material investments in Turkey and that could well lead to other financial institutions, coming to the game.

Banking counters were well patronised on European bourses as a direct result.

Oils, however, were big losers as investors noted that the icing was falling off the gingerbread, somewhat.

This was how key indices of European bourses ended their respective trading days, last Tuesday:

Amsterdam's AEX Index Minus 0.72 percent

Great Britain's FTSE 100 Index Minus 0.33 percent

Germany's Frankfurt XETRA DAX Index Minus 0.17 percent

France's CAC 40 Index Minus 0.95 percent

Switzerland's Swiss Market Index Minus 0.27 percent

Italy's MIBTEL Index Minus 0.62 percent

Profit-taking appeared to be the order of the day on equity markets of Asia, last Tuesday, but, by and large, the paring of share prices was mild.

In the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), however, both equity markets made gains, but the gains were tiny, compared with Monday's markets.

On the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, the Hang Seng Index rose about 0.23 percent to 16,100.09 points on a Total Turnover of about \$HK32.19 billion.

Advancing counters outnumbered declining counters by the ratio of about 1.57:One.

The Ten Most Actives were:

HSBC Holdings plc (Code: 5) Unchanged at \$HK131.00 per share

BOC Hongkong (Holdings) Ltd (Code: 2388) Up 1.27 percent to \$HK15.90 per share

China Construction Bank Corporation (Code: 939) Up 1.39 percent to \$HK3.65 per share

PetroChina Company Ltd (Code: 857) Unchanged at \$HK8.35 per share

Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (Code: 13) Down 0.14 percent to \$HK71.60 per share

China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Code: 386) Up 1.09 percent to \$HK4.65 per share

China Life Insurance Company Ltd (Code: 2628) Up 1.00 percent to \$HK10.10 per share

CITIC Pacific Ltd (Code: 267) Up 7.97 percent to \$HK25.75 per share

CNOOC Ltd (Code: 883) Down 0.82 percent to \$HK6.05 per share

Hunan Nonferrous Metals Corporation Ltd (Code: 2626) Down 2.44 percent to \$HK3.00 per share

As for the Main Board's double-digit movers of the day, they included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Asia Alliance Holdings Ltd	616	12.99		2.00

Broad Intelligence International Pharmaceutical Holdings Ltd	1149	13.13		0.56
China Chengtong Development Group Ltd	217	12.28		0.32
China Elegance (Holdings) Ltd	476	25.00		0.065
China Sci-Tech Holdings Ltd	985	12.40		0.136
China Wireless Technologies Ltd	2369	17.95		2.30
CNPC (Hongkong) Ltd	135	10.00		3.025
eForce Holdings Ltd	943	31.82		0.058
Everbest Century Holdings Ltd	578	13.33		0.34
Fortuna International Holdings Ltd	2941		12.12	0.029
Fushan International Energy Group Ltd	639	20.00		1.26
G-Vision International (Holdings) Ltd	657	11.11		0.10
Golden Dragon Group (Holdings) Ltd	329	15.49		0.82
Hon Kwok Land Investment Company Ltd	160	12.62		2.90
Hop Hing Holdings Ltd	47	73.33		0.52
Mirabell International Holdings Ltd	1179	14.78		3.30
Morning Star Resources Ltd	542	12.31		0.073
New World Mobile Holdings Ltd	862	18.92		2.20
Parkson Retail Group Ltd	3368	11.80		27.00
Perfectech International Holdings Ltd	765		10.53	0.51
Radford Capital Investment Ltd	901		18.37	0.16
Regent Pacific Group Ltd	575	30.43		0.30
Road King Infrastructure Ltd	1098	17.26		9.85
Sewco International Holdings Ltd	209	14.29		0.24

Shenzhen Expressway Company Ltd	548	11.45		3.65
South China Holdings Ltd	265	11.11		0.30
Victory Group Ltd	1139		13.33	0.13
Wai Kee Holdings Ltd	610	13.95		2.45
Wai Yuen Tong Medicine Holdings Ltd	897	16.67		0.315
Wanji Pharmaceutical Holdings Ltd	835	35.00		0.216
Wonderful World Holdings Ltd	109	24.14		0.108

On The **G**rowth **E**nterprise **M**arket (The GEM) of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, this speculative market appeared to be defying the general trend of the Main Board.

The Growth Enterprise Index rose by about 0.84 percent to 1,310.66 points on a Total Turnover of about \$HK214.71 million.

Gaining counters outnumbered losing ones by the ratio of about 1.16:One.

The 5, most-active counters, in terms of their respective turnovers, only, were:

TOM Online Incorporated (Code: 8282)

Unchanged at \$HK2.55 per share

Value Convergence Holdings Ltd (Code: 8101)

Up 12 percent to \$HK2.625 per share

Wumart Stores Incorporated (Code: 8277)

Up 6 percent to \$HK29.00 per share

CK Life Sciences International (Holdings) Incorporated (Code: 8222)

Up 3 percent to 97 cents per share

Yantai North Andre Juice Company Ltd (Code: 8259)

Up 1 percent to 76 cents per share

The GEM's biggest movers of the day included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Angels Technology Company Ltd	8112	10.87		0.255
Excel Technology International Holdings Ltd	8048	13.33		0.068
FX Creations International Holdings Ltd	8136		23.08	0.10

KanHan Technologies Group Ltd	8175		12.43	0.155
Northeast Tiger Pharmaceutical Company Ltd	8197	32.00		0.066
QUASAR Communication Technology Holdings Ltd	8171	11.11		0.10
Soluteck Holdings Ltd	8111	13.33		0.068
Stockmartnet Holdings Ltd	8123		13.64	0.057
SYSCAN Technology Holdings Ltd	8083	13.46		0.059
Value Convergence Holdings Ltd	8101	11.70		2.625
Zheda Lande Scitech Ltd	8106	12.50		0.18

After 7 consecutive days of gains, key indices of the 3 equity markets of Japan fell, last Tuesday, but the losses were very small.

On The Tokyo Stock Exchange, its TOPIX Index fell about 0.28 percent to 1,749.65 points.

Losing counters outpaced gaining ones by the ratio of about 1.10:One.

The Nikkei-225 Stock Average shed about 0.23 percent of its value, falling back to 17,292.91 yen.

News Wise

- **Japanese investment** in the PRC, proper, as opposed to the HKSAR of the PRC, rose by about 19.80 percent to about \$US6.50 billion in calendar 2005, compared with calendar 2004, according to a report, emanating from The Japan External Trading Organisation, Beijing. That amount of investment in the PRC was a record for any 12-month period.

In other Asian equity markets, this was how their key indices ended, last Tuesday night:

The HKSAR	Plus 0.23 percent to 16,100.09
Indonesia	Minus 0.21 percent to 1,326.45
Japan	TOPIX Index Minus 0.28 percent to 1,749.65 Nikkei-255 Stock Average Minus 0.23 percent to 17,292.91
Malaysia	Plus 0.31 percent to 931.17
The Philippines	Plus 0.20 percent to 2,194.20

Singapore	Minus 0.63 percent to 2,532.59
South Korea	Plus 0.42 percent to 1,385.64
Taiwan	Plus 0.07 percent to 6,665.60
Thailand	Plus 0.90 percent to 745.33

Wednesday

Wall Street continued its rally, last Wednesday, fueled by excitement in the high-technology sector of the market plus investors, coming back for some more excitement in the energy sector as the price of crude oil on international commodity exchanges resumed its upward thrust.

On The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil for delivery in May was \$US67.07, up about 1.27 percent on Tuesday's last quote.

For June delivery, the price of a barrel of light sweet crude oil was \$US68.36 at the last settlement, an increase of about 1.03 percent on the day.

On The New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average ended last Wednesday's trading session at 11,239.55 points, an increase of about 0.32 percent on Tuesday's close.

Over on The NASDAQ, its Composite Index closed the day at 2,359.75 points, up about 0.61 percent, compared with the close of Tuesday.

NASDAQ's high-technology sector was set alight when Apple Computer Incorporated announced that it had developed software which could expand the number of users of its Mac computer: It has software which would permit Mac owners to use the Windows Operating System, developed by rival, Microsoft Corporation.

The share price of Apple rose more than 10 percent on the release of the news.

Oils and miners were the targets of investors in Europe, last Wednesday, as buyers lined up after seeing what was happening on international commodity exchanges.

With Wall Street, continuing on a roll, so to speak, investors piled into stocks and shares on major European bourses.

Every key index of every major European bourse rose, as the following **TARGET** list of major stock markets of the region indicates:

Amsterdam's AEX Index Plus 0.12 percent

Great Britain's FTSE 100 Index Plus 0.65 percent

Germany's Frankfurt XETRA DAX Index Plus 0.25 percent

France's CAC 40 Index Plus 0.29 percent

Switzerland's Swiss Market Index Plus 0.35 percent

Italy's MIBTEL Index Plus 0.97 percent

News Wise

- The National Statistics Office of the Government of the **United Kingdom (UK)** reported that **manufacturing output** in the UK for the month of February fell by about 0.20 percent, Month-On-Month. Annualised, manufacturing output for the UK is, now, off by about 1.70 percent, Year-On-Year.

The equity markets of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) were closed, last Wednesday, for the Ching Ming Festival.

On The Tokyo Stock Exchange, the spectre of higher costs for steel, coupled with higher costs for raw materials, generally, took the wind out of investors' sails, last Wednesday.

After an early morning rally, key indices of Asia's largest equity markets turned decidedly south.

By the close of the trading day, The TOPIX Index, the key index of The Tokyo Stock Exchange, was standing at 1,746.05 points, down about 0.21 percent on Tuesday's closing level.

The ratio of losing counters to gaining ones was about 3.03:One.

The Nikkei-225 Stock Average ended the trading day at 17,243.98 yen, off about 0.28 percent on the day.

News Wise

- **JP Morgan Trust Bank Ltd**, the Japan division of the international merchant bank of **JP Morgan Chase and Company**, has been ordered to suspend part of its Japanese operations from April 13, 2006, to October 12, 2006. The US-based bank has been found guilty of inappropriate asset assessment. The Order to cease and desist came from The Financial Services Agency.

This was how key indices of other Asian equity markets ended up, last Wednesday night:

The HKSAR	Closed
Indonesia	Plus 1.37 percent to 1,344.60
Japan	TOPIX Index Minus 0.21 percent to 1,746.05 Nikkei-255 Stock Average Minus 0.28 percent to 17,243.98
Malaysia	Plus 1.13 percent to 941.67

The Philippines	Plus 0.17 percent to 2,197.90
Singapore	Plus 0.49 percent to 2,544.89
South Korea	Plus 0.23 percent to 1,388.77
Taiwan	Closed
Thailand	Plus 3.05 percent to 768.07

Thursday

Crude oil prices edged toward the \$US70 per barrel mark, last Thursday, but investors, locked into equity markets in The Land of The Free and The Home of The Brave, did not seem to be too concerned that energy prices were headed for record levels.

Speculators continued to take long positions on international commodity markets on the assumption that the Government of Iran, bloody minded as it is known to be, could well determine to curtail crude oil exports to the West if the United Nations imposes sanctions on the country.

The United Nations has informed Iran to cease and desist its uranium-enrichment programme because there appears to be good reason to believe that Iran is desirous of manufacturing a nuclear arsenal.

Meanwhile, in The Persian Gulf, Iran continued to hold its war games, coming out with news flashes, almost on a daily basis, last week, in respect of its newest (and most deadly) weaponry.

(For more about Iran, please refer to [TARGET Intelligence Report, Volume VIII, Number 66](#), published on Friday, April 7, 2006: Betty Letters)

On The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil for delivery in May was \$US67.94, up about 1.30 percent on the final quote of Wednesday.

For delivery in June, the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil was \$US69.05, an increase of about 1.02 percent on the last settlement of Wednesday.

On The New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed the day at 11,216.50 points, representing a decrease of about 0.21 percent on Wednesday's closing level.

On The NASDAQ, its Composite Index ended the day at 2,361.17 points, which was just 1.42 points higher than its Wednesday close.

The statistics with regard to the labour situation in the US was due to be released the following day (Friday, April 7) and many people were concerned as to what it might indicate, if anything.

In Europe, key indices of major bourses rose, fractionally.

The fact that the European Central Bank (ECB) determined to maintain the status quo, leaving interest rates unchanged, was a positive for investors in this part of the world.

This was how the key indices of major European bourses ended their respective trading days, last Thursday:

Amsterdam's AEX Index	Plus 0.22 percent
Great Britain's FTSE 100 Index	Plus 0.02 percent
Germany's Frankfurt XETRA DAX Index	Plus 0.03 percent
France's CAC 40 Index	Plus 0.02 percent
Switzerland's Swiss Market Index	Plus 0.23 percent
Italy's MIBTEL Index	Plus 0.13 percent

News Wise

- **Interest rates** in the United Kingdom are to stay put at 4.50 percent, The Bank of England determined at its Monetary Policy Committee, held last Thursday; and,
- **The ECB** decided to go with the flow and leave interest rates at 2.50 percent.

In Asia, there was a great deal of excitement, with the major equity markets, rising sharply.

The volume of activity on the premier equity market of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), last Thursday, hit a level that had not been seen in many a moon: \$HK45.69 billion.

Whether or not paying homage to ancestors, which is the essence of last Wednesday's Ching Ming Festival, had caused the flurry of activity, one could not be certain, but one thing was absolutely clear: There was a great deal of money, looking for a home in equities in the territory.

On the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, the Hang Seng Index rose about 1.93 percent to 16,411.13 points.

Advancing counters beat off declining ones by the ratio of about 2.79:One.

The Ten Most Active counters were:

HSBC Holdings plc (Code: 5)	Up 0.92 percent to \$HK132.20 per share
China Construction Bank Corporation (Code: 939)	Down 1.37 percent to \$HK3.60 per share
PetroChina Company Ltd (Code: 857)	Up 2.99 percent to \$HK8.60 per share
Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (Code: 13)	Up 2.03 percent to \$HK73.05 per share

China Mobile (Hongkong) Ltd (Code: 941) Up 4.84 percent to \$HK44.40 per share

BOC Hongkong (Holdings) Ltd (Code: 2388) Up 1.89 percent to \$HK16.20 per share

Hongkong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd (Code: 388) Up 10.92 percent to \$HK53.85 per share

CNOOC Ltd (Code: 883) Unchanged at \$HK6.05 per share

China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Code: 386) Up 3.23 percent to \$HK4.80 per share

Chaoda Modern Agriculture (Holdings) Ltd (Code: 682) Down 4.92 percent to \$HK5.80 per share

As for the Main Board's double-digit movers of the day, there were a total of 42 counters that qualified for that honour, with 4 of their number, losing ground, while the remainder, all rose 10 percent or more.

eForce Holdings Ltd (Code: 943) was the biggest gainer of the day as investors pushed up its share price by 50 percent to 8.70 cents.

G-Vision International (Holdings) Ltd (Code 657) was the biggest loser of the day, dropping back to 7 cents per share, a one-day fall of about 30 percent.

On The **G**rowth **E**nterprise **M**arket (The GEM) of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, the Total Turnover was about \$HK282.59 million as The Growth Enterprise Index shot up 3.07 percent, exactly, to 1,350.90 points.

Gaining counters outnumbered losing ones by the ratio of exactly 1.60:One.

The 5, most-active counters, in terms of their respective turnovers, only, were:

TOM Online Incorporated (Code: 8282) Up 8 percent to \$HK2.75 per share

Xinjiang Tianye Water Saving Irrigation System Company Ltd (Code: 8280) Down 1 percent to \$HK2.175 per share

Value Convergence Holdings Ltd (Code: 8101) Up 10 percent to \$HK2.90 per share

Wumart Stores Incorporated (Code: 8277) Up 4 percent to \$HK30.50 per share

Techpacific Capital Ltd (Code: 8088) Up 4 percent to 77 cents per share

The GEM's biggest movers of the day included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Argos Enterprise (Holdings) Ltd	8022		28.57	0.10

Armitage Technologies Holding Ltd	8213	39.29		0.039
Byford International Ltd	8272	24.50		0.249
Cardlink Technology Group Ltd	8066	11.30		0.128
Chinainfo Holdings Ltd	8206	22.73		1.35
Essex Bio-Technology Ltd	8151	33.97		0.28
International Entertainment Corporation	8118	26.88		5.90
KanHan Technologies Group Ltd	8175	16.13		0.18
Mobile Telecom Network (Holdings) Ltd	8266	20.00		0.12
New Chinese Medicine Holdings Ltd	8085		32.43	0.05
Northeast Tiger Pharmaceutical Company Ltd	8197		22.73	0.051
Proactive Technology Holdings Ltd	8089	20.00		0.06
Qianlong Technology International Holdings Ltd	8015		13.33	0.26
Shandong Molong Petroleum Machinery Company Ltd	8261	11.11		2.00
ThinSoft (Holdings) Incorporated	8096	28.21		0.15
Value Convergence Holdings Ltd	8101	10.48		2.90
Vodatel Networks Holdings Ltd	8033	11.11		0.10

In Japan, investors scrambled to buy stocks and shares, listed on the country's 3 equity markets.

The excitement was based on the belief that prospects for Japanese traders and manufacturers were to experience much higher earnings in the coming year.

In addition, noting that which had taken place on The NASDAQ on Wednesday, Japanese investors decided that that which is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

On The Tokyo Stock Exchange, The TOPIX Index hit a near 15-year high of 1,775.67 points as the key index of this market shot up about 1.70 percent.

The ratio of gaining counters to losing ones was about 4.05:One.

The Nikkei-225 Stock Average rose 1.42 percent to 17,489.33 yen.

News Wise

- The People's Bank of China has fined The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Shenzhen Branch, 1.20 million renminbi (about \$HK1.15 million) with regard to alleged **money laundering** activities by some of its customers; and
- **OKI Electric Industry Company** has taken a controlling stake in Business Logistics (Thailand) Company. OKI, today, owns 73 percent of the Issued and Fully Paid-Up Share Capital of Business Logistics (Thailand). OKI is a telecommunications equipment producer.

In other Asian equity markets, this was how their key indices ended up at the conclusion of their respective trading days, last Thursday:

The HKSAR	Plus 1.93 percent to 16,411.13
Indonesia	Plus 0.77 percent to 1,355.01
Japan	TOPIX Index Plus 1.70 percent to 1,775.67 Nikkei-255 Stock Average Plus 1.42 percent to 17,489.33
Malaysia	Minus 0.06 percent to 941.06
The Philippines	Plus 1.02 percent to 2,220.37
Singapore	Minus 0.09 percent to 2,542.64
South Korea	Plus 0.59 percent to 1,397.00
Taiwan	Plus 1.43 percent to 6,760.82
Thailand	Closed

Friday

Just before Wall Street opened for business, last Friday, The Bureau of Labour Statistics brought out its findings in respect of the labour situation in the US, during the month of March.

It was not good news for the overall economy of the US, but it could be interpreted as being positive if one looked at the figures in isolation with regard to any determination of the US Federal Reserve Board when it holds its next Open Market Committee Meeting at which time, it will decide whether or not to raise interest rates – again.

The following is a statement, emanating from The Commissioner of The Bureau of Labour Statistics, Ms

Kathleen P. Utgoff, at 8:30 am, last Friday:

'Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 211,000 in March, following an increase of 225,000 in February. During the 12 months ending in March, monthly employment growth averaged 174,000. Over the month, there were widespread job gains in the service-providing sector. The unemployment rate was little changed at 4.7 percent.'

'Employment in professional and business services rose by 52,000 in March. Several component industries continued to add jobs, including architectural and engineering services, computer systems design, management and consulting services, and services to buildings and dwellings.'

'The leisure and hospitality industry added 42,000 jobs over the month, largely due to a sizable gain in food services and drinking places. Health care employment increased by 24,000, reflecting continued growth in hospitals, physicians' offices, and home health care services.'

'A large job gain in general merchandise stores pushed employment in retail trade up by 29,000 in March. Wholesale trade continued to add workers over the month. Financial activities added 16,000 jobs, with continued growth in credit intermediation and in insurance.'

'In the goods-producing sector, mining employment continued to grow in March, largely in support activities in oil and gas. Employment in manufacturing was about unchanged, as a gain in computer and electronic products was offset by job losses in textile mills and in plastics and rubber products. Construction employment also was essentially unchanged in March, after rising by 81,000 in the previous 2 months.'

'Average hourly earnings for private production or nonsupervisory workers rose by 3 cents in March, following an increase of 6 cents in February. Over the year, hourly earnings increased by 3.4 percent. The average workweek was unchanged in March, at 33.8 hours. The manufacturing workweek and overtime hours also were unchanged, at 41.0 and 4.5 hours, respectively.'

'Turning to data from the household survey, both the number of unemployed persons (7.0 million) and the unemployment rate (4.7 percent) were little changed in March. Over the year, the unemployment rate has come down from 5.1 percent. Total employment and the labor force continued to trend up in March. The number of persons working part time for economic reasons edged down over the month.'

'This month, we again report on the labor force status of survey respondents who evacuated from their homes due to Hurricane Katrina. The data are derived from a special set of questions that have been included in the household survey since October to gather information about evacuees. The estimates do not account for all persons who evacuated from their homes due to the hurricane; information is not gathered on those evacuees who remain outside the scope of the survey, such as those currently living in hotels or shelters.'

'Data for March indicated that there were about 1 million persons age 16 and over who evacuated from their August residences due to Hurricane Katrina. In March, about one-half of the evacuees were again living in the homes they vacated in August. Among Katrina evacuees identified in March, 53.6 percent were in the labor force, and their unemployment rate was 16.5 percent. Unemployment rates were much lower for those evacuees who were living at their pre-Katrina residences (5.3 percent) than for those who were living elsewhere (34.7 percent).'

'To summarize the labor market data for March, nonfarm payroll employment rose by 211,000, following a gain of 225,000 in February. The unemployment rate was about unchanged in March at 4.7 percent.'

On Wall Street, there was a bit of a rout and investors became gun-shy, fearing that The US Federal Reserve would raise interest rates again in May.

On The New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 96.46 points, equivalent to about 0.86 percent, ending the week at 11,120.04 points.

Over on The NASDAQ, its Composite Index gave up about 0.94 percent of its value, sliding back to 2,339.02 points.

The tally for the world's largest equity markets was:

The Dow Jones Industrial Average	Plus 0.10 percent
The NASDAQ's Composite Index	Minus 0.03 percent

On The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), the last settlement for a barrel of light sweet crude oil for delivery in May was \$US67.39, down about 0.81 percent on Thursday's closing level.

As for delivery in June, the last settlement came in at \$US68.64 per barrel of light sweet crude oil, a price which was equivalent to a reduction of about 0.59 percent, compared with Thursday's last settlement.

In Europe, investors, having studied the report of the US Labour Department, became concerned that the US Federal Reserve might well be forced to increase interest rates in the US in the month of May in order to control inflationary tendencies in the world's largest single economy.

Also, seeing how Wall Street was reacting to the US Government's labour report, it put the willies into eurozone investors.

Key indices of major European bourses came under pressure, sometimes rather intense pressure, dragging them much lower:

Amsterdam's AEX Index	Minus 0.19 percent
Great Britain's FTSE 100 Index	Minus 0.32 percent
Germany's Frankfurt XETRA DAX Index	Minus 1.30 percent
France's CAC 40 Index	Minus 0.90 percent
Switzerland's Swiss Market Index	Plus 0.04 percent
Italy's MIBTEL Index	Minus 0.95 percent

In Asia, the largest equity markets of the region enjoyed another mildly bullish day.

In the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the key index of the premier equity market rose to a new 66-month high on a continued high volume of activity.

On the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, the Hang Seng Index rose 0.37 percent to 16,471.78 points on a Total Turnover of about \$HK42.55 billion.

Losing counters, however, outpaced gaining ones by the ratio of about 1.26:One.

The Ten Most Actives were:

China Construction Bank Corporation (Code: 939) Down 3.47 percent to \$HK3.475 per share

Hutchison Whampoa Ltd (Code: 13) Up 0.21 percent to \$HK73.20 per share

GOME Electrical Appliances Holding Ltd (Code: 493) Down 16.41 percent to \$HK8.15 per share

China Mobile (Hongkong) Ltd (Code: 941) Up 1.58 percent to \$HK45.10 per share

HSBC Holdings plc (Code: 5) Down 0.23 percent to \$HK131.90 per share

China Life Insurance Company Ltd (Code: 2628) Up 1.95 percent to \$HK10.45 per share

Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd (Code: 16) Up 1.36 percent to \$HK81.85 per share

PetroChina Company Ltd (Code: 857) Down 1.74 percent to \$HK8.45 per share

BOC Hongkong (Holdings) Ltd (Code: 2388) Up 0.31 percent to \$HK16.25 per share

Hongkong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd (Code: 388) Down 0.65 percent to \$HK53.50 per share

As for the Main Board's double-digit movers of the day, they included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Chinney Investments Ltd	216	11.24		0.99
COL Capital Ltd	383	15.48		2.425
Cosmopolitan International Holdings Ltd	120	15.70		0.199
Daqing Petroleum and Chemical Group Ltd	362	12.00		0.56
Deson Development International Holdings Ltd	262	36.59		0.56

eForce Holdings Ltd	943	26.44		0.11
Everbest Century Holdings Ltd	578		19.48	0.31
Fortuna International Holdings Ltd	530		15.63	0.027
GOME Electrical Appliances Holding Ltd	493		16.41	8.15
Guangdong Tannery Ltd	1058	10.00		0.22
Guo Xin Group Ltd	1215	25.00		0.04
Hon Kwok Land Investment Company Ltd	160	14.88		3.475
Hop Hing Holdings Ltd	47		15.15	0.56
Interchina Holdings Company Ltd	202	13.33		0.051
Karl Thomson Holdings Ltd	7	10.49		1.79
Morning Star Resources Ltd	542		15.07	0.062
New World Mobile Holdings Ltd	862		11.11	2.00
Oriental Investment Corporation Ltd	735	16.42		0.39
SEEC Media Group Ltd	205	10.53		0.42
Sky Hawk Computer Group Holdings Ltd	1129		11.22	0.095
Teem Foundation Group Ltd	628	55.34		1.60
Uni-Bio Science Group Ltd	690	16.44		0.85
Weichai Power Company Ltd	2338	10.56		15.70
Wing Hong (Holdings) Ltd	745		11.54	0.046
Xin Corporation Ltd	1141	10.17		0.26

Over on The **Growth Enterprise Market** (The GEM) of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, its Growth Enterprise Index lost about 1.03 percent of its value, falling back to 1,328.74 points.

The Total Turnover on this speculative marketplace was about \$HK258.26 million.

Gaining counters were ahead of losing ones by the ratio of about 1.12:One.

The 5, most-active counters, in terms of their respective turnovers, only, were:

Wumart Stores Incorporated (Code: 8277)	Down 3 percent to \$HK29.05 per share
Xinjiang Tianye Water Saving Irrigation System Company Ltd (Code: 8280)	Up 5 percent to \$HK2.275 per share
Value Convergence Holdings Ltd (Code: 8101)	Down 1 percent to \$HK2.875 per share
Shandong Weigao Group Medical Polymer Company Ltd (Code: 8199)	Up 5 percent to \$HK4.025 per share
Techpacific Capital Ltd (Code: 8088)	Unchanged at 77 cents per share

The GEM's biggest movers of the day included:

Name of Company	Code	Increase (%)	Decrease (%)	Closing Price (\$HK)
Argos Enterprise (Holdings) Ltd	8022	46.00		0.146
China Advance Holdings Ltd	8117	76.19		1.85
FlexSystem Holdings Ltd	8050	27.42		0.079
FX Creations International Holdings Ltd	8136	20.00		0.12
Grandy Corporation	8143	22.45		0.60
Sino Haijing Holdings Ltd	8065	14.04		0.065
Jiangsu Nandasoft Company Ltd	8045		10.36	0.173
Jilin Province Huinan Changlong Bio-pharmacy Company Ltd	8049	11.72		0.162
KanHan Technologies Group Ltd	8175	18.33		0.213
MP Logistics International Holdings Ltd	8239	12.50		0.09
New Chinese Medicine Holdings Ltd	8085	40.00		0.07
Neolink Cyber Technology (Holdings) Ltd	8116	10.53		0.084
QUASAR Communication Technology Holdings Ltd	8171		10.00	0.09

Satellite Devices Corporation	8172	50.00		0.033
Shandong Molong Petroleum Machinery Company Ltd	8261	17.50		2.35
Shanghai Donghua Petrochemical Company Ltd	8251	11.27		1.58
Soluteck Holdings Ltd	8111	22.06		0.083
Stockmartnet Holdings Ltd	8123	13.21		0.06
Tradeeasy Holdings Ltd	8163		10.42	0.043
Vodatel Networks Holdings Ltd	8033	25.00		0.125

The tally for the 4-day trading week for the 2 equity markets of the HKSAR was:

The Hang Seng Index	Plus	4.22 percent
The Growth Enterprise Index	Plus	4.67 percent

In Japan, the 3 equity markets of the country struggled to reach for higher levels, and, by the close of the day, The Tokyo Stock Exchange's key indices had achieved their goals, all being in the black.

The TOPIX Index, which is the key index of The Tokyo Stock Exchange, ended the week at 1,783.72 points, a one-day improvement of about 0.45 percent.

The ratio of advancing counters to losing counters was about 1.56:One.

The Nikkei-225 Stock Average rose about 0.42 percent, hitting 17,563.37 yen by the close of the week.

The tally for the largest equity market of Asia and the second largest equity market of the world was:

The TOPIX Index	Plus	3.21 percent
The Nikkei-225 Stock Average	Plus	2.95 percent

As for the other equity markets of Asia, this was how their respective key indices fared, last Friday:

The HKSAR	Plus 0.37 percent to 16,471.78
Indonesia	Plus 0.61 percent to 1,363.30
Japan	TOPIX Index Plus 0.45 percent to 1,783.72 Nikkei-255 Stock Average Plus 0.42 percent to 17,563.37
Malaysia	Plus 0.28 percent to 943.71

The Philippines	Minus 0.16 percent to 2,216.73
Singapore	Plus 0.37 percent to 2,552.05
South Korea	Plus 0.38 percent to 1,402.36
Taiwan	Plus 0.31 percent to 6,781.94
Thailand	Plus 0.29 percent to 770.33

**Due to the number of public holidays, around the world,
the next stock-market review will be delivered to Subscribers,
or transmitted to Subscribers' electronic addresses, on Monday, April 24,
2006.**

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