AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

ALGER - Les 188 élus du Front islamique du salut (FIS) au 1er tour des législatives avortées ont lancé dimanche des appels au retour "à la légalité constitutionnelle" et à la reprise des élections.

JERUSALEM - Deux ministres israéliens, MM. Youval Néeman et Rehavam Zéevi, dirigeants de 2 formations d'extrême-droite Tehya et Moledet, ont présenté dimanche en fin de matinée leur démission du gouvernement dirigé par M. Yitzhak Shamir. Après la défection de ces 2 formations, qui regroupent 5 députés, M. Shamir perdra sa majorité parlementaire.

SOFIA - Le candidat du rassemblement anticommuniste Union des forces démocratiques (UFD), M. Jelio Jelev, a remporté les 1ères élections présidentielles au suffrage universel en Bulgarie. Selon les projections, M. Jelev, a obtenu 53,38% des voix contre 46,62% pour son concurrent Veiko Valkanov soutenu par l’ancien parti communiste.

AFP - TOKYO - Le dollar a poursuivi vendredi à Tokyo sa baisse de vendredi sur le marché américain, clôturant à 123,95 yen, en chute de 4 yen par rapport à la clôture de vendredi sur le place japonaise.

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THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

REUTER: Dollar testing record low

TOKYO - "Tokyo foreign exchange dealers said on Monday they expected the dollar to soon challenge its record low of 120.45 yen, set on January 4, 1988. 'Every incentive suggests the dollar will dip below 120 yen’, a Mitsubishi Trust and Banking dealer said. ‘All support lines have been broken. Unless the monetary authorities say they would prefer not to see the dollar going below 120 yen, it is only a matter of time (before it breaks the record low)’, he said. An international monetary source in New York who declined to be identified told REUTER on Friday that the Bank of Japan (BOJ) had joined the Federal Reserve in selling dollars versus yen.... 'We received the message from the central banks very clearly that they want a higher yen’, said Yoshinori Shinagawa, chief dealer at Hokkaido Takushoku Bank in Tokyo."

HERALD TRIBUNE: Dollar sold to revive economy

WASHINGTON - "The United States and Japan moved Friday to drive the dollar down against the yen in a surprise joint action apparently designed to promote US exports and trim Japan’s. The Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan sold dollars in concerted intervention on currency markets, dealers said. It was the 2 nations’ first concrete attempt to fulfill commitments to spur world economic growth through trade, which they made during President George Bush’s trip to Tokyo earlier this month. ‘It shows that the US and Japan are prepared to use the exchange rate to limit Japan’s rising trade surplus’, said David D. Hale, a Chicago-based economist for Kemper Financial who is one of the prominent figures Mr Bush has consulted recently on ways to revitalize the US economy."

THE TIMES: Germany fears recession

BONN - "Jürgen Möllermann, Germany’s controversial economics minister, says the German economy will fall into recession, 'if we make the wrong decisions'. In what amounts to his most outspoken warning so far on the state of the economy, Herr Möllermann singled out the country’s trade unions, some of which have demanded pay rises of more than 10% at a time when Germany is struggling to contain inflation, which is now more than 4%. Herr Möllermann said that he downgraded growth prospects for this year from more than 2.5% to between 1 and 2%. This forecast will form part of a wider economic assessment, which will be presented to the government
by the end of this month. For the eastern part of Germany, the forecast will reaffirm previous predictions of 10% growth this year."

AUSTRALIAN FIN. REVIEW: Dawkins push for fiscal stimulus

CANBERRA - "The Federal government is moving to condition market expectations to allow the maximum possible increase in government spending in next month’s economic statement. With a shaky Australian dollar already indicating market nervousness that the Keating government will go for a big, politically motivated kick-start, the Treasurer, Mr Dawkins, has publicly released the information he put to Federal Cabinet on Tuesday to justify the case for a significant fiscal stimulus... Mr Dawkins said questions about the desirability of a fiscal stimulus and the scope for it turned on an assessment of when the point of recovery was likely to be reached. It was clear the turning point was later than believed a few months ago."

FINANCIAL TIMES: US deficit, industrial production tumble

WASHINGTON - "The US trade deficit tumbled to its lowest level for more than 8 years in November as recessionary forces curbed US demand for imports, the Commerce Department reported yesterday. The merchandise trade deficit fell to $3.6bn, far below analysts’ expectations of a shortfall of about $6bn. The 40% drop from October’s deficit of $6.3bn mainly reflected a 5.5% decline in imports. In a separate report, the Federal Reserve said industrial production fell 0.2% in December to register its third consecutive monthly decline since the economy began to turn down in the autumn. For 1991 as a whole industrial production fell 1.9%, the first annual decline since 1982."

MISCELLANEOUS

THE TIMES: Delors to ask for more

BRUSSELS - "The EC commission is expected to propose a massive increase in the Common Market budget for the next 5 years, inevitably setting Britain on a collision course with other countries over its own contribution. The proposals, being drafted by M. Jacques Delors, commission president, following secret talks in Brussels at the weekend, include a doubling of funds for Spain and other poorer regions and will almost certainly jeopardise the famous ‘rebate’ won by Mrs Thatcher... The plan is still hazy, but it is thought to involve raising the level of the overall EC budget from 1.2% of EC Gross Domestic Product to about 1.4% over the next 5 years."

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC shuns ‘sensitive issues”

BRUSSELS - "The European Commission is planning to set up a unit to prevent Brussels scoring damaging ‘own goals’ in an effort to smooth ratification of the treaty on European Union agreed at the Maastricht summit in December. The unit will seek to ensure that Eurocrats do not produce measures of particular sensitivity in individual member states at moments when they might cause political rows that could disrupt ratification of the treaty."

LA TRIBUNE: IBM dans le rouge

"Pour la 1ère fois de son histoire, IBM est dans le rouge. Certes, les clignotants s’affolent depuis maintenant plusieurs mois: pertes trimestrielles, provision pour restructurations, suppressions d’emplois à la hache... Mais jamais cet empire n’avait enregistré, sur l’ensemble d’un exercice, des résultats négatifs. En un an, le bénéfice de 6 mrd de dollars s’est transformé en une perte de 2,8 mrd de dollars (15,4 mrd de francs), soit un différentiel de près de 9 mrd."

FINANCIAL TIMES: Paribas loses on Maxsell loans

PARIS - "Shares in Paribas fell more than 7% yesterday as the French investment bank said it would have to make about FFr800m-worth of provisions in its 1991 accounts to cover the risk of losses on its loans to Maxwell private companies. It is the first bank to make a public estimate of the scale of its losses on Maxwell loans. Indeed its losses are likely to be among the biggest recorded by any bank."

FINANCIAL TIMES: UK inflation rises

LONDON - "The headline inflation rate increased last month, even though
weak demand led to price reductions for a broad range of retail goods and services. The Central Statistical Office said yesterday the year-on-year increase in December in the retail prices index (RPI) was 4.5%, compared with 4.3% in November. Between the 2 months the index rose by 0.1%, the smallest increase since July... The figures indicate that the government’s goal of achieving a further slowing in inflation this year is on target. It hopes that an easing in price pressures on consumers and industry will provide a springboard for sustained growth. Behind the statistics was widespread price-cutting in shops, especially for alcoholic drinks, clothing, furniture and personal goods, as retailers sought to tempt shoppers with bargains in the run-up to Christmas."