

Client: Allied Gold
Source: 123 Jump (Web)
Date: 18 May 2008
Page: N/A
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Barrick and Allied Gold, Spotless O

The Preliminary market turnover was 1.54 billion, worth \$5.47 billion, with 594 stocks trading up, 523 stocks closing down and 368 unchanged. The most actively traded stock was AFT Corporation with 121.85 million shares worth \$123,200.

Market Driver

BHP Billiton Ltd's chief executive officer Marius Kloppers today revealed that his company was keen on engaging Aluminum Corp of China or Chinalco following its purchase of shares in Rio Tinto which is BHP's target.

Chinalco and Alcoa Inc paid 6,000 pence a share price paid by for their 9% stake in Rio. Aluminum's acquisition of a stake in Rio has the potential to offset BHP's bid. Kloppers said they are seeking to engage Aluminum in the same manner that they are engaging Rio's top 50 shareholders.

He added that they were pulling all stops to secure total acceptances although they would also be comfortable if they garner at least 50% acceptances which would still give them control.

Chinalco's support is crucial in BHP's endeavor to create the largest producer of aluminum and energy coal. Chinalco's chairman Xiao Yaqing hinted on March 18 that he might increase its stake in Rio to secure the metals needed by China, the biggest consumer of aluminum, copper and iron ore.

BHP gained 1.3% and Rio rose 2.2%.

Gainers and losers

Of the ASX 200 index stocks, Sundance Resource led the gainers with a rise of 23.3% followed by increases in Worleyparsons of 9%, in Timbercorp Ltd of 6.9%, in Aquarius Platinum of 6.5%, and in AED Oil Ltd of 6.2%.

Of the ASX 200 index stocks, Spotless Group led the decliners with a fall of 8.3% followed by losses in Centro Retail Group of 6.5%, in Westfield Group of 5.5%, in JB HI-FI Ltd of 5.3% and in Babcock & Brown of 5.3%.

Qantas carried more passengers on domestic routes

Qantas Airways Ltd airline's latest traffic figures shows that the airline carried 2.7% more domestic passengers but less international customers in January compared to the year ago in the same month.

Qantas carried 1.35 million domestic passengers in the month, while international passengers fell 4.6% to 731,000. On the whole, the number of passengers carried rose to 3.23 million in January, from January 2007 representing a 5.6% increase.

Qantas said domestic traffic as measured by revenue passenger km rose 2.7% while capacity as measured by available seat km was up 3%.

This resulted in a revenue seat factor of 80.5%, which was 0.2 percentage points lower than January the previous year. International revenue passenger km were down 2.3% and available seat km was also lower by 3.2%, which →

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resulted in revenue seat factor of 87.4%, up 0.8 percentage points on January 2007.

For the travel carrier group in January RPKs rose 4.3%, ASKs were up 3.7% resulting in a revenue seat factor of 84.2%, which was 0.5 percentage points higher than the previous year.

In the financial year to January 2008, group passenger numbers were up 6.6% from the previous year to 23.02 million.

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