

BRIEFS

Heavy trading push up stocks in

NEW YORK, Feb 5: The stock market surged ahead to new highs in heavy trading Thursday, extending Wednesday's rally with encouragement from falling interest rates both at home and abroad.

US, French firms win contract

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: The US defence department said on Tuesday it had awarded a 724 million dollar contract for about 300,000 desktop computers to the French computer giant Groupe Bull and to an American firm, government Technology Services Inc.

US sold \$443 m worth gold to Taiwan

TAIPEI, Feb 5: The United States was Taiwan's biggest gold supplier in 1992, selling 40 tonnes (1.4 million ounces) worth 443.6 million US dollars to the island, Finance Ministry officials said Thursday.

OPEC chief leaves for talks in Africa

CARACAS, Feb 5: Alirio Parra, President of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) left Thursday for Nigeria, Gabon and Libya for talks on reducing oil production to boost prices.

Dollar closes mixed, gold falls in NY

NEW YORK, Feb 5: The dollar was mixed against other major currencies Thursday, posting moderate gains against the German mark after the Bundesbank moved to cut key interest rates.

Drought hits Morocco

RABAT, (Morocco), Feb 5: A prolonged drought has left Morocco's reservoirs less than 30 per cent full, Public Works Minister Mohamed Kabbaj said Thursday.

Friendly dry cleaning machine

BOCA RATON, Feb 5: An ecologically friendly cleaning process used in a London tailor shop for 70 years has been imported for Americans seeking a solvent-free method of dry cleaning.

Yeltsin delivers biting attack on ministers for significant economic failures

MOSCOW, Feb 5: President Boris Yeltsin delivered a biting attack on his won Cabinet Thursday, blaming his top ministers for "significant economic failures" and skyrocketing inflation.

Yeltsin also lashed out at the Cabinet for soaring inflation. "Somebody has to be held accountable for this," Interfax quoted him as saying.

The April 11 referendum will decide the outline of a new Russian Constitution and the division of powers between the president and parliament.

the former "Gaidar team" of young reformers. He survived a government shakeup last December, when Yeltsin bowed to hard-liners in the Congress of People's Deputies.

of such a course of events are dangerous to the extreme," he wrote.

German Central Bank comes to rescue krone

COPENHAGEN (Denmark), Feb 5: The German Central Bank came to the rescue of the Danish currency Thursday, cutting two key interest rates and relieving pressure that threatened a forced devaluation of the krone.



SARAJEVO: A Bosnian woman carries a beam of firewood from a destroyed house as she passes by a sign welcoming tourists to Sarajevo Feb 4. The Bosnian capital has been under siege for almost ten months.

Malaysia to disinvest broadcasting department

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 5: Malaysia's public Department of Broadcasting, which runs two TV channels and several radio stations, will be made into a corporation this fall.

US productivity records 20-yr high

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: Americans' productivity climbed 2.7 per cent last year, the most in two decades, according to a government report that raised hopes that a long-awaited rebound in the nation's competitive standing is at hand.

Germany's powerful central bank lowered two key interest rates hours after a similar rate cut in Japan.

Private analysts agreed. They said that unless job growth picks up considerably in the months ahead, the surge in consumer spending that has powered the economy so far will falter.

the past several months but it still would not be enough to push the unemployment rate down from the 7.3 per cent level where it has been stuck since November.

Germany, Japan cut interest rates to stimulate ailing economies

NEW YORK, Feb 5: Germany and Japan applied the tonic of lower interest rates Thursday to stimulate their ailing economies, above that sent positive ripples throughout the world and could have a particularly beneficial impact in the United States.

In the United States, thousands of jobs are tied to exports, which account for an estimated 12 per cent of US economic activity.

Germany's neighbours repeatedly had called on Germany's central bank, the Bundesbank, to reduce rates.

Analysts said Japan's rate cut was less significant than the German move because the Japanese rates weren't an element in the currency market turmoil.

One million dinar note!

BELGRADE, Feb 5: Yugoslavia may soon have to issue a one-million-dinar banknote to cope with hyperinflation which is devastating the economy.

Gulf states welcome more US exports

ABU DHABI, Feb 5: Gulf Arab states are willing to give more access to US exports but are set to reject its requests to lift a long-standing economic boycott of Israel and ease offset conditions on western companies, reports AFP.

Real exchange rates generate concern among L American policymakers

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: Recently in most Latin American countries real exchange rates have experienced rapid real appreciations, generating considerable concern among policymakers and political leaders.

In the late 1980s some analysts, including the International Monetary Fund staff, argued that the crawling peg regimes adopted by most of Latin America after the debt crisis had become excessively inflationary.

A number of Latin American countries have, in fact, decided to use an exchange rate anchor as a way to reduce inflation.

reach a high inflation plateau. The adoption of a fixed exchange rate, it has been argued, will constrain government's ability to surprise the private sector through unexpected devaluations.

to unpredictable shocks, contingent exchange rate rules can, at least in principle, be superior to fixed rates.

US-EC deadlock on trade deal unlikely to end soon

BRUSSELS, (Belgium), Feb 5: The European Community's trade chief on Thursday played down chances for a breakthrough in world trade talks at a meeting next week in Washington.

isn't their policy," he said. Brittan said an agreement in the Uruguay Round "is in reach," adding, "If the United States wishes to proceed urgently to the kind of deal the whole world needs, I don't see why it can't be done."

China plans to lay off 500,000 coal miners

BEIJING, Feb 5: China's national coal mining conglomerate and a major state steel factory have announced plans to lay off nearly half a million workers to increase efficiency, official news reports said Thursday.

that it was cutting 80,000 workers, a full two-thirds of its workforce, in the face of increased market competition.

ECO may okay action plan for Islamic common market

ISLAMABAD, Feb 5: Foreign ministers of 10 nations are expected to approve this week-end an action plan for developing an essentially Islamic common market in central and western Asia, reports AFP.

Official sources said the session would be a landmark in the member states' efforts to develop the grouping into a central and western Asian common market.

Gulf states welcome more US exports

ABU DHABI, Feb 5: Gulf Arab states are willing to give more access to US exports but are set to reject its requests to lift a long-standing economic boycott of Israel and ease offset conditions on western companies, reports AFP.

The boycott has cost Israel nearly 50 billion dollar and has forced several world companies to shun Israel because Arab countries blacklist firms doing business with the Jewish state.