

BRIEFS

India to auction 8-yr-old securities

BOMBAY, Feb 25: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the auction of eight-year government securities...

Pak foreign reserves rises to \$1b

KARACHI, Feb 25: Pakistan's foreign reserves rose to 1.00 billion US dollar in the week to last Thursday...

Japanese-Chinese ship collide, sinks

TOKYO, Feb 25: A 2,037-ton Japanese ship sank off western Japan Tuesday night after colliding with a 4,797-ton Chinese container ship...

Grand bargain painting in NY

NEW YORK, Feb 25: Attention flea market shoppers. An American tourist in Bristol, England, was browsing at a "boot sale" when the visitor spent about three dollars on a painting of hummingbirds...

'Clinton, Greenspan to change Fed rules'

WASHINGTON, Feb 25: President Bill Clinton and Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan are preparing to change the priorities of federal bank regulation to break the back of the credit crunch...

Cost of restoring Castle \$58m

LONDON, Feb 25: The cost of restoring fire-damaged Windsor Castle will be between 30 million and 40 million pounds (43.5 million and 58 million dollars)...

Indian railways raises fare, freight prices

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: The state run Indian railways Wednesday announced a 10 to 12 per cent hike in fares and freight to earn an additional 616 million dollar in the coming fiscal year...

Singapore economy picks up in '92, expects healthy growth during this year

SINGAPORE, Feb 25: Singapore's export-driven economy, buoyed by the US economic recovery, picked up steam in the fourth quarter of 1992 and expectations are for healthy growth this year...

The cause of the stronger than expected growth - which caused a rally on the local share market to record highs on Wednesday - was continued strong exports in the fourth quarter, especially to the United States...

If the growth continues in the US we will see a bigger impact on our economy, the spokesman said. However, the recession and slow growth in other industrial economies may slow down the pace of recovery in the United States...

The capital account surplus rose to 6.9 billion dollar (4.21 billion US dollar) last year from 5.1 billion dollar (3.1 billion US dollar) in 1991.

Overall, the island's balance of payments showed a net surplus of 9.96 billion dollar (6.07 billion US dollar) for the year against surplus of 7.26 billion dollar (4.43 billion US dollar) a year earlier.

Manufacturing output, at 28 per cent of GDP the largest sector, rose 6.8 per cent year-on-year in the last quarter, against 2.7 per cent in the third and a 0.7 per cent drop in the first - the first negative growth in manufacturing since the 1985 recession.

Trade issue to dominate Major, Clinton talks

WASHINGTON, Feb 25: British Prime Minister John Major arrived here on Tuesday for his first meeting with President Bill Clinton, with trans-Atlantic trade tensions likely to dominate the talks, reports Reuters.

Drastic steps needed to pull India out of fiscal crisis

NEW DELHI, Feb 25: India's pro-market reforms are starting to pay off but more drastic steps are needed to launch the economy on a path of high growth, the government said in its annual pre-budget report Tuesday, reports AFP.

Singh unveils the 1993-94 budget, expected to consolidate the reforms which critics say were tailored to dictate by the international lending agencies.

tries in the gigantic public sector and a gradual elimination of subsidies which produce a size hole in government coffers.

import tariffs banking and stock market reforms and favoured movement towards a full float of the rupee to boost exports.



Indonesia, Germany sign \$66.28m loan accord

JAKARTA, Feb 25: Indonesia and Germany signed here Thursday an agreement on loans and grants totalling 110 million German mark (\$66.28 million dollar) and another covering cooperation on the environment, according to AFP.

Soaring yen threatens to deepen Japan's worst crisis since WW II

TOKYO, Feb 25: Just when it looked like Japan's battered economy had reached bottom, the nation's currency has begun a record-shattering drive that threatens to deepen one of the worst downturns here since World War Two, writes Reuters.

Business leaders and economists say the higher yen, which has climbed nearly six per cent against the dollar in just more than two weeks, would prolong the downturn and could even widen Japan's already massive trade surplus.

Clinton's energy tax may jeopardise stable oil supply from Gulf states

Dubai, Feb 25: US President Bill Clinton's proposed energy tax, which aims to reduce US dependence on imported energy, could jeopardise the stable supply of oil from Gulf producers, industry sources said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

and invest their income in order to maintain production and prevent shortages around the world, one senior Gulf-based analyst said.

Gulf states are asked to support the world with energy capacity and maintain stable supply, to cut back investment in their oil sectors, the analyst said.

Coal is more harmful to the environment than oil, Saudi officials also indicated they thought the tax was unfairly weighted against oil.



Norway to lift trade sanctions against South Africa

OSLO, Feb 25: Norway will lift most trade sanctions against South Africa next month because of progress in ending apartheid, the Foreign Ministry announced Tuesday, reports AP.

EC likely to take steps to help steel industry

BRUSSELS, Feb 25: European Community industry ministers will signal on Thursday what steps the EC is willing to take to help its ailing steel industry restructure and cover the costs of an estimated 50,000 job losses, reports Reuters.

reorganisation plan that meets EC objectives. One of the toughest questions facing the ministers is how to restrict steel imports from eastern Europe, with Britain pushing to scale back the tariff quotas proposed by the commission from three years to two.

Lanka's experience of privatisation of state owned bus service

I visited Sri Lanka recently to attend a conference of South Asian Federation of Accountants. The theme of the Conference was "Regional Development - South Asian Perspectives". It was divided into three technical sessions...

104 bus depots under the supervision and management of a Central Transport Board and 10 Regional Boards. During a period of 18 months commencing in December 1990, 85 out of 104 bus depots were converted into Peoples Companies under the terms of the Conversion of Public Corporations into Public Companies Act...

ing depots and workshops. This programme is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Prior to 1958, Road Passenger Transport Services were provided entirely by the private sector organised under several limited liability companies...

The failure of CTB was due to many reasons, some of which may be enumerated as follows: (a) The recruitment of staff was well in excess of requirement; (b) Overhead costs were high because of proliferation; (c) The competition from the private sector operations among other factors led to losses in income to the extent that proper maintenance of the fleet was not possible; (d) Lack of motivation and poor productivity reduced efficiency to very low levels.

cent shareholding transferred to the employees. The transport boards with limited or no role to play were to be phased out gradually. The companies were to be run by Boards of Directors nominated from the senior staff with two elected worker representatives and one representative from the local banking sector.

been created as a body responsible for implementing national policy and providing guidelines to the provincial councils for the regulation and operation of buses. In mid 1990, by introducing a duty free import scheme with tax concessions and providing easy bank credit, the fleet strength of buses substantially increased. The present fleet strength of private buses is about 14,000. The majority of private bus owners do not own than 2 or 3 buses each.

trage operated per day has increased by 100,000 km. The companies are assisted to operate uneconomic routes in rural areas and subsidised for providing concessionary school travel. A management reorientation and skills development programme with ILO/UNDP assistance has been launched to help these companies. This bus sector restructuring programme has demonstrated the following positive characteristics: (a) It created a body of motivated employees who are both shareholders and participants in management; (b) It decentralised the operation of the bus sector to divisional levels and eliminated high overhead costs and other wasteful expenditure and relieved the treasury of high annual expenditure; and (c) It helped to ensure healthy competition among operators both big and small while conforming to regulatory regimes and safe standards designed to safeguard and promote the public transport service.