

BRIEFS

Bird's painting fetch \$96,000
NEW YORK, Mar 12: A painting of two hummingbirds that an American tourist picked up for about three dollars at a flea market in England fetched \$96,000 dollar on the auction block at Christie's on Thursday.

Sharp fall in stock prices in New York

NEW YORK, Mar 12: Stock prices fell sharply Thursday after the release of mixed economic data caused investors to question the staying power of the US economic recovery.

US orange juice for Russian apple juice

BRADENTON (Fla), Mar 12: A Florida company is making use of an old-fashioned barter system to send orange juice to Russia in exchange for apple juice.

China imposes new aviation rules

BEIJING, Mar 12: The Chinese government has announced stricter rules for new airlines in order to slow the explosion of tiny, ill-equipped operations.

3 arrested in Italy for corruption

MILAN, Mar 12: Three top managers in Italy's state-controlled energy conglomerate were arrested Thursday in the mushrooming corruption scandal rocking Italy's highest political and business circles.

Asian stocks finish lower in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, Mar 12: Asian stock markets closed generally mixed Thursday, with share prices plunging in Hong Kong because of political jitters over the territory's future.

Assistance for Bombay riot victims

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Newly appointed Chief Minister of India's southwestern state of Maharashtra Sarad Pawar announced assistance of 25,000 and 10,000 rupee (750 and 300 US dollar) to permanently and partially disabled persons in Bombay riot victims.

New trading system in fabled central Asia

HONG KONG: A new trading system is in the works for Central Asia. Under the plain title 'Economic Cooperation Organization' (ECO), it is an attempt by ten countries, mostly Muslim-controlled, to revive an earlier pact between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, signed 25 years ago but long submerged under problems of conflict.

Sharif. The intention is to impose low taxes on mutual trade, to set up investment bank, and to build roads and railways between member countries. However, progress towards these aims is bound to be slow. What may assist the process is membership in the Asian Development Bank, which has been proposed.

The declines reflect in part a delay in adjustment and the collapse of the rouble currency. Another sign of economic distress in the region is the growing unemployment with, for example, the number of persons officially unemployed increasing five-fold in Kazakhstan during 1992.

Central Asian republics, it also has long borders with Russia and China. Its oil reserves are enormous, and already the US Chevron company has contracted to develop the giant Tengiz field.

Wulany Image Alpha, says that in the Caspian Sea area alone, some 40 million dollar could be absorbed by oil development over the next 40 years.

A delicate balancing act to maintain, introducing market reforms very circumspectly. The Uzbekistan government, more fearful itself of Muslim radicals than of political breakdown, is supporting the pro-communists with sophisticated arms including aircraft.

UK miners call 24-hr strike to protest govt plan

LONDON, Mar 12: British miners on Thursday called a 24-hour strike for April 2 to protest government plans to drastically slim down the industry, says Reuters.



LONDON: Ford workers protest outside the company's London office March 11 where talks between unions and management are taking place on job losses. — AFP/UNB photo

'Japan's economy still severe, may need another stimulus package'

TOKYO, Mar 12: Despite optimistic predictions by some government officials, the chief of the Economic Planning Agency said Friday that Japan's economic conditions are still severe and may require an additional fiscal stimulus package, says an AP report.

current downturn, and it is premature to say the economic slump bottomed in the latest quarter, Funada said. Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry released a survey Thursday showing that Japanese corporations saw pretax profits tumble 39 per cent last quarter for the fastest year-one-year pace since the first oil crisis in the 1970s.

Agency and some other officials as well as major economic think tanks are less sanguine about the nation's economic conditions. Opposition parties have called for consideration of income tax cuts, but the ruling Liberal Democratic Party wants to wait for the effects of the previous package to take hold.

He also assured the farmers that a two-pronged approach would be adopted to help the local industry flourish by bringing down the costs of making phosphatic fertilizers, mitigating their fears about high cost of the fertilizers.

Political chaos responsible for Italy's economic woes

MILAN, Mar 12: A political crisis stirred up by Italy's widening corruption probe risks delaying economic recovery and adding to the country's huge debt problems, analysts said, reports Reuters.

In particular, they say his government may lack the authority to take measures needed to deal with an overshooting state deficit, long Italy's economic bugbear. Holding the line on the deficit is vital to calm financial market nerves and ensure Italy does not get left behind as Europe moves towards lower interest rates.

cast to drop eight pct to 150 trillion lire this year — under control as interest rate payments account for the whole of the shortfall. Many analysts had expected the Bank of Italy to lower its discount rate earlier this month to take advantage of a cut in a key German money market rate.

forcing the central bank to intervene on the foreign exchange markets. Analysts say the evidence of the first two months of the year is that the government is once again going to miss the deficit goal unless it takes fresh, and politically unpopular, action to cut spending or raise taxes.

Yeltsin now fighting for reforms, control on free-spending

MOSCOW, Mar 12: President Boris Yeltsin has stolen the headlines in a war of words in Moscow this week, but a second battle is also under way — the fight for economic reforms and control of a free-spending central bank, reports Ruter.

style market economy, say the central bank is fuelling inflation by pumping out money and according to high spending demands from a conservative parliament. But Central Bank Chairman Viktor Geraschenko questions the link between money supply and inflation. He told congress Russia money supply rose 10.3 times in 1992, a rise in line with the rising incomes of the population.

issue in the debate, with Yeltsin initially calling for the central bank to be put under government control. The central bank now reports to parliament and Yedorov complained that Geraschenko was too willing to accede to parliamentary demands which would increase spending sharply.

Fyodorov, who has described control of inflation as the main task of government and central bank, said he would support the idea of an independent central bank. He said the government had no plans to quit, despite battles raging in congress. It is necessary to continue to the last moment, despite attempts to push the government from the path it has taken, he said.

Reform needs privatisation

Meanwhile, another report from London adds: Russia's tenuous economic reform, threatened by hyper inflation and political turmoil, will be impossible unless privatisation is carried forward, said the deputy chairman of Russia's privatisation agency.

India, Armenia to promote bilateral trade

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: India and Armenia signed a framework agreement here yesterday to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two nations, reports Xinhua.

India to stop wheat import this year

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao yesterday announced that the country would stop importing wheat this year, reports Xinhua.

EC for Economic coop accord with India

BRUSSELS, Mar 12: The European Community proposed a new agreement with India here Thursday to boost economic cooperation and help alleviate poverty, particularly in rural areas, reports AP.

40 leaders' bid to quick completion of GATT talks

GENEVA, Mar 12: Leaders of nearly 40 states will launch a new bid to push the major powers towards quick completion of the long-stalled Uruguay Round trade negotiations, the world trade watchdog GATT said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Clinton begins massive pro-NAFTA campaign

WASHINGTON, Mar 12: The Clinton administration has launched an aggressive campaign to extol the virtues of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) amid renewed signs of opposition in Congress and elsewhere, reports Reuters.

US senate body okays \$502 b deficit cuts

WASHINGTON, Mar 12: United Democrats whipped the outlines of a \$502 billion budget-cutting plan through a Senate committee Thursday night. But they quarreled among themselves over whether to trim President Clinton's 16 billion dollar spending plan for jobs, says AP.

India exports to the EC comprise mainly textiles, yarn fabrics, garments, jute, leather, carpets and engineering goods.

auto and other industries, technology exchanges, energy efficiency, pollution control, tourism and liberalisation of maritime transport. The EC Cooperation and Aid Commissioner, Manuel Marin said "Respect for human rights and democratic principles is the basis for the cooperation."

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