Miyazawa praises Clinton

WASHINGTON, Apr 19 Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa praised President Clinton Friday for sending a high-level delegation - his secretaries of state and treasury - to this week's Tokyo conference on aid to Russia. As reporters and photographers filed into Clinton's Oval Office at the start of their meeting, the President was saying: "I think there's a great understanding of how important the issue is." Miyazawa replied: "But I think it's really the leadership... your leadership... sending a high-caliber delegation really changed the atmosphere of the meeting", reports AP.

Slowdown in US industrial output

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: The steady increase in output at American factories, mines and utilities stalled in March because of the winter storm that swept the nation's east coast in mid-month, the government said Friday. Industrial production last month was unchanged from February, ending a string of five consecutive advances, the Federal Reserve said. It had risen a seasonally adjusted 0.6 per cent in February and 0.3 per cent in January. "In part, the slowdown reflects the loss of output following the ... storm," the central bank said, reports

Bank owner admits smuggling arms

BELGRADE, Apr 19: The owner of the Jugoskandic bank on Friday confessed to smuggling arms for Serbdominated Yugoslavia and accused the Yugoslav military of sabotaging his once-profitable bank. In a videotaped interview shown on independent Belgrade Studio B TV, Jezdimir Vasiljevic confessed to having procured military hardware for the Yugoslav army in 1992, after war Herzegowidal Mithateline, (II) was probably the only person who could travel abroad and get everything the army needed, and I was doing that," said Vasiljevic, who fled Yugoslavia for Israel last month, reports AP.

Fire destroys oil exploration office

BOMBAY, Apr 19: A major fire engulfed the office of India's main oil exploration and drilling agency in this port city Sunday, destroying its control room and computers, police said. Eleven fire tenders battled the blaze in the seventh and eighth floor offices of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) at Bandra district for some 12 hours, but no one was hurt. "Both floors have been completely gutted," a police officer said, adding his men were yet to enter the skyscraper, reports AFP.

Chinese villager detained for scandal

BEIJING, Apr 19: In a scandal sure to be a major embarrassment to the government, the nationally reknown head of China's "richest village" has been detained on suspicion of shielding suspects in a murder case. The detention of Yu Zuomin is the latest blow to Daqiuzhuang village, for years touted by the central government as a model of the market-style economic reforms pushed by senior leader Deng Xiaoping. The official Xinhua News Agency reported Friday that Yu was detained Thursday, saying he "is alleged to have shielded and hidden the criminals and stood in the way of police on their duty," reports AP.

Illegal job seekers asked to surrender

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 19: Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba Saturday urged illegal foreign jobseekers to surrender to be given an opportunity to work, otherwise they will be repatriated. The government is concerned over the entry of illegal imgrants is solved, says a Xinhua report.

WB expects Third World's double growth

WASHINGTON, Apr 19: Developing countries are expected to grow about 4.7 per cent a year going into the next decade, nearly double the economic vitality they showed in the 1980s, the World Bank said on Sunday, reports

In a report, the international lending agency said the increased economic growth might of poorer countries reflects hard-won reforms rather than vastly increased activity by wealthier countries spreading worldwide.

This brighter outlook is to a large extent the dividend of the wide-ranging - and often painful - economic policy reforms of the past decade, the bank said in global economic prospects and the developing

WASHINGTON, Apr 19:

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyaz-

awa on Sunday expressed

Japan's resolve to cut its trade

surplus with the United States,

cific trade targets, reports

Speaking on ABC television,

Miyazawa expressed satisfac-

tion that President Bill Clinton

had agreed in Friday's meeting

to negotiate a new framework

to address bilateral trade is-

sues rather than seeking a

ident Clinton, instead of call-

ing for a quick fix ... proposed

"I'm really happy that pres-

quick-fix solution.

Reuter.

but again rejected using spe-

countries 1993. Developing countries grew 2.7 per cent a year between 1982 and 1992.

The study said that developing countries in recent years have transformed much of the behaviour that has caused problems, dealing with their commercial bank debt, slowing inflation and liberalising trade.

At the same time, the report cautioned that there were many risks involved in the forecast, citing, in particular, the inability of the global community to complete work on Uruguay Round trade talks under the General Agreement

on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). While the importance of a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round is widely proclaimed, there has been almost no forward movement in

to work at the framework", he

said. The interview was taped

on Saturday before Miyazawa

left Washington to return to

that Japan still had hard work

ahead to whittle down its 49

billion dollar trade surplus

with the Untied States. But he

said setting specific trade tar-

gets or quotas was not the an-

mise anything I cannot

possibly deliver on "he said,

noting that the Japanese gov-

ernment could not disband

market principles to assure

"One, I really cannot pro-

Miyazawa acknowledged

the round in over two years, DC, Rao, Acting World Bank chief economist, told re-

He said the inability of trading partners to reach an accord has been exaggerated by growing trade tensions and some concern about the popularity of new regional trade arrangements.

"A more open trading system globally is particularly important for those developing countries committed to trade reform, and expanding trade opportunities are vital for the reforming countries of eastern and central Europe," Rao said.

The report comes out against a backdrop of a global economy in which developed countries, with the possible exception of the United States.

that its companies bought

specific quantities of US goods.

government to do that, you are

telling the government to be a

managed economy," he said.

That's the way that Russia has

been doing (it), but you want

trade imbalance was bad. "We

all sense an embarrassing situ-

could not and should not last

concern to Miyazawa in unusu-

ally blunt terms about

Miyazawa said the US-Japan

He said the lopsided trade

Clinton expressed deep

them to change now".

for many more years.

ation," he said.

"If you really want some

Miyazawa favours trade surplus cut

but rejects using target

are suffering economic malaise.

Bank officials said its projections are based, in part, on the assumption that the economic recovery that appears to be consolidating in the United States spreads to western Europe and Japan within the next 12 months and that major industrial countries begin to grow at close to their potential by 1994

In Europe and Central Asia, which includes Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, growth is expected to increase by about 2 per cent a year through the 1990s as the shift to a market economy begins to provide dividends.

Latin America is expected to continued its recovery with growth of 4 per cent achiev-

"inadequate" US access to

It was Clinton's first meet-

ing with Miyazawa since he be-

came President three months

ago and ushered in a tougher

approach to US-Japanese rela-

tions than that of former

sied that he and Clinton had

become acquainted and estab-

lished "trust and friendship" as

the foundation of their future

the tenor of the talks had been

nearly belligerent he said, "we

Asked about reports that

Miyazawa said he was satis-

President George Bush.

relationship.

didn't mince words".

Japanese markets.

able over the long-run sub-Saharan Africa is also expected to show some improved growth, but not at rates much higher than population

The Middle East and North African region, however, is expeeted to show some of its greatest growth since the 1970s, moving ahead by 4 per

cent or 5 per cent. East Asia, which includes China, is forecast to show significant growth levels, al though somewhat lower than in the previous decade.

South Asia's growth is projected to average around 5 per cent annually in the 1990s with faster growth in the second half of the decade as reforms take hold in India.

Kuwait records \$811m trade deficit in '92

KUWAIT CITY, Apr 19: Kuwait registered a trade deficit of 239 million Kuwaiti dinar (811 million US dollar)

in 1992, reports Xinhua. The total import of this oilrich state in 1992 amounted to about 7.484 billion dollar, and its exports 6.673 billion dollar, according to statistics reported by the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Watan yesterday.

Oil exports totalled 6.18 billion dollar while its non-oil exports came up to 484.8 million dollar, the report said.

Kuwait registered a surplus of 5.19 billion dollar in foreign trade in 1989, according to statistics released by the central bank of Kuwait.

The trade deficit was attributed to the rise of imports following the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991, and a drop in Kuwait's oil exports as a result of the ignition of hundreds of Kuwaiti oil-wells by Iraqi occupation forces.

India plans to maintain minimum reserves of \$5b

NEW DELJII, Apr 19: India plans to maintain minimum reserves level of five billion US dollar, local English newspaper The Economic Times reported Friday, says Xinhua.

According to the government's latest thinking on its balance of payments management strategy, all efforts including taking immediate recourse to commercial borrowing, will be made if the reserves level tends to fall below five billion dollar at any point of time, the report said.

At present the country's foreign exchange reserves level is estimated at over 6.4 billion dollar, well above the minimum level, and he reserves continue to slow buovancy during the first fortnight of April, the report quoted of ficial sources as saying.

Workers' strike hits Nigerian oil sector

LAGOS, Apr 19: A strike by workers demanding wage hikes has shut down Nigeria's largest oil refinery and could cause fuel shortage in parts of the country, the official news agency of Nigeria said Friday, reports AFP.

The Port Harcourt Refinery with a capacity for producing 150,000 barrels of oil per day, supplies fuel to most of the seven states in eastern Nigeria. Its closure is likely to bring about fuel shortages in that re-

gion, the agency said. The workers went on strike Thursday to press for higher wages and the removal of two directors of the company accused of overlooking some workers in granting promotions, a source close to the workers told the news agency.

Riot police have been deployed at the refinery, located in southeastern Nigeria, to prevent outbreaks of violence, the agency said.

Kuwait seeks to promote trade link with China

KUWAIT CITY, Apr 19: Kuwait is seeking to consolidate its commercial ties with China in the context of the perfect political relations between the two countries, the Kuwaiti Minister Commerce and Industry de-

clared, reports Xinhua. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 1993 Chinese trade fair here Saturday evening. Abdullah-Al-Hajiri said this kind of fair was sure to increase the two-day-trade. He promised to take fresh moves to stimulate trade relations between the two coun-

He pointed out this is the second Chinese fair held in Kuwait in less than six months, which is a clear evidence showing the importance Kuwait and China attach to the promotion of trade relation

between the two countries. The last Chinese trade fair was held in November, with

the conclusion of contracts worth a total of 40 million US

China and Kuwait have enjoyed good relations since the establishment of diplomatic

> Chinese president Yang Shangklun paid an officials visit to Kuwait in 1989, and Kuwatti Amir Jaber-al-Ahmed al-Sabah made a visit to China in 1991, the second in less than a year, reflecting the interest in developing closer relations with each other.

More recently, the two countries signed in January an agreement on promoting health cooperation in the fields of medicine and medical researches.

The Minister for Commerce and Industry cut the ribbon, visited the exhibits and watched a show on the development of Chinese civilization and foreign relations.

Taiwan to become 7th largest trading nation

TAIPEI, Apr 19: Taiwan rank as the world's 7th largest trading nation once The European Community is categorised as a single economy this year, trade officials here predicted Sunday, reports AFP.

Citing statistics released by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the officials predicted Taiwan would surpass South Korea to become the world's 7th largest with total trade volume expected to hit 167 billion US dollar this year.

Currently Taiwan ranks 14th on the world list, and the sharp jump would be due to the recategorisation of the EC as a single market this year, the board of foreign trade officials said.

The combined value of all

EC members' trade in 1992 stood at 1.2 trillion US dollar. as compared to one trillion dollar for the United States, according to the GATT statis-

When the EC is treated as one economy Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Switzerland will take the 5th to 10th place. Statistics also showed that combine trade of Hong Kong, China and Taiwan - considered Chinese led economies last year accounted for 7.4 per cent of total world trade.

Respective trade values of the three were 240 billion, 166 billion and 153 billion US dollar, which when combined are expected to surpass Japan this year, the officials noted.

Iraqi dinar falls to its lowest level, prices up

BAGHDAD , Apr 19: The Iragi dinar has dived to its lowest level against the US dollar, causing a new surge prices for food and other basic needs, reports Reuter.

The dollar was trading at 55 dinar in Baghdad's black market on Sunday up about 34 per cent on its record level of 41 dinar last month.

Early this month economic crime squads arrested 300 traders for overcharging in the government's latest campaign against the effects of Gulf War trade sanctions. A similar crackdown last year led to the execution of 42 for hoarding and profiteering.

But the dinar's value continued to slump and prices to soar for both imported and locally produced commodities, including eggs, sugar, rice, flour and meat.

Cheap government rations supply Iraqis with more than a third of their food needs but they must buy the rest from private traders.

The UN sanctions imposed to punish Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait bar all trade with Baghdad apart from essential food and medical supplies.

Business in the Shorja Market, Iraq's main trading centre, is sluggish, traders say the falling dinar is driving them out of business. "In less than one month the

dinar lost more 30 per cent of its value", said one. "The market is volatile and wholesale trade is nearly impossible".

Shorja is no longer the buzzing commercial nerve centre of Baghdad, many of its keen merchants' shifted to other trades when the government banned luxury im-

ports last year. Street hawkers and pavement sellers have almost replaced the traditional Baghdadi trader with his distinctive gown, cloth belt and head

Shorja was once Iraq's cheapest place to shop. Not any more.

Inflation rises in China

BEIJING, Apr 19: China's inflation rose sharply in the first quarter as the government freed more prices from control and issued currency to pay increasingly restive farmers, the government announced Monday, reports AP.

Zhang Zhongji, spokesman for the State Statistical Bureau, said retail prices in the country's 35 biggest cities were up an average of 15.7 per cent in the first quarter of 1993, compared to the same period of 1992. Prices in rural areas were up 8.5 per cent, he said.

The figures were China's highest since 1988 and 1989, when inflation of nearly 40 per cent aroused widespread public discontent and was a factor in the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

Despite recent warnings from economists that banks are lending too much money and that the boom in construction and manufacturing is straining the country's energy and transport facilities, there was no attempt to slow things down in the first quarter.

Industrial output was up 22 per cent from the first quarter of 1992, Zhang said, with the coastal areas leading the way as usual. Gross domestic product increased 14 per cent, he said. Zhang said state-owned en-terprises invested a total of 58.8 billion yuan (10.3 billion

dollar) in fixed assets during the quarter, up 70.7 per cent from the same quarter of

He acknowledged that many of the investment decisions were made without approval by the central government, noting that local governments have been given more power to make decisions on their own.

Robbers take \$ 2m

Dollar continues to slide in Asia ahead of US-Japan summit

HONG KONG, Apr 19: The dollar continued its slide against the yen and also fell against many other Asian currencies in mixed trading ahead of the key summit between US President Bill Clinton and Japanese Premier Kiichi Miyazawa, reports AFP.

FRANKFURT, Apr

Positions hardened over the

weekend in the East German

pay conflict and the country's

biggest union prepared to call

Engineering employers dug

a strike ballot, reports Reuter.

in their heels and refused to

raise their pay offer, while the

German Trade Union

Federation, the DGB, called on

tance". The national board of

the powerful is Metall union

Sunday for a "week of resis-

solder paste in surface mount technology.

Some markets were slightly sluggish as they shook off the Easter break. Japanese yen: The yen was

slightly higher at 112.95 yen to the dollar on the Tokyo foreign exchange market Friday, up 0.20 yen from the 113.15 finish a week earlier.

The Japanese currency hit a record high of 112.60 yen in Tokyo briefly on Tuesday, with investors encouraged by the Japanese government's biggest-ever economic recovery

package worth 13.2 trillion yen (117 billion dollar) adopted the same day.

meets in Frankfurt on Monday

to set a date for a ballot on

whether to hold a full-scale

strike - the first by workers in

Union Chairman, said last

week a vote could be held from

April 26 to 28 and all-out

strikes could begin before the

organised two waves of walk-

outs and demonstrations over

The IG Metall has already

end of the month.

Klaus Zwickel, Deputy

Eastern Germany in 60 years.

investors were watching Friday the outcome of talks in Washington between Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and US President Bill Clinton, dealers said.

Singapore dollar: The Singapore dollar sirmed against the US dollar, closing at 1.6275 to the Greenback Friday, compared with last week's rate of 1.6295.

Dealers said better than expected US jobless figures caused strong buying interest of the Greenback Friday, but the rise could not be sustained in the absence of fresh factors. Australian dollar: The

Australian dollar rose more

than one US cent by mid-

week, but had lost half its gains at Friday's close and dealers forecast that it would weaken further under pressure from a surging yen.

the employers' breach of the

three-year pay agreement

scaled in 1991, which would

have brought East German

metal workers' pay up to the

West German level by next

weekend for a return to the

negotiating table. But employ-

ers' leaders made it plain they

had no intention of giving

Dieter Kirchner, Chief

Politicians called at the

ENSURING PERFECT PRINTING: A screen used in the production of electronic assemblies is minutely examined with

high-tech scanning equipment to ensure perfection. It is just one of many tests and inspections carried out on precision

printing screens and masks by a British company. Screen printing plays an essential role in the production of many

electronics goods today. Application range from the production of complex hybrid circuits on ceramics, to deposition of

E German workers may begin wildcat

strike — first in 60 years

ground.

The Australian currency ended at 71.63 US cent, up 0.66 cent from the previous Friday's close.

But it was 0.45 cent below its high point of 72.08 cent on Wednesday, the day when the Australian share market went above 1,700 points for the first time since January 1990. On the Reserve Bank's trade

weighted index, which measures the dollar against a basket of other currencies, the Aussie closed at 53.2 points, an increase compared with its 52.6 points the previous Friday, but down from 53.5 on Thursday.

"The Australian dollar is looking soft", one trader said as the week ended.

Executive of the Gesamtmetall

Engineering Firms' Federation,

said they would not raise their

offer of a nine per cent pay

He told German Radio the

originally agreed pay rise of 26

per cent, which the employers

have cancelled, would have led

to "70,000 to 80,000 addi-

itself, over 20,000 workers

walked off the job on Friday.

In the engineering sector

tional redundancies".

-LPS photo

Taiwan dollar: Up six Taiwan' cent to close Friday at 26.04 to the US dollar on active trading from the previous week's finish of 26.1. Hong Kong dollar: Steady at

7.731-7.732 to the US dollar to which it is pegged. The effective exchange rate index closed Friday at 112.4 down from the previous week's 112.9.

New Zealand dollar: Down at 53.83 US cent from the previous week's close of 53.85 cent, after hitting six month highs during the week.

The local unit pushed past 54 cent mid-week, amid strong signs of economic recovery.

But offshore investment houses selling combined with local profit-taking to push the New Zealand dollar down to 53.75 by mid-Friday before recovering the week's close.

Thai baht: The baht was slightly firmer at the official mid-rate of 25.25 baht to the dollar, compared to last week's close at 25.27 baht.

Malaysian ringgit: The Malaysian dollar ended the week 30 points lower at 2.5815 to the dollar from 2.5785 the previous week on strong selling of the unit by offshore centres via Singapore.

Buying of the dollar by several major local banks to cover positions also dampened the currency's strength, dealers said.

South Korean won: The won

was up marginally at 795.70 to the dollar Saturday, 0.10 higher than the previous week's close of 795.80.

Dealers said an average 450 million dollar were traded daily, a 10 per cent increase in volume over the previous

The won is expected to remain stable well into next

Philippine peso: The peso fell to 26.059 peso to the dollar at Friday's close from 25.907 the previous week, as a campaign by Philippine exporters to bring the peso down appeared to be bearing fruit.

Indonesian rupiah: The rupiah ended the week lower at 2,071 rupiah to the dollar at Friday's close, compared to the previous week finish of 2,070.

from Y'slav bank BELGRADE, Apr 19: Two masked men carrying auto-

matic weapons crept through the roof into a bank's safe and ran off with cash worth about two million dollar, the daily newspaper Borba said Friday. reports AFP.

The bank robbers did not touch the gold or Yugoslav dinar found in the private Jugoskandik Bank. They tied and handcuffed seven security guards before running off. The police, arriving mo-

ments after the robbery, could

do no more than pick up some of the stray bills left on the streets as the robbers fled. The Jugoskandik Bank is

embrotled in a major financial scandal. Its owner, the multimillionaire Jezdimir Vasilievic fled to Israel in March.

migrants into the country as they bring about problems, including aids, Ghafar was quoted by the Malaysian national news agency as saying in Kuala Pilah, Sembilan. Last week, the government announced the freeze on the entry of foreign workers before the question of the current 224,000 jobless immi-