

## Four major trade powers claim

## Toronto meet paves the way for GATT deal by '93

TORONTO, May 15: Ministers representing the world's four major trade powers Friday said they paved the way for successful outcome this year of the protracted world trade liberalisation talks known as the Uruguay Round, reports AFP.

Japanese Trade Minister Yoshiro Mori, US trade representative Mickey Kantor, European Community trade commissioner Sir Leon Brittan and Canadian International Trade Minister Michael Wilson insisted they had made sufficient progress in Friday's one-day meeting here to speed up the negotiating process.

Wilson said the four ministers had decided to meet again on June 2 in Paris and on June 24 in Japan.

At those two meetings, he said, they believed they could sufficiently narrow their differences to enable the July

summit in Tokyo of the Group of Seven industrialised nations to agree on a package to be taken back to the Uruguay Round talks in Geneva.

Mori, however, hinted that outstanding problems still presented a considerable hurdle. He told reporters that he had offered new tariff cuts averaging 85 per cent on 770 specific industrial products — including electronics, pharmaceuticals and film.

This offer was in addition to a similar offer made last March on 1,000 specified products, he said.

But Friday's offer was contingent on further tariff cuts by the other trading partners.

And Mori also rejected outright specific proposals in a report earlier this week from Arthur Dunkel, head of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which would

force Japan to open up some of its agricultural markets, including rice.

This proposal, known as "tariffication," would translate import bans and quotas into tariff equivalents which would then be phased out.

Wilson, who also opposes tariffication, refused to comment on any specifics. Nevertheless, all four ministers expressed their pleasure at the progress they said they had made Friday.

"We have achieved everything we could possibly have wanted from this meeting," Brittan said.

Kantor added that he was "very pleased with the Japanese government's presentation."

Brittan refused to accept assertions from reporters that a paper published earlier this week by French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, re-

jecting an earlier EC-US agreement on farm subsidies and access especially for oilseeds, spelled the end of any hopes of an agreement on the crucial agricultural package in the Uruguay Round.

He insisted that all EC members of the G7 (Britain, France, Germany and Italy) "will speak with one voice" at the Tokyo summit.

Brittan said he would be discussing Balladur's paper when he meets the Prime Minister in Paris on Monday.

Wilson said the meeting had drawn up a "broad and ambitious market access package" covering both goods and services.

But like Kantor and Brittan, he refused to give any details.

He did add that he envisaged a possible separate meeting, before the Tokyo G7 summit, of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting nations.

## Italy's IRI chief steps down

ROME, May 15: The president of Italy's big government-owned group IRI, Franco Nobili, resigned on Friday in the wake of his arrest on Wednesday on corruption charges, a legal source said, reports AFP.

He was charged with "aggravated corruption" and violation of the law on government financing of political parties in connection with Italy's vast corruption scandal. The alleged offences occurred before he was named to head the IRI. He has said he is innocent.

## Per capita external debt in India stands at \$75

NEW DELHI, May 15: The Indian per capita external debt (excluding rupee and defence debt) was 75 US dollar at the end of September 1992, reports Xinhua.

India has a population of more than 800 million.

Indian Minister of State for Finance Ahrar Ahmed told the lower house of Parliament yesterday that India's total debt (excluding defence and Rupee debt) as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices stood at 21.4 per cent in 1990-91 and 27.3 per cent in 1991-92.

External aid was 1.3 and 1.9 per cent of India's GDP during 1990-91 and 1991-92 respectively, he said.

## Polish govt turns down Solidarity's wage demand

WARSAW, May 15: The Polish Government rejects the Solidarity Union's wage demands, while remaining ready to negotiate on reforming the education system and health services, which have been on strike for 10 days, Deputy Premier Pawel Laczowski told Parliament today, reports AFP.

He said the union will have to accept the fact that "wage changes, even the fairest ones, have to take the real budget possibilities into account."

Solidarity is getting ready for a general strike to try to force the Government to boost wages and to provide better financing in the state budget for education and health.

On Thursday, the Solidarity region called for a general strike in the area starting on May 20 to demand the resignation of the Suchocka Government.

## Nigeria seeks to ease \$27b debt burden

PARIS, May 15: The leader of the Nigerian transitional government, Ernest Shonekan, on a two-day official visit to France, appealed to creditor nations to ease his country's 27 billion US dollar foreign debt burden, reports Xinhua.

Speaking at the end of his visit yesterday, Shonekan said the eight billion dollar annual cost of servicing the debt could be reduced by 50 per cent. This should be agreed by the western creditor nations as part of their favourable treatment to the world's poorest nations, he maintained.

During his visit, the Nigerian leader met Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and officials of the Club of Paris, the grouping of creditor states.

Shonekan said that the Western Creditors had told him to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, saying that its approval would be decisive in rearranging his country's debt.

## G7 rejects Suharto's bid to address summit

TOKYO, May 15: The Group of Seven (G7) nations has not agreed to allow Indonesia's President Suharto to address their July summit to champion the cause of southern nations, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Friday, reports AFP.

A 37-strong ministerial committee of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) met this week in Bali and urged that Suharto, as NAM chairman, be invited to the annual summit of major industrialised nations to be held in Tokyo in July.

The request has been turned down for the moment although some members of the G7 — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — have agreed to meet Suharto individually, the

official said. Japan has agreed to act as broker between the north and south regional groups.

"Japan wants to play a mediating role between G7 and Suharto through its good offices to help reach a consensus, but as yet that has not been possible," said the Foreign Ministry official.

He added that Suharto's request was still a possibility but urged Jakarta to show more "flexibility" on the subject, without elaborating.

The G7 summit will take place on July 7-9. Russian President Boris Yeltsin will address the seven leaders in Tokyo, but only after the official summit has closed. Yeltsin made a similar address at last year's G7 summit in Munich.

## Palestinians lose \$100m in the first month of Israeli closure

JERUSALEM, May 15: Palestinian losses in the first month of an Israeli closure of the occupied territories reached nearly \$100 million dollar, according to a study published Friday by a Palestinian economist, reports AFP.

The indefinite closure imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the end of March, following a wave of attacks that left 15 Israelis dead, has forced nearly 120,000 Palestinians to lose their jobs inside Israel.

Khazem Shunar, the economic advisor of the Palestinians peace team, evaluated the Palestinian revenue losses in the territories in April at 66 million dollar.

He estimated losses for Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem at nine million dollar.

Shunar said that 30,000 inhabitants from the territories shopped daily in the Arabic sector of the old city before they were shut off.

The travel ban has also crippled trade inside the West Bank and between Gaza and the West Bank, costing the Palestinians nine million dollar in losses last month, Shunar said in the report published by the Palestinian daily Al-Quds.

The sale of products from the territories to Israel was also seriously hampered adding another 10.8 million dollar worth of losses to the Palestinian economy.

He estimated losses from tourism and transport revenues at six million dollar.

## US wants enforcement sanctions on fellow NAFTA members

WASHINGTON, May 15: President Clinton said Friday that US negotiators will push for supplemental agreements to a proposed free pact with Mexico and Canada that would provide for enforcement sanctions if a country failed to live up to its commitments, reports AP.

Clinton said US negotiators were working toward language that would allow a country to impose trade sanctions "for repeated and persistent violations" of environmental and worker rights under the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement.

NAFTA, which was negotiated last year by the Bush administration, would create the world's largest free trade zone by removing virtually all barri-

ers to trade and investment among the United States, Mexico and Canada.

However, Clinton has demanded that side agreements be negotiated before he submits the accord to Congress for approval. Officials from all three countries are scheduled to resume talks in Ottawa next Monday on the side deals.

"I believe the treaty has to have some enforcement provisions," Clinton said during a White House news conference.

All three countries would have equal representation on the commissions. If a persistent failure to enforce environmental or labour laws were found, the commission could send the issue to an arbitration panel, provided two of the three countries agreed.

## Russian budget gap may balloon to \$8b by June

MOSCOW, May 15: Russia's budget deficit could hit seven trillion rouble eight billion dollar by the end of June Interfax news agency said on Friday, reports Reuters.

It quoted Deputy Central Bank Chairman Valerian Kulikov as saying wage increases for state employees were to blame for the ballooning deficit.

Deputy Prime Minister Antoly Chubais said budget revenues for 1993 should amount to 20 to 22 trillion rouble (23 to 25 billion dollar), Interfax said, without giving a figure for spending.

President Boris Yeltsin announced salary increased and other benefits for various groups ahead of the April 25

referendum which gave him backing for his rule and reform policies.

Wages for state employees were raised by 90 per cent on May 1 to take account of inflation, which has been running at an average of more than 20 per cent a month this year.

Central bank officials have accused the government of sabotaging the budget with extra spending. Liberal government ministers say the bank has fuelled inflation with overgenerous soft loans to struggling state enterprises.

Interfax quoted unnamed experts as saying that, if current spending trends continued, the budget deficit could reach 17 trillion rouble (20 billion dollar), for 1993.

## Thai toy factory fire

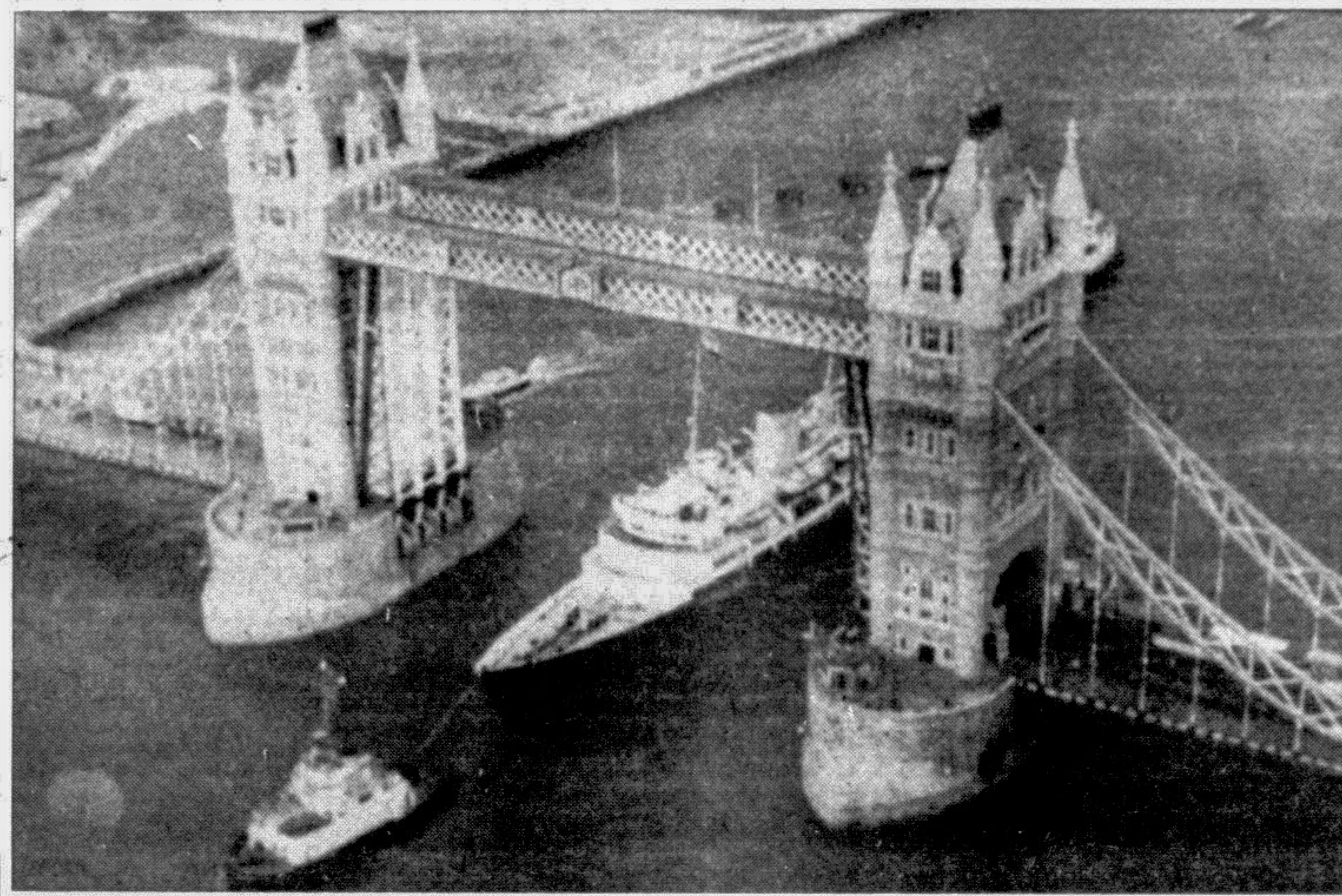
## US firms urged to share responsibility

WASHINGTON, May 15: US companies who bought from the Thai toy factory where over 250 people died in a fire earlier this week, must take their share of the blame said the President of the biggest US, labour federation on Thursday, reports AFP.

"These American companies cannot deny knowledge or responsibility for the abysmal working conditions in the factories that produce their goods," said AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland.

Indeed, those conditions are the reason they located production in Thailand in the first place. They can literally work people to death.

"The Kader factory near Bangkok, like so many others in that region of the world, was a death trap," he said.



The Royal Yacht Britannia passes under Tower Bridge as it departs the Pool of London May 14 after a three-day visit. The yacht is bound for Sunderland as part of a tour of Britain to commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic. The tour will conclude in Liverpool later this month. — AFP/UNB photo

## Hamletian dilemma haunts the Danes before important referendum

COPENHAGEN, May 15: Like William Shakespeare's indecisive Prince Hamlet, modern Danes are asking themselves whether to be or not to be — part of a closer European union, writes AP.

Their "no" last June halted progress toward giving the European Community a common currency, citizenship, central bank, and defense policy by 1999.

On May 18, the Danes answer again, voting on the same treaty, but with exemptions allowing them to opt out of the agreement's major provisions.

Britain has postponed its ratification until after the Danish vote, and the treaty cannot go into effect unless all 12 EC members ratify it. In the year since the rejection, European leaders have said what they will do if the Danes say "no" again.

Last June's rejection of the treaty hinged on 46,259 ballots, less than one per cent of the votes.

Tuesday's decision by 3,977 million voters — 13,000 more than last year because of newly eligible 18-year-olds — could be just as close.

"I'm still opposed to it," said Grethe Ingerslev, 33, a saleswoman who voted "no" last year. She fears the EC bureaucracy will interfere with Denmark's social welfare policies and that the trade bloc will become a military power.

"But I fear a second rejection will be very harmful for Denmark (economically). I don't think we can afford that. I'd better vote 'yes,' she said in reasoning worthy of Shakespeare's character.

Such ambivalence is reflected in polls that showed support for the treaty hovering at 50 per cent or below a week before the referendum, while the 15 per cent undecided voters slightly shifted toward the opposition, which ranged around 32 to 34 per cent. About five per cent say they

won't vote. The treaty failed last year in a vote of 50.7 to 49.3 per cent. Just like last year, political party leaders have been unable to count on agreement from their rank-and-file on the benefits of a "yes" vote.

But resting on the assurance that the exemptions they won in a December EC summit in Edinburgh would be enough to change Danes' minds, the pro-treaty campaign followed normal Danish election practice and opened its campaign after Easter.

Such confidence may have been misplaced. The "yes" side is much too positive and they are 100 per cent sure that their convictions are the right ones," said Gudrum Olsen, 40, a construction technician. The "no" side admits they have doubts.

They like some parts of European cooperation, other parts they don't. They are more realistic and honest."

By April the opponents — a collection of grassroots groups, rightists and leftists — were able to exploit the suspicion of EC bureaucrats. Treaty support in opinion polls dropped from 66 per cent right after the December summit to 45 per cent in April.

"I feel the exemptions are nothing but a smoke screen the European bureaucrats are hiding behind, ready to fool us," said an active opponent, Hanne Christensen.

The "no" side argues that the exemptions, written in a separate Edinburgh document, are not legally binding. This view got important support in early May when a memo by an EC lawyer, saying just that, was leaked to the British press.

A recent government report said rejection could force Denmark out of the EC, or hurt the economy and jobs by denying Danes access to more liberal cross-border trade and financing.

## Women celebrate 20 years in the London Stock Exchange

By Lee Rodwell, London Times Special to the Daily Star

Susan Shaw put on her black turban hat, kissed her two-year-old daughter Tania good bye and set off for work. She had deliberately chosen what she considered a "quiet" black and white outfit so that she would draw as little attention as possible.

But when you are breaking into a 200-year-old male bastion, attention is inevitable. And when Susan Shaw walked on to the floor of the London Stock Exchange at 0936 hours on Monday 25 March 1973, the stares and the brief burst of shouting confirmed that she was making history.

It is 20 years since Shaw — dubbed then by the press as the First Lady of Throgmorton street — became one of the first six women members of the Stock Exchange, and the first to make an appearance on the floor. Since then, of course, women have stormed the City in a variety of ways and many have reached senior levels.

In a recent round-up of Britain's top businesswomen the Sunday Times named 50 high-flyers operating within the so-called "Square Mile". All were full-time directors of a leading company or a non-executive director of at least two publicly listed companies. The catalogue of highly successful women included nine finance

directors — including Jane Barker, who is finance director of the London Stock Exchange itself — as well as eight bankers and fund managers.

Yet when Susan Shaw became Throgmorton Street's first female broker, women had yet to make their mark on the City and she was entering what had been an exclusively male preserve. Not surprisingly, she was very nervous. "I felt very small — knecs like jelly," she wrote in her diary. But the fact that she came from a theatrical family helped. She told herself: "Can't let the side down."

## Gallery Guide

Shaw had never had any ambitions to become a stockbroker — much less hit the headlines. Trained as a secretary, she became bored with shorthand and typing and began working as a gallery guide at the Exchange in 1961. However, after five years she was beginning to feel this was little more than a dead end.

Then Richard Bradshaw, senior executive with Thomas Clarke and Co, offered her a job and soon she was running private clients' portfolios. Even then she had no idea where this would lead her.

"Becoming a member of the Stock Exchange

was probably the furthest thing from my mind in those days," she said later. "I'd been a gallery guide for five years and thought I'd gone as far as I could. Then Mr Bradshaw stepped in and offered me a job. I went for three weeks and stayed 17 years. I was in the right place at the right time when admitting women became an issue."

As issues went, it had long been hotly debated. Bradshaw had led the fight to have women in the Stock Exchange, claiming that the younger members who opposed the idea were "afraid of competition and Eve's charm".

So with his support — and that of her husband Gavin, an industrial diamond specialist — Susan finally floored the Exchange. She left her office at the end of the first day, exhausted but exhilarated, bearing flowers and champagne from her clients.

"It was the proudest day of my life," she said later. "I went home that night and watched myself on television while doing the ironing."

## Celebration Lunch

Throughout the first week Shaw kept a diary and the entries bare witness to how hectic it will be. On Monday, after a celebration lunch at the Caprice, she returned to the floor of the

## Dollar, gold closes lower

NEW YORK, May 15: The US dollar closed lower against major foreign currencies Friday as dealers turned their attention to important developments next week in Europe's economy. Gold process fell slightly after hitting a 17-month high.

On the Commodity Exchange in New York, gold for current delivery fell 1.00 dollar a troy ounce to 367.70 dollar, a day after the metal surged 7.50 dollar an ounce on inflation concerns. In Tokyo, the dollar closed at 111.65 yen, down 0.03 yen from Thursday's close. In London the British pound was quoted at 1.5387 dollar, up from 1.525 dollar late Thursday, reports AP.

US industrial output picks up WASHINGTON, May 15: US industrial production, which stalled in March when a winter blizzard swept the East Coast, picked up again in April with a 0.1 per cent gain, the government said Friday. Analyst said it was another sign that the US economy, which had slowed during the first quarter in large part because of the harsh winter, was resuming modest growth this spring, reports AP.

## India's textile exports rise

NEW DELHI, May 15: India's textile exports showed an increase of 13.7 per cent in dollar terms to touch a record level of 6,590 million US dollar in 1992-93, compared with 5,797 million dollar the previous year. Local newspaper The Economic Times today quoted the Minister of State for Textiles, G Venkat Swamy, as saying that the export target for 1993-94 would represent an increase of 12 per cent over the performance in 1992-93 when actual exports had exceeded that year's target of 6,349 million dollar, reports Xinhua.

## Shanghai Airlines to buy Boeing jets

STATTLE, Washington, May 15: Boeing Co announced Friday that Shanghai Airlines had ordered five widebodied B767-300 jets worth 450 million dollar. China's first independent airline will use the new 263-passenger aircraft on domestic flights to Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, Boeing said in a news release, reports AFP.

## Taipei's firm to list share in China

TAIPEI, May 15: Taiwan-owned appliance maker will list its shares on the Shenzhen stock exchange, becoming what is believed to be the first 100 per cent Taiwanese-held firm to list in China, the parent company said on Friday. Tahann Kuen Enterprise Co Ltd, Xiamen has received approval for the listing from Shenzhen authorities, said Tsai Ghon, Sales Manager for the parent company. Tsann Kuen Enterprise Co, reports Reuters.

## Interest rates raised in China

BEIJING, May 15: The central bank announced Friday an increase in interest rates to cool off mounting inflation that could threaten China's fast-paced economic development. Economists have been urging the Peoples Bank of China to make such a move for months to stem steadily worsening inflation. China's retail price index rose 8.6 per cent in the first quarter, but inflation on major cities was nearly twice as high, reports AP.