

**WORLD AND NATION**

**Funky Winkerbean**



**SHOE**



**Inflation**

**Economic growth in surprising slump**

**Associated Press**  
 WASHINGTON — Economic growth slowed to a surprisingly weak 2.1 percent during the first three months of the year, while one measure of inflation spurted to its highest level in almost three years, the government reported Thursday.  
 The Reagan administration and many private economists called both statistics misleading, contending that the economic expansion is more robust and inflation far less of a menace than the Commerce Department figures seem to indicate.  
 Other analysts were less optimistic, warning that the unexpected weakness could translate into climbing unemployment rates as domestic industries lose further sales to a flood of foreign imports.  
 All sides agreed that the department's estimate of growth in the gross national product — the total output of goods and services — was

much lower than the 4 percent rate that had been widely expected for January through March.  
 The 2.1 percent gain was the weakest performance since a 1.6 percent rise from last July through September, a period of slumping growth, which was followed by a 4.3 percent rebound from October through December.  
 In other bad news, the report said that a measure of inflation tied to the GNP — the implicit price deflator — rose at an annual rate of 5.4 percent in the first three months of the year, the fastest clip since a 5.6 percent pace in the second quarter of 1982. This inflation measure had risen at a rate of just 2.8 percent in the final quarter last year.  
 White House spokesman Larry Speakes said that while the growth figure was lower than expected, "we continue to believe that the economy

is on a path of steady growth with low inflation."  
 Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige discounted the jump in the inflation figure, saying it was caused by some one-time factors, such as a government pay raise.  
 Private analysts agreed that the inflation figure was probably overstated, especially given the good showing in recent months in two better-known inflation measurements — the Consumer Price Index and the Producer Price Index.  
 The report blamed the weak growth on a surge in imports in the first quarter that robbed domestic manufacturers of sales.  
 The Commerce Department also reported Thursday that after-tax profits of the nation's corporations rose a slight 0.4 percent in the final three months of 1984, following a 5.7 percent decline from July through September.

**Soviet official assassinated in New Delhi**

**Associated Press**  
 NEW DELHI, India — Two men on a motorcycle roared up beside a Soviet diplomat's car Thursday and pumped several shots through the right rear window, killing him instantly, police reported. His wife, with whom he had been shopping, and his driver were slightly hurt by flying glass.  
 Police identified the diplomat as V. Khitichenko, 48, a senior engineer in the Soviet Embassy's Economic Affairs department. Embassy spokesman Vladimir N. Tsatsyn confirmed the identification, but in response to later telephone calls the embassy refused to give the victim's first name or answer questions.  
 The attack on Khitichenko was the latest in a series of killings or attempted killings of foreign diplomats in India over the past three years.  
 Police Commissioner Suryakant S. Jog said that, after the driver stopped the car, "the motorcyclists . . . pumped a couple of more rounds from the side and the front." He described the assassins as in their 20s and of unknown nationality.  
 Thakur Jagdish Singh, chief officer of a district police station, said the two men fired at least six shots from automatic pistols.  
 Jog said Khitichenko was hit four times. His wife, Nina, 43, and the driver were slightly injured by flying glass and treated briefly at a hospital, Jog said.  
 Deputy Police Commissioner B. K. Gupta reported that "witnesses said the (the assassins) were not Europeans."  
 No group claimed responsibility for the assassination and the motive was not immediately clear, Jog said.  
 The commissioner said the Khitichenkos, who have a son, had been in New Delhi for two years and were returning to their home in the embassy compound when the attack occurred at about noon.  
 Police are conducting a nationwide search for another Soviet diplomat, Igor Gezha, who disappeared last Sunday while jogging in a New Delhi park. Gezha, 37, was a third secretary in the embassy's information department.  
 India has admitted many refugees from the Middle East and southwest Asia, and terrorist activity has been a growing problem in recent years.

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