HANOI, Nov 26 : French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, urging Vietnam to open further to the outside world, said France would more than double its aid to Hanoi, reports Reuter.

Dumas, who arrived in Hanot with a 120-strong delegation, said France would boost direct aid this year to 95 million Francs from 45 million France in 1990.

He told a joint news conference with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam that France would also increase its cultural, scientific and technical cooperation with Victnam by 24 per cent to 42 million Francs.

Dumas said he told Vietnamese officials that France would help Hanot strengthen ties with the European Community and help it clear debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"We reaffirmed France's determination to support Vietnam's change and evolution in order to regain its place in the international arena now that events in Indo-China have changed," he said.

Vietnam took steps towards ending its isolation by pulling its troops out of Cambodia, supporting a UN-sponsored peace accord signed by Cambodia's warring factions and reaching out to non-communist countries in the region, Dumas said.

By practising an open policy towards countries in the region, not only to China but to ASEAN, Vietnam creates new conditions with the international community, Dumas said.

Vietnames Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet broke new ground in October with a visit to Singapore, Indonesia and Thai land, all members of ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations.

He and Do Muoi, the head of Vietnam's Communist Party. went to China in early November to normalise bilateral relations.

Split turns G-77 threat hollow

TEHRAN, Nov 26: Developing countries this weekend sent a defiant message to the United States and the European Cor munity over international trade talks, but deep splits in Third World ranks reduced it to a hollow threat, report Reuter.

"We are just swimming in a sea of meaningless words, said a Latin American envoy to a Tehran conference at which the Third World was supposed to draw up a common stand ahead of February's full session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The so-called Group of 77, which includes some of the world's poorest nations, warned rich nations that they should not try to strike a deal on the Uruguay round of trade talks behind the back of developing countries.

But after Latin American protests that the Group had no business interfering in the complex talks being held under the auspices of the general agreement on tariffs and trade, the message was so watered down that it meant nothing.

The only way the five-day conference secured a consensus was by adding a rider to its declaration on the talks saying this "should not be seen as inhibiting (GATT) negotiators."

EC-Singapore form association to boost trade

SINGAPORE, Nov 26: A European Community (EC) Business Association grouping eight nations has been formed in Singapore to boost bilateral trade, a statement said Monday, reports AFP.

The release from the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC), acting secretariat for the Association created earlier this month, said the organisation's main objective "is the two-way promotion of investment and trade between Europe and Singapore."

Trade between Singapore and EC nations totalled 46 billion Singapore Dollars (28 billion US) in 1990, the statement said.

The EC takes 19.5 per cent of the Island's exports and supplied 13 per cent of its imports, while about 1.400 European companies have invested about seven billion Singapore Dollars (4.2 billion

US) here. The EC Business Association acts as an "umbrella organisation" for the National Business Groups of Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

UN unaware of Iraqi oil sale

UNITED NATIONS, Nev 26: The Security Council's sanctions committee has no information about a report that Iraq is quietly exporting small quantities of refined oil prod ucts in defiance of UN sanctions, a member of the com mittee said, reports Reuter.

He was responding to questions about a report from Nicosia quoting Middle East diplomats as saying the oil products were being exported by road to Jordan and then on to Lebanon through Syria, Samall quantities were also being sent by road to Turkey, the report said

Although the quantities were small, they might significantly reduce Baghdad's 100 million Dollar a month food import bill, he report added.

A member of the Austrian UN Mission, which chairs the sanctions committee, told Reuters the committee was unaware of the report or of the alleged violation of UN sanctions.

He noted the committee did receive periodic reports

VIENNA, Nov 26 : Oil min-

from Jordan about limited quantities of oil and oil products that country was allowed to import from Iraq for its own use, "in the light of Jordan's unique and particular situa-

This was a preference to a dispensation that the commit-

Kuwait to sale oil to India

NEW DELIII, Nov 26 : Kuwait has announced that it had decided to approve a long term crude oil sale commitment to India at a price 1.50 US Dollars a barrel lower than the spot buying price of crude oil, Hindustan Times reported today, reports Xinhua.

In making the announcement, the Kuwait Oil Ministry declared that relations with India were important to Kuwait and in recognition of that the Emirate had decided to extend a preferential crude oil sale agreement to India.

tee granted to Jordan soon after UN sanctions were imposed on Iraq in response to its August 1990 invasion of

The Austrian diplomat said the latest report from Jordan to the sanctions committee that between showed September and 30, Jordan imported 169,182 tons of oil and 47,881 tons of oil derivatives. He said this was consistent with previous monthly quantities. .

Although the Security Council adopted a resolution in August allowing Iraq to export up to 1.6 billion Dollar worth of oil and oil products over a six-month period to buy food and other civilian necessities Baghdad refuses to implement the scheme, which it considers a violation of its sovereignty.

Under the scheme, all proceeds from the oil sales would have to be paid into a UN account, with about one third being funnelled off for war reparations and to meet other war debts.

On the occasion of the publication of the Task Forces Report Professor Rehman

Sobhan accompanied by some conveners and the publisher presented the set of four volumes of the report to the Chief Justice and former Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. Picture shows from left to right: Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir (Chairman Tariff Commission). Salahuddin Ahmed (former Secretary). the Chief Justice, Professor Rehman Sobhan, M Munir-Uz-Zaman (former Secretary). Mr Mohiuddin Ahmed the publisher (UPL) and Mahbubul Amin Khan, Director BIBM.

OPEC divided over market outlook conference to discuss steps to

isters of the Organisation of limited resumption of ship secure orderly reintegration of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) appeared divided Monday over the oil market outlook for the next six months and how to handle an early resumption of exports by Kuwait and, possibly Iraq, reports AFP.

Remarks by several OPEC ministers ahead of the organisation's winter conference, to be formally opened here Tuesday, indicated that a large number of member countries, perhaps most, differ with Saudi Arabia, now accounting for over one-third of OPEC's output, on both scores.

Saudi Arabia was reported Monday to be calling for a higher overall production ceiling for the next three months, while ministers of several other countries said they favoured maintaining the current limit.

Ministerial aides said the majority were worrying about the prospect of Kuwatt returning to the market as a significant exporter by the spring of next year, coinciding with the normal seasonal decline in demand.

They also did not rule out ments by iraq, still under a United Nations embargo imposed at the start of the Gulf

This could raise the specter of oversupply and downward pressure on prices, which would be especially harmful to the poorer OPEC producers or those without spare capacity.

These countries, which include Algeria, Nigeria, Libya and others, therefore want the

New executives of BFLEA

New executive body of the Bangladesh Finished Leather Exporters' Association (BFLEA) was elected for next 2-year term on Monday. A K M Rahmatullah, M Nasir and Sycd Z H Faisal were elected President and Vice-President respectively. Alhaj Rezaul Karim Ansari has been elected treasurer. The elected five members are— M A Matin, Bazlur Rahman, M Ahmed Ali Mia, M A Rashid Bhuyian and Md Rahimullah, says a press

Kuawit - and perhaps Iraq and, if need be, how to reduce OPEC's overall exports in line with actual second-quarter demand.

However, the Saudis have rejected this approach in advance, an authoritative Nicosiabased oil weekly said Monday.

The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said Saudi Arabia's position was based on the view that Kuwait's increased output will be "phased in pradually" that Soviet oil exports are set to continue to "decline sharoly," and that Iraqi oil exports "will not reenter the market insignificant volumes so long as Saddam Hussein remains in power" in Baghdad.

MEES said the Saudis therefore want the ministers to concentrate on the first quarters of 1992. When demand from industrial and developing consumer countries is expected to rise.

Last September, OPEC members set a notional production ceiling of 23.65 million barrels a day (MBD) until year-end.

S. Arabia halts oil talks with US

WASHINGTON, Nov 26: Saudi Arabia has halted negotiations with the US to provide the US strategic petroleum reserve with oil, sources familiar with the talks said, reports Reuter.

Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer sent a letter to US Energy Secretary James Watkins earlier this month saying his government had "no basis at this time" to continue negotiations because Saudi Arabia had no surplus oil the sources said.

The letter said that at this time (the Saudis) don't have the basis for working on this matter, " one source said.

The US began discussing the possibility of leasing oil from Saudi Arabia a few years ago as a way to fill the reserve for a fraction of the cost of purchases. At the time, the Saudis were producing six million Barrels Per Day (BPD) with the capacity to produce another two million BPD but

they were unable to sell the Although Saudis viewed a

leasing deal as a way to make money on surplus oil, they primarily viewed such a plan as a way to strengthen relations with the US, the source

"From the Saudis" perspective, it (would) destroy the myth that the Saudis can hold the US hostage over a barrel of oil" and reduce the likelihood of an oil import quota, he said.

These days, however, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Saudis produces 8.2 million BPD of oil and sell all of it, which reduces the financial incentive to pursue a leasing agreement.

"It doesn't make sense for any producer to be giving (the reserve) a barrel of oil and getting two Dollars a year for it when he could be selling it and

getting 20 Dollars instantly. unless you have spare capacity," the source said, adding that the Saudis could have surplus oil in six to 12 months.

Another source familiar with the negotiations said the termination appeared to be "fairly abrupt". He said Nazer's letter "did

not really contain any overtures that could lead to a resumption of negotiations."

The US strategic reserve was conceived in the 1970s to protect against oil price shocks similiar to those caused by OPEC in 1973 and 1979. The emergency supply is stored in underground salt caverns in Texas and Louisiana.

The reserve holds about 600 million bartels of oil. Congress has horised an increase to one thon barrels but has not appropriated money for the purchases.



Peter Claussen, Jute Adviser of the German government called on Jute Minister Brig (Retd) A S M Hannan Shah at his office on Tuesday.

India moves to gain Soviet women suffer from HIVESWIS reform

MOSCOW, Nov 26: Women are among those suffering the most as the Soviet Union stumbles towards a market economy, the Director of the Moscow Labour Exchange Igor Zaslavsky said, reports Reuters.

About 77 per cent of all those unemployed in Moscow are women, Zashivsky told the newspaper Pravda.

He said about 50 per cent of the women in Moscow who have managed to keep their jobs earn less than their hus-

"Problems are being solved at the expense of women. Preparations are being made in Moscow to prohibit employers from firing women who are the only bread winners in the family", he said.

The Soviet Union on July 1. began handing out unemployment benefits, burying the 60year-old maxim that he who does not work does not eat.

Soviet economists have predicted that 10 to 12 million people, or eight per cent of the labour force, are expected to be out of work by the end of the year.

Zaslavsky said large numbers of unemployed are economists - who specialised in central planning - engi neers, technicians and librari-

Asia-Pacific states must reduce dependence

BANGKOK, Nov 26: Countries in the Asia-Pacific region must reduce their dependence on transnational corporations (TNCs) which still dominate primary commodity markets in the region, a senior United Nations official said here on Monday, reports

The call came at the start of a meeting organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to explore ways of increasing primary commodity producers' bargaining strength and maximising their benefits in international trade.

"The continued dependence of ESCAP member countries upon participation of TNCs in the international trading of primary commodities is understandably a matter of great concern," said Sciko Takahashi, deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. While the Asia-Pacific re-

gion is the largest producer and exporter of some of the world's primary commodities between 60 and 90 per cent of the marketing of all primary commodity exports in the region is controlled by TNCs, according to the United Nations.

"ESCAP member countries should formulate and apply policies which enhance the transfer of marketing knowhow from TNCs in areas such as international marketing, the development of market intelligence services, Takahashi recommended.

invoctore' confidence Commence said, "in a large country of our NEW DELIII, Nov 26 : India size, I think there will always

is making a bold bid to win a debilitating war with sepa ratists in three border states to instil confidence among wary foreign investors, senior officials said, reports Reuter. Prime Minister PV

Narasimha Rao said he would be discussing security issues at a third world summit in Venezucia. "We have to discuss these

things" Rao said, when asked if he planned to allay widespread fears over violence and instability in India at the Caracas meeting of the Group of 15 developing countries convened to discuss economic cooperation.

Senior ministers expressed support for the army's recently stepped up anti-guerilla operations in Assam, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and said if tough measures were not taken now foreign investors would remain wary of coming to India.

Finance Minister Manmohan Singh said separatist violence was causing concern among foreign investors, but be some problems. Of course, we didn't have these problems, we would move fasters" in luring investors, Singh told Reuters. -"It's time for tough action

or we'll lose the initiative forever," said Chandulal Chandrakar, Congress party spokesman.

tough line by Defence Minister Sharad Pawar. The threat to the Unity and integrity of the country has been contained through strong action," Pawar told reporters last week.

Chandrakar was echoing a

The bloodiest revolt is in Punjab, where militants demand a separate homeland for India's 14 million Sikh minor-

In the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir Indian security forces have had running battles with Muslim militants that have killed more than 5,000 people in the last two years.

UK awaits Iraqi word to release assets

LONDON, Nov 26: Britain said it was awaiting formal authorisation from Iraq before freeing 70 million Sterling in Iraqi assets to pay for humanitarian goods ordered from Britain, reports Reuter.

Foreign office and department of trade and industry (DTI officials said the 70 million sterling, of Iraqi assets Britain said it would unfreeze in return for the weekend release of Briton Ian Richter was not a random figure.

The officials said the sum represented the total value of orders for humanitarian goods, including food and medicine, placed by Iraq, with British companies since April when the United Nations exempted such items from sanctions against Iraq. Export licenses had already

been approved, one said. It had

previously been reported that the unforzen funds would be used to pay for goods yet to be ordered.

The orders for the humanitarian supplies, exempted from UN sanctions against Iraq for the Gulf War, had not, been filled as Iraq had been unable to specify how it would pay for the goods.

Another official said the next step would be formal authorisation from Iraq to go ahead and use the unfrozen assets to pay for the orders.

The government would also need Iraq to specify which of its British bank accounts should be debited.

A DTI official said the 70 million Sterling included about 40 million Sterling in food, 20 million sterling in medical supplies and the rest in public health-related equipment.

Countries trying to join EC face a long wait

Countries trying to join the European Community (EC) could face a long wait if the current 12 members states fail to agree on closer monetary and political links at a key summit next month, officials said Sunday, reports Reuter.

BRUSSELS, Nov 26

They said the 17-member European Commission, the EC's executive, had agreed during an informal closeddoors weekend session that a failure at the summit in the Dutch town of Maastricht would preclude any early action on applications by Austria, Sweden and others.

Although the ground rules

for negotiations with potential entrants are decided by the 12 governments, the Commission is the only EC body empowered to conduct the accession talks. The officials said external

relations commissioner Frans Andriessen had found board agreement among his colleagues for his thesis that the EC should try to deal with potential applicants multilaterally, grouping them according to specific common interests or situations. Such a pattern has been set already in negotiations between the EC and the seven countries common market, the European Economic Area (EEA).

Economic recession rings warning bells in White House

WASHINGTON, Nov 26 The US economy is trying to find its way after a period of decline and aimlessness as consumers remain in hiding and political warning bells are ringing in the White House. reports Reuter.

Economists generally agree that the economy is badly under the weather. But they differ on how serious the malady is or how long it will continue.

Some take the view that the worst is over and an upturn is under way. Others believe that the economy could drift back into recession, causing what is

commonly called a" double

A National Association of Economists survey, released on Thursday, showed the group was more troubled about the economy than at the time of its last review in August. But only about 10 per cent expected it to turn down again in a double dip.

The vast majority anticipated a subdued recovery. "Despite recent disappoint-

ing economic news, most forecasters still feel that a recovery is under way.," the survey concluded, adding that "conviction

among the panelists is nearly universal that such a recovery will prove less robust than In such an environment,

and with President George Bush looking to the presidential election next year, it is not surprising that finger pointings is a national pastime. Democrats blame Bush for

tight-fisted banks, which

blame overzealous regulations

and so on.

has painted itself into a very nasty box," said Lynn Michaelis, President of the Economists Association. the economic woes, Bush blames Congress, they both blame the Federal Reserve, the US central Bank, which blames

It seems that little can be done in the short term to help recovery - a disturbing feeling which is battering stock and bond markets and worrying businessmen. The fact is the government

In the past, policy-makers would have unshackled government spending, pumping money into the economy to get it moving, or cut taxes as a way of igniting consumer spending.

But a spending spree

throughout the 1980s has left a mountain of debt and huge deficits, ruling out or making very difficult any big spending plans or tax cuts. At the same time, con-

sumers seem depressed, worried about their jobs. they are keeping their pocketbooks shut. But some analysts argue that

the current malaise is milder than past recessions, although spread more evenly throughout the economy- touching whitecollar workers who previously felt immune from slowdowns.

On Friday Bush met a group

of private economists at the White House to get their views on the course ahead. The economists told him

the central bank should lower interest rates again to help stimulate the economy, economist Feldstein said.

Possible tax cuts were also discussed during the meeting with the President and several top US officials, said Felstein, a former chief of the President's Council of Economic Advisers under Ronald Reagan.

"There's a range of views but there was a fair amount of consistency

Economic growth in '92 will be disappointing

TOKYO, Nov 26 : An anticipated recovery in the world economy is not happening and economic growth in 1992 will be disappointing, with this year one of the worst since 1945, the World Bank's Chief conomist said today, reports Reuter.

Lawrence Summers, who is also Vice President of the Bank, told an economic seminar that output in the develop ing world was expected to fall this year for the first time since 1950.

He is in Tokyo to attend a meeting of the G-7 council, a gathering of former and current economic officials of the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations - the United States, Japan, Britain, Germany, France, Canada and Italy,

While some official forecasts saw restoration of moderate world economic growth in the 2.5 to 3.0 per cent range in 1992, recent developments, particularly in the United States, were alarming, Summers said.

A wide range of indicators suggested that an anticipated pickup in economic activity was not occurring, he said.

But slower growth was due to individual conditions in varfous countries, he said.

"In these circumstances, there is no compelling case for concerted international action, he said.

Pak sugar producers urge govt for import ISLAMABAD, Nov 26 : Pak-

istani sugar manufacturers have urged the government to check imports of sugar to save the local industry from collapsing, the official agency APP said Monday, reports AFP. The agency quoted un-

named trade sources as saying sugar imports of 433,320 tons in 1990-91, when the country itself registered record domestic production, had pushed the market into a sluggish

If the prevailing market conditions continued, the local sugar industry could face disaster, the sources told APP.

The domestic manufacturers expected more imports because world market prices were favourable to importers, who have been exempted from customs duty since September.

The manufacturers were perturbed over what they called protection for importers and the foreign sugar industry at the cost of the local producers, APP said.

India rules out privatisation of banks

NEW DELIII, Nov 26: The Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh today categorically ruled out privatisation of the nationalised banks but indicated that the banking system would be restructured to improve its functioning and profitability, reports PTI.

"Regardless of any recommendations, the government has taken a decision not to privatise the nationalised banks," Singh informed the Rajya Sabha amid cheers from the members.

The Finance Minister who was replying to H S Hanspal during the question hour agreed with the members that there were complaints regarding working and profitability of the banks. "Our banking system must

standard. We are conscious of the fact that there are a lot of lacunae. It will be our effort to deal effectively with the problems," he said. India-Italy jt

come up to the world class

venture on textiles NEW DELHI, Nov 26

Benetton of Italy has signed a 50-50 joint venture with India's Delhi Cloth Mills (DCM) Ltd. to market and export Benetton products from India, the Economic Times said Tuesday, reports AFP. Under the agreement signed Sunday between

Benetton Group Chairman Luciano Benetton and DCM's Vinay Bharat Ram, the company will set up a knitting. dyeing and processing facility, and subsequently invest in production facilities for Benetton's other product lines. Benetton already distributes garments in India under an ex-

isting franchise which will not be affected by the new company, the Times said. Eventually the joint-venture plans to market its full range

of products including lingerie, shoes, watches, household linen, perfumes and stationery. it added.