Pak carpets carve a niche abroad

by Muhammad Luqman from Islamabad

The Pakistani hand-knotted carpets with exquisite designs, beautiful colour combinations and excellent craftsmanship of wavers, have carved a big niche in the international rug market.

According to the data available, in 1990-91 the exports of carpets stood at Rs 5,000 million (\$200 million)-USA and European countries are the major markets of Pak carpets. The competition is growing tougher day by

However, the competitors in this industry, like Romania, and Nepal, in addition to traditional competitors India, Turkey, China and Iran, are putting formidable challenge to Pakistani carpets.

"The devaluation of currencies and the provision of substantial incentives to exports in the neighbour countries has added to our difficulties," says Yaqqob H. Salehji, Chairman, Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA).

During the last decade, the prices of Pakistani carpets in international market, on an average have fallen by \$20 per square meter. In 1980-81, the average price of Pakistani carpets was \$82 per square meter which fell to \$62 per square meter, in 1990-91.

"The emergence of new competitors with low quality carpets, our emphasis on bulk exports with least consideration of value added products and lack of contact with the buyers are the major causes of the decline," says Khawaja Talha Zubair of Pak-Punjab Carpets.

In this scenario, the emphasis from the price-competition should be shifted to the non-price oriented strategies so that this luxury item could make its place by satisfying the needs of the potential buyers, despite its higher price.

The innovation in designing and colour scheme can steer the carpet industry out of present crunch.

There is need for establishing carpet design training institutes in the country so that the carpet weavers could tune themselves to new trends prevailing in the international market," says Mahmood Ahmad of Tufail Oriental Carpets.

The material used in weaving a carpet includes wool yarn, silk dyes, cotton and colours. Being the basic ingredient of carpet, use of better wool, improves the quality of the

"Both foreign (mostly imported from New Zealand) and local wool is used in making carpets in the country," says Mahmood Ahmad.

The New Zealand wool, all spinned, costs Rs 450-500 (about 20 dollars) for a 4.5 kilograms of pack where as the same quantity of local wool costs Rs. 200-450. Proper care of sheep and goats can help achieve autarky in raw material

Apple's share

in US soars

improved its share in the US

portable computer market

with the introduction of its

Power Book family of products:

captured 39 per cent of the

market, relegating the ex-

leader Toshiba to second

In the desktop system cate-

gory. Apple is also leading with

about 20 per cent of the total

market. The Apple PC sales

which went down 15 per cent

in 1990-91 have shot up by 65

per cent this year, according

Quandra outperformed almost

every other machine in the

category. LC and Classic - two

Apple products have been

performing better than equiva-

The total personal com-

puter market expanded by four

per cent in US against 1990

sales figures, according to a

survey conducted by an inde-

pendent US firm. The survey

also reveals that sales of IBM

declined by 20 per cent of

lent their competitors.

On the speed front, Mac

to a press release.

place.

The new machines have

Apple Computer Inc has

"By imparting training to the farmers, we can increase this commodity to a great extent," says Dr Sadaqat Hayat Hanjara, an animal husbandry expert.

It is believed that chemical dying shortness the life of a carpet. The exponents of this theory consider vegetable dyes more suitable for this purpose.

"Vegetable dyes not only increase the life of a carpet but also add more attraction to the foreign buyers," says liyas Butt, an exporter. Imran of Imran Oriental Carpets has pro-

duced a carpet by using vegetable dyes. A carpet, I have got, made in four and a half years, which has a knottage of 3,600 per square inch and is vegetable dyes," he ex-

As the vegetable dyes are expensive and difficult to be used on a large scale, so this

idea has not attracted the manufacturers: "It is impossible to use vegetable dyes while manufacturing carpets on a commercial scale,

says Mahmood Ahmad. The carpet weaving is not only an art, but also a source of livelthood for about two mil-

lion people of both sexes in the country. An exporters mostly gets the weaving done on contract. The contractor hires the weavers, mostly women and children. This business is mainly spread in the small towns of Punjab like Sangla Hil, Jaranwala, Hafizabad, Daska, Narowal, D.G khan and other parts of the country.

The daily wages totally depend on the quality, and quantity of work. A trained worker can earn Rs. 100 (\$4) a day," says a manufac-

This thing of beauty does not bring joy to the weavers. The continuous sitting for eight hours and setting of the wool dust in the lungs causes diseases. The children who indulge in this profession at early age, remain usually un-

in this scenario, when there is decline both in volume and value of Pakistani carpets abroad, the presence of importers of oriental rugs from America and Europe at a recently concluded hand knotted carpet exhibition was a good omen for the carpet industry.

"Business worth \$28 million was transacted at the exhibition, a record in the history of exhibitions, " says an organiser of the exhibi-

New designs and colours were seen in both Persian (double knot) and Mouri Bokhara (single knot style) at the exhibition. Some pieces were breath taking in their beauty and style. But this was a fraction of what the Pakistan carpet industry is capable of.

This tough time for the industry can only be tackled by adopting innovative techniques on the part of the manufacturers and the provision of incentives to the exporters by the government.

Business briefs

ADB launches HK dollar bond: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Friday launched a first-ever 500 million Hong Kong dollar (64.6 million US) bond issue in a gesture of confidence in the British colony's future, reports

The seven-year bonds, bearing a coupon of 8.90 per cent payable semi-annually, were priced at 100.25 per cent and listed in the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the bank's Manila headquarters said in a statement.

83 kg gold seized at Karachi: Pakistan customs officials have seized 83 kilograms of gold at Karachi airport, local press reported Sunday according to Xinhua from

The large amount of gold was recovered from the toilets of a flight of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) coming from Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, the report said, without specifying the time for the capture of the gold

4 held with 2 tonnes of marijuana: A Dutch national and three Thai men have been arrested near Bangkok with two tonnes of marijuana, police said Sunday, reports AFP from Bangkok.

Lee Cheng Chong, a Dutch national, and three Thai accomplices, arrested on Saturday in Samut Prakarn province, will face a jail term of not less than 15 years if found guilty of trafficking in narcotics.

China to attend OPEC meeting: China, a non-member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), will attend a meeting of the body in Vienna next week, the China Daily said Sunday, reports AFP.

China National Petroleum Corp Vice President Zhang Yongyi left Beijing Saturday for Austria to represent Beijing at the meeting on Wednesday, the English-language newspaper

Miyazawa praises Delhi's steps, to send team to study aid

Reforms to boost India's growth: ADB

MANILA, Apr 12 : Sweeping reforms of India's economy will boost long-term growth after a turbulent period in 1991 because of the Gulf war, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Saturday, reports Reuter.

A package of stabilisation measures, the deregulation of much of industry and steps to make the trade system more market-oriented will produce a more efficient economy, the bank said in its outlook report for 1992.

"It is hoped that the policies will have a favourable impact on long-term growth. although it is recognised that it may take some time for industry to adjust to the wideranging deregulation process," the bank said.

"It is projected that the economy will return to a higher growth path, reasonable

Sharif involved

in laundering

of illegal

money: Benazir

KARACHI, Apr 12:

Opposition leader Benazir

Bhutto's Pakistan People's

Party (PPP) accused Prime

Minister Nawaz Sharif's gov-

ernment on Saturday of in-

money, reports Reuter.

volvement in laundering illegal

passed by the PPP's central

executive committee followed

fears expressed in the United

States that Pakistan's plans to

sel Foreign Currency Bearer

Certificates (FCBC) abroad

could help launderers of drug

Pakistan dismissed the

fears but suspended its plans

while seeking permission from

local regulatory agencies in the

United States and other coun-

Pakistani government ad-

vertisements published in

some US newspapers had said

no questions would be asked of

buyers of the FCBCs about the

The PPP resolution said the

advertisements established "in

incontrovertible terms the in-

volvement of Pakistani rulers

in the drug and other illegiti-

Beijing plans

more night-time

programmes

for tourists

Tourism Administration is to

increase various kinds of

night-time tourism pro-

grammes for overseas tourists

from April 20, reports Xinhua.

the Tourism Administration,

the night-time tourism pro-

grammes include bright

Changliang Square (between

the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel

Beijing and Liangmahe

Mansion), Golden Night in

Xiyuan Hotel, Delicacy Center

for tourists and other pro-

grammes sponsored respec-

tively by Beijing Hotel, Grand

Hotel, Jianguo Hotel, Hotel

Beijing-Toronto, Yanjing Hotel

and some other hotels along

the Chang'an Avenue, the main

East-West Street in the center

of the city.

According to an official of

BEIJING, Apr 12: Beijing

source of their funds.

mate trades."

tries to sell the FCBCs there.

The charge in a resolution

able balance of - payments sit-

uation." New Delhi has abolished most remaining import licences for raw materials and intermediate and capital goods and streamlined trade regulations designed to protect its infant industries after independence in 1947.

Regulations were pruned from four books running to over 800 pages to about 85 pages, said Kishore Shah, President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Imports of consumer goods will still be restricted but most government trade monopolices have been removed, except for key items such as petroleum, fertilizers and edible oils.

This will go a long way towards reducing the anti-export bias of the trade regime and increasing its transparency."

India's gross domestic

product, which grew by only two per cent in 1991 because of the Gulf war, is now expected to rise by 4.3 per cent this year and by 4.8 per cent in 1993 as the reforms begin to have their desired effect, the

But growth would be constrained by tight monetary and fiscal policies and a balance-ofpayments situation 'that will remain difficult until commercial capital inflows resume significantly and export growth improves substantially."

The ADB urged vigorous reforms to raise more taxes by shifting the source from trade tariffs to domestic taxes. New Delhi must also remain

committed to reforms in trade, industry, finance and energy for the measures to succeed.

The reforms "should impart dynamism and efficiency to the growth process and provide a solid foundation for higher industrial and overall growth" in the coming decade, the ADB predicted.

Earlier report from Tokyo Japanese Prime adds: Minister Kiichi Miyazawa praised India's economic reforms on Friday and promised Finance Minister Manmohan Singh he would send a mission to study aid, foreign ministry officials said.

In talks with Miyazawa and Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, Singh said India needed bilateral cash loans to speed up its economic reform as well as investment from the International Mone tary Fund and the World Bank.

Miyazawa told Singh he welcomed India's 'dramatic' reforms and said a government

aid mission would visit India this month to make feasibility

studies. Miyazawa said the Japanese government and business circles were impressed at the free-market, pro-investment and austere budget reforms

India started last year. Singh also gave Miyazawa a letter from Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, who said he would like to visit Tokyo in

June. Rao recently said he wanted to visit Japan in June to com-memorate the 40th anniversary of their diplomatic rela-

Officials quoted Miyazawa as telling Singh he personally would not forget the friendly stance India took towards Japan in the aftermath of World War Two.

Singh was in Tokyo on an unofficial five-day visit which started on Wednesday.

Lanka plans tea promotion tour

COLOMBO, Apr 12: Minister of Plantation Industries Rupa Karunatilake will lead a delegation to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria to promote the exports of Sri Lankan teas to those countries, reports

The battered Sri Lanka tea industry is reportedly facing increasing pressures from Indian teas in the Middle East markets, to which India is diverting a larger volume of her exportable tea due to the sharp fall in her exports to the

former Soviet Union. It is reported that two highlevel delegations from India have recently visited the Middle East countries in an effort to increase her market

Sri Lankan low-grown teas which were fetching premium prices for over a decade owing to Middle East demand have recently suffered a serious setback, according to a spokesman of the Sri Lankan Tea Board.

Although the high and mid grown tea prices at last week's

auction moved up to the levels of March 1991, the low-grown tea prices have plummeted 18 rupees (about 0.4 US dollar) per kilogram and below the price of the corresponding period of last year, the spokesman said.

If the low-grown tea prices are allowed to slide further, it will cause serious economic problems to the country as most of the new tea areas and small holdings are located in the low-grown area in Sri

Japan cabinet upholds rice ban

TOKYO, Apr 12: Japan's cabinet approved a report Friday which continues to oppose opening the country's rice market to imports while calling for revisions to the latest proposals to reform world agricultural trade. reports AFP

The annual report by the agriculture, forestry and fisheries ministry also warned that aberrations in climate, including the current El Nino phenomenon in the Pacific region. would lead to a decline in world cereal output this year.

"We cannot be optimistic about the world food supply." the report said.

Droughts brought on by the El Nino phenomenon are causing a "drastic" reduction in the wheat and corn harvests in the United Stats and Australia. two of Japan's biggest sources of agricultural products.

Indonesian rice harvests are also being reduced by drought as are grain harvests in China by heavy rains.

Drought is also adversely affecting grain harvests in the Urals, northern Kazakhstan and southern Ukraine, it said. In Japan alone last year,

unusually low temperatures and three major typhoons caused 920 billion yen (seven billion dollar) in crop damages. The report also noted the

widening gap between rich and poor countries in terms of population and food consumption, along with the growing demand for food and feed grains as the world population increases.

As a result of all this, the worldwide ratio of wheat stocks is expected to fall from 24.5 per cent at the end of last

year to 22.3 per cent at the end of this year.

The food grain ratio is forecast to fall from 16.6 per cent to 15.5 per cent, the rice ratio from 17.1 per cent to 15.2 per cent and the soyabean ratio from 21.5 per eent to 20.5 per cent, the report warned. The idea of replacing vari-

ous import restrictions on farm products, as proposed by Arthur Dunkel, Director General of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) remains "unacceptable" to the ministry. "Japan must remains selfsufficient in rice," it said.

The report also noted that the United States and Australia had basically accepted the proposal while the European Community (EC) wanted cer-

Now 800-seater jumbos!

TOKYO, Apr 12: The world's two biggest aircraft makers are developing super-jumbos with up to 800 seats, with three Japanese airlines as major potential buyers - but Japan may buy only a few, industry analyses said, reports Reuter.

The airlines might not buy more than a handful because of the lack of appropriate airports in Japan and because they want to use the jumbos on only a few profitable domestic routes, the industry analysts

Boeing Co and Airbus Industries have said they plan to develop 600 to 800-seater super jumbo planes by the early 2000s.

International Coffee Organi

sation (ICO) Council had

agreed to relaunch negotia-

tions on a new price-support-

ing pact based on a universal

quota system only prompted a

brief hike, before profit-taking

marked in New York and fur-

ther destabilished the trend

here, before sentiment the

selling had been overdone

prompted a slight rally,

traders and analysts however

maintained their cautious atti-

tude, pointing to the many

hurdles awaiting ICO dele-

ducers is going to be the most

delicate task, analysts said.

Brazil is expected to resist any

attempt by consumers - 'de-

Quota sharing among pro-

gates in their negotiations.

Losses were particularly

reversed the trend.

tain sections to be revised to ease the impact on its protectionist farm policies. Other countries, including

fication. "In consideration of such problems as imbalanced profits between importing and exporting countries," the report recalled, 'Japan has taken the

South Korea, also oppose tari-

position that some revision should be made." As for Japan's affluent farmers, who tend to drive mercedes rather than tractors, the report noted an in-

crease in large-scale farming.

But it said the 3.79 million farm households-six per cent of the working population in 4 1990, down from nine per cent in 1980 - were still cultivating an average of only one hectare (2.6 acres).

And the number of households cultivating five hectares (13 acres) or more is still less than one per cent.

To maintain the vitality of agriculture, we need to have younger generation, to secure successors," a ministry official The report acknowledged

that the liberalisation of beef imports, long pressed by the United States and other countries and finally realized from April last year, had sent beef prices lower while boosting imports. "Although the price of do-

mestically produced highgrade beef, such as Japanese black cattle, remains high, the price of dairy cattle beef has fallen. The latter represents 60 per cent of total beef production and must heavily compete with imported beef," it

India world's top sugar producer NEW DELHI, Apr 12: India

has become number one sugar producer in the world with its 1991-92 sugar production topping 12.04 million tons, reports Xinhua.

This was stated by K L Lenka, Minister of State for Agriculture, in parliament last week according to local press.

Sugar production in 1990-91 aggregated 11.9 million tons as against 11 million tons in 1989-90.

He said India exported 250,000 tons of sugar last year. There still remains a great potential for sugar production in India, the Minister added.

India urges plan to raise tourist flow in S Asia

NEW DELHI, Apr 12 : Indian Minister of State for Tourism MOH Farooq has called upon the South Asian members of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) to prepare an action plan to augment tourist traffic in the region through collaborations, reports Xinhua.

inaugurating the 27th meeting of the WTO Commission for South Asia in Bangalore, South India, on Friday, Farooq said the South Asia regional cooperation in tourism promotion program sponsored by the UN Development Program (UNDP) had succeeded in training a cross section of personnel engaged in various tourism activities.

WTO could prepare a program on the same lines as the UNDP was unable to continue such programs for the region. he said, adding that this new program could also concentrate on tourism marketing and courses on tourism planning keeping in view conservation and preservation of environment and ecology.

The minister said with 1993 being celebrated as South Asia tourism year, the WTO steering committee could chalk out a program to be implemented during the year.

Compaq by nine per cent. UK poll, Tokyo stock upheaval and ME tension shake commodity market news Tuesday that the

LONDON, Apr 12 : Although traders' attention focussed on events on the UK political scene this [election] week, wider-ranging factors like weakness in Japanese equities and rising tension in the Middle East provided the main influences on London com-

modities markets, reports AFP. A slump in Japanese shares hit hopes of economic recovery in the West during the first part of the week, causing marked losses for London Metal Exchange(LME) base metals and industry-oriented precious metals, such as plat-

inum and silver. Traders breathed a sigh of relief when the Nikkei rallied strongly just ahead of the weekend, and metals recouped

some of their losses. Crude oil prices continued to firm as the UN deadline for Libya's extradition of suspected terrorist drew nearer and tensions increased in Iran and Iraq. Brent prices moved well above the 19 dollars per barrel mark.

The coffee market was unimpressed by the Inter national Coffee Organisation (ICO) Council decision to relaurich negotiations on a new international agreement. The new pact will attempt to support world prices through a universal export quota system, but market sources anticipate harsh negotiations over quota sharing.

Gold : Rally after weak start. Gold prices remained below the psychological level of 340 dollar per ounce until Friday. as Japanese thyestors liqui-

dated gold and platinum to raise cash after renewed weakness on their equity mar-

The Federal Reserve's surprise easing of its credit policy and a strong rally in the Nikkei then prompted a rally in gold prices Friday.

Silver : Rally after weak start. Silver prices were only briefly supported by news that Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori had dissolved congress last weekend, as analysts took the view that this civil coup "may create more order than chaos". After falling on profit-taking, prices drew support from the Nikkei's strong rally Friday, which allyed fears that the slump in Japanese shares may hinder

economic recovery elsewhere. With nearly 15 per cent of world mine production, Peru is the world's third-largest producer of silver, behind Mexico and the United States. It produced 1,850 tonnes in 1991, according to figure from Shearson Lehman Brothers.

Platinum : Rally after weak start. Platinum prices made a partial recovery Friday following a strong rally in Japanese equities. It had earlier fallen sharply on Japanese selling following the slump of the Nikkei. Rumours of unofficial sales at low prices from Russia had also prompted fears that the Almazyuvelir export monopoly over sales of platfnum-group metals, confirmed last week, might not be water-

tight. A report by Interfax new agency saying Russian exports

of platinum could rise by 10 or 15 per cent this year from the 580,000 ounces exported in 1991 did not influence the market. Analysts said the figure quoted for 1991 sales was significantly below a Johnson Matthey estimate of 930,000 ounces, made at the end of last

Copper: Weak. Copper prices fell following the slump in Japanese shares, which was feared likely to delay a worldwide rally in industrial demand for base metals. Losses were later reduced by Chinese buying and by a strong rally in the Nikkei Friday

The political crisis in Peru was virtually ignored by the copper market, as copper production was said to be unaffected. Peru is the world's fourth-largest producer of copper, with output estimated at 244,000 tonnes last year by the World Bureau of Metals (WBM). Australian producer Mount

isa Mines Ltd announced it will boost domestic and overseas production in the next few years, to fill the gap in worldwide smelting capacity, Japan's Mitsubishi Materials Corp also said its production will increase by 1,920 tonnes in April-September 1992 against the previous six months, as its Naoshima Smelter resumes normal out-But a boost to prices could

be provided by Zambia, where

the government has been cut-

ting power supplies because of

severe drought, and this may

affect copper production until

the end of this year.

LME stocks of copper fell by 4,350 tonnes to 292,050 Zinc: Weaker. Prices moved

in a narrow range as most traders focussed on elections in Italy, Germany and Britain. Worries over the early slump in Japanese shares and producer selling pushed prices

slightly down over the week. Speculative buying Monday morning following news of the Peruvian crisis was short-lived. Peru is the worlds fourthlargest producer of zinc with 1991 output estimated at 157,000 tonnes.

LME stocks of zinc rose by 275 tonnes to a record 223,100 tonnes.

Lead : Easier. Prices drifted down over the week, ignoring the Peruvian crisis, although Peru is the world's sixthlargest producer.

LME stocks of lead rose by

700 tonnes to 131,600 tonnes. Tin: Rally after weak start. Following a weak start to the week, tin prices were supported by concern over the lack of quality metal available for nearby delivery. LME stocks of tin fell by

235 tonnes to 11,675 tonnes.

Aluminium: Firmer. Prices

increased from mid-week, mainly on technical buying and on the back of firmer Far Eastern markets. Traders remained nervous about possible strike action which could affect 1.65 million tonnes of annual capacity at US

producers Alcoa and Reynolds,

where labour negotiations are

due to begin in early May. They

expect the steady drawdown

from US warehouses to continue, as us producers gear up for the wage rounds.

in Europe, however, stocks continued to rise as fresh shipments arrived from South America and Russia, traders said. LME stocks rose by 5,450 tonnes to a new record of 1,199,925 tonnes

The latest international Primary Aluminium Insti tute(IPAI) figures showed a 62,000 -tonne fall in western world stocks of aluminium in all forms in February compared to the previous month to 3.323 million tonnes.

Nickel: Weaker. Prices fluctuated over the week, to end slightly lower.

Early in the week prices were briefly boosted by rumours of unofficial strike action at Norilsk in Russia, the world's largest producer, and by news of cutbacks at the world's second-largest producer, Inco in Canada. But prices fell back, as Norilsk production was reportedly unaffected, and Inco's cutback was outweighed by high stock levels and expectations of fresh Russian shipments. Canadian producer Inco

said it will cut production by 10 million pounds this year, as its Shebandown mine will be closed for three months. It had earlier estimated 1992 output at about 425 million pounds. LME stocks fell by 168 tonnes to 26,100 tonnes. Coffee : Cautious. Initial,

cautious optimism over the

prospects for a new interna-

tional coffee agreement trans-

manding better availability of higher-quality coffees - to reduce its market share in favour of Colombia or Central American producers. Sugar: Stronger. Raw sugar prices surged to their highest level for eight months, in anticipation of a sharp drop in

the south African sugar crop in 1992-93. South African sources expect the crop to fall by as much as 20 per cent from last year, to 1.83 million tonnes, due to a drought which has also hit Zimbabwe hard. Press reports said south Africa had informed Far-Eastern buyers it will have no spot sugar available this marketing season (92-93).

White sugar was supported by raw's strength, and ignored press reports that India had lated into moderate gains. But

authorised the export of 250,000 tonnes of white sugar and had the capacity to export up to one million tonnes per year. India last year exported 525,000 tonnes after a six-year gap in sales.

profit-taking however reduced gains for both raw and white sugar during the second part of the week. Cocoa : Rally after weak start. Cocoa prices fell to their

lowest level for eight months early in the week on fears of renewed selling by Ivory Coast, but were later supported by technical buying based on sentiment the market was overtributed to forecasts by Brazilian producers that the

Early losses were also at mid-cosp (harvested between May and September) in the Bahia area of the country (the second world producer) may reach two to 2.5 million bags (60 kilos each) against 1.9 million last year. However, reports of pod-rot disease later circulated on the market, allaying the impact of these figures.

Vegetable oils: Vegetable of prices moved in a narrow range on the European market. Specialist review oil world said that world stocks of the 17 oils and fats would fall to 10.2 million tonnes at the end of the current season from 10.5 million a year ago, compared with 12.1 million in Autumn 1988, but warned that prices would not necessarily rise as the world has learnt to live with low stocks.

Crude oil : Firmer. Brent Crude prices moved above the

19 dollar per barrel mark for the first time in eight weeks, supported by increased tensions in the Middle East, before reducing gains on profittaking. Analysts said the tone should remain firm until the April 15 deadline for UN sanctions Against Libya. News that Iraq had moved missile batteries into a part of its territory prohibited by a UN order brought further support. A" positive American

Petroleum Institute (API) report also encouraged gains, as it showed weekly drawdowns in US stocks of crude, distillates and gasoline. Early in the week, Iran's

bombing raid against an Iranian opposition base inside Iraq had added fuel to the rise. News from the International Energy Agency of a 900,000 barrels-day fall in OPEO output in March had also supported the tone although OPEC out. put. At 23.5 million barrels per day, remains above the ceiling of 22.982 million agreed in February and effective until

The EEC on Monday lifted it soil embargo against South Africa, imposed in 1985. Rubber : Quiet. natural rub-

ber prices drifted slightly lower in London due to continued lack of activity in Europe. But the underlying trend was steady due to persistent bad weather in the Far-East, although wintering should be over by now, and reports of a shortage of latex. There was also continued buying of Indonesian rubber by US type manufactures, traders