

Iraq aims to forge strategic partnership with India

NEW DELHI, Nov 29: Iraq said Wednesday it would establish a wide-ranging strategic partnership with India...

The vice president, who arrived here Monday, met Wednesday evening with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and signed several agreements. Under an accord on trade and industry, Baghdad invited Indian companies to set up units in Iraq's free trade zones...

tant to take a stand on it, will find it difficult to get our oil," he said. Ramadhan, the first Iraqi leader to visit India in 25 years, did not rule out the possibility of defence cooperation between the two countries. "We must open cooperation in all fields without exception and give priority to areas which will re-integrate our interests..."

blotkade, which is backed mainly by Britain and the United States. "Kuwait is now housing British and US military, and from Kuwait everyday warplanes are flying to launch military attacks on Iraq. So what kind of guarantees does Kuwait want from us when it has America as its guarantor?" Kuwait will have to shoulder the responsibility as any country has the right to defend itself in a manner and time it sees fit, Ramadhan warned.

Informatics celebrates completion of first yr

Informatics Institute Bangladesh celebrated the completion of its first year and held the annual prize giving ceremony recently, says a press release. Dr Mizanur Ralman Shelley, chairman of Centre for Research and Development and Editor Bangladesh Asian Affairs, presided the function as chief guest...



Model Azwani Hashim stands next to a newly-launched Nissan at the Kuala Lumpur International Motor Show yesterday. The motor show offers visitors a wide variety of latest models and concept cars from auto makers around the world and is an exhibit from November 25 to December 4.

ADB approves \$52m loan to Pakistan

MANILA, Nov 29: The Asian Development Bank today approved a concessional loan of \$52 million dollars to help Pakistan increase its agricultural productivity and promote livelihood projects, reports AFP. The loan also is aimed at improving life in Pakistan's rural communities by upgrading infrastructure, including irrigation, roads and water supply...

UN appeals for \$229m to aid Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 29: The United Nations issued an appeal Wednesday for \$229 million to help Afghanistan - a country shattered by 21 years of relentless war, the worst drought in three decades and a ravaged economy, says AP.

Environmentalists gearing up for marking Seattle anniversary

SEATTLE, Nov 29: A year after riots ripped through downtown Seattle and wrecked a huge global trade meeting, thousands of labour and environmental activists are gearing up to mark the anniversary by doing it all over again, reports Reuters. Seattle officials say they are better prepared than last November, when thousands of protesters of all sorts blocked streets and handbills of thugs smashed storefronts before an army of police drove them off with tear gas and pellet guns...

partment has made thorough plans for any eventuality, talking into account all of the lessons learned last year. Former Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper resigned after the riots and his replacement, Gil Kerlikowske, has said police will be better equipped and trained than a year ago. Kerlikowske also said he will be on the streets with the police to ensure they behave responsibly, a nod to the police brutality charges levelled last year at some of the troops, many of them from outside Seattle. "Clearly, the department has taken advantage of all of the lessons learned from WTO," Kerlikowske said. "There will not be an overreaction by the members of the Seattle Police Department."

sit-in that violated an emergency no protest order. But Seattle has already granted a permit for a carousel operator at the park and has asked protest groups to gather at another park outside the downtown core, citing safety concerns and the presence of children at Westlake Park. Seattle officials declined to say how many officers would be in the street to face the crowds, or to identify what specific actions would trigger arrests. "Our policy is that law-breaking is not part of free speech," said Dick Lilly, a spokesman for Mayor Schell. "Vandalism, violence - people committing those kinds of acts will be arrested. Other acts causing public safety problems or danger to the public, it is possible that [police] will have to arrest those people."

week and many mainstream environmental groups have chosen to stay out of the city or hold indoor events. Of the hardened few in the streets this year, many will not fear confrontations with police, said Mark Taylor-Canfields, a protest organizer. "There has been civil disobedience training going on and I can tell you that if the city tries to stop people from marching and protesting, there will be arrests," he said. Lilly said the relatively small number of permit requests, many from individuals, and the lateness they were filed shows protesters were not serious about marching legally, perhaps preferring to spark arrests to promote their messages. "Confrontation with local authorities is part of the strategy of some of the groups in the anti-globalization movement. That kind of confrontation with authority is used to legitimize and justify their movement," Lilly said.



Members of the All India Life Insurance Agents' Federation stage a sit-in protest near parliament, in New Delhi yesterday. Life insurance agents from all over India asked for better insurance, welfare schemes and benefits for themselves. -- AFP photo

Oil falls over warm winter forecast

LONDON, Nov 29: Oil prices tumbled yesterday as dealers took fright over mild winter weather in the West, says Reuters. Brent blend ended 86 cents lower at \$32.20 a barrel and US light crude slid \$1.13 to \$34.25. Crude prices were led lower by a decline in the value of heating oil futures on exchanges in London and New York after a warm spell on both sides of the Atlantic. London heating oil fell \$15.50 a tonne, \$2.08 a barrel, to \$293.75 a tonne, having hit a high in September of \$350. US heating oil sank 6.42 cents a gallon, \$2.70 a barrel, to \$102.10 a gallon. Dealers have been fretting about low heating oil inventories ahead of peak winter demand, but temperatures across Europe this week are running as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit (seven Celsius) above normal for the time of year.

Forecasts are for European weather to remain mild over the next 10 days. "There's a lack of interest for heating oil. Why buy it?" said a European oil trader. "I heard it's 15 degrees (Celsius) in Belgium. That's not too cold for November." In the US Northeast, a region heavily dependent on oil for heating, temperatures also are mild but a colder spell is forecast from Thursday. Iraq deadline looms. Dealers shrugged off concerns over a disruption to Iraq's 2.3 million barrels a day of UN-monitored oil sales from December 1. "There are so many premiums already built into this market," said one. "For Iraq, for the Middle East and for low inventories." Iraq said it would not back down in a tussle with the United Nations over December pricing for its crude exports.



South Korean workers from construction unions shout anti-government slogans as they march through downtown Seoul yesterday. Some 2000 unionists protested against the government-forced closure of debt-ridden firms. --AFP photo

Taiwan to open direct trade with China

TAIPEI, Nov 29: Taiwan is to open direct trade links with China after it joins the World Trade Organisation (WTO), it was reported here Wednesday, reports AFP. The island would begin an initial step of direct business contacts with the mainland after its WTO accession which was expected in January, the Economic Daily News said. Direct transport links would be followed by the opening of direct commercial exchange, the paper cited Mainland Affairs Council chairman Tsai Ingwen as saying. Taipei and Beijing would be required to engage in trade talks under the WTO framework after both sides enter the international trade body, the paper said. Taiwan has banned direct cross-strait contacts since it

was separated from the mainland in 1949 at the end of a civil war. But indirect commerce and investments, made mainly through Hong Kong, have prospered since Taipei allowed civilian exchanges in late 1987. However, indirect commerce and investments, made mainly through Hong Kong, have prospered since Taipei allowed civilian exchanges in late 1987. Japanese industrial growth slows in October. TOKYO, Nov 29: Japan's industrial output grew much slower than expected in October after a dip the previous month, government data showed today, and economists said activity at the country's mines, factories and utilities could be near a peak as exports begin to slow, says Reuters.

Exchange Rates

Table of American Express Bank foreign exchange rates for various currencies including US Dollar, Pound STG, Deutche Mar, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Dutch Guilder, Danish Krona, Australian \$, Belgian Franc, Canadian \$, French Franc, Hong Kong \$, Italian Lira, Singapore \$, Euro, and Saudi Rial.

Table of Bill buying rates for 30 Days, 60 Days, 90 Days, 120 Days, and 180 Days.

Table of Exchange rates of some Asian currencies against US dollars including Indian Rupee, Pak Rupee, Thai Baht, Malaysian Ringgit, Indonesian Rupiah, and Korean Won.

Table of Amex notes on Mondays market showing rates for US dollar demand compared to low supply, with rates ranging from 53.91 to 53.93.

Shipping Intelligence

Table for Chittagong port listing vessel names, cargo, local agents, and arrival dates.

Table for Vessels due at outer anchorage listing vessel names, dates of last port, local agents, cargo, and loading ports.

Table for Tanker due listing vessel names, dates, and cargo types.

Table for Vessels at Kutubdia listing vessel names, cargo, last ports, local agents, and arrival dates.

Table for Movement of vessels for 30/11/2000 showing outgoing and shifting vessels with dates and destinations.