

have been identified — some as long ago as 1975 in the Iraqi National Tourism Development Plan — as having particular potential for tourism development. These include: the Haj Omran-Mirga Mir and Gali Ali Beg-Bekhal areas, for which development masterplans have been completed by Denmark's **Skaarup & Jespersen**, and its local associate **Planar**; tourist villages in Hassan Beg and Sur Ahmadiya; areas in Penjwin, Kharadar and on the shores of the lakes created by the Saddam, Dokan and Darbendikhan dams all covered by a northern region tourism development plan completed by France's **OTH International**; holiday complexes for Hamrin and Tharthar lakes where a turnkey contract was awarded in September 1981 to South Korea's **Hanyang Corporation**, before being cancelled due to reallocation of funds in 1982; the Hammam Ali spa near Mosul, and a health sanatorium at Hit where a tender for work on the sulphur springs was recently announced (MEED 29:7:88).

Dredgers await Shatt al-Arab work

International dredging companies are awaiting the call to put forward proposals to clear the Shatt al-Arab and navigation channels leading to Umm Qasr port. The government has already opened the file on clearing the Shatt, Basra's mayor Anwar Saeed al-Hadithi says. Immediate priority has been attached to the scheme which will help speed the process of economic recovery in the south (see page 2).

The scope of work was first outlined in 1982 when several international salvage companies received invitations to prepare proposals to clear the waterway from its mouth at the Gulf up to Basra, and navigation channels around the tip of the Gulf as far as Al-Sabiya outside Umm Qasr port.

Work would include location and clearance of unexploded mines, bombs and missiles, dredging, and removal of 93 ships reported trapped in the area. Of these, 75 are reported to be in the Shatt al-Arab, and a further 18 at Umm Qasr and Khor al-Zubair.

The dredging is expected to be a lengthy process. Before the war, constant dredging was needed to keep sections of the 192-kilometre Shatt open to shipping. Usually, the heavy winter rains washed silt downstream where it piled up on the underwater Abadan sandbar, across the entrances to the ports of Basra, and Khorramshahr in Iran. Silt can build up at the sandbar at a rate of 0.3 metres every 24 hours during spring floods, and year-round dredging was required to maintain a low-water draft of just under 9.1 metres. In mid-1982, it was estimated that three-four metres of silt had built up on the channel bed.

The most optimistic estimate for clearing the Shatt al-Arab waterway is two years, Al-Hadithi said. In 1982, contractors' estimates ranged up to four or five years. The project

will require huge efforts and resources, Al-Hadithi said, adding that Iraq would ask for international assistance to carry out the work.

IN BRIEF

- Brazilian holding company **Autolina** hopes to sign a \$900 million car supply contract before 1989. Autolina is negotiating to supply 100,000 cars manufactured by **Volkswagen do Brasil**. Up to 40 per cent of the contract's value would cover spare parts. Payment will be in dollars and oil. The deal was one of several outlined in a December joint trade agreement. Contract discussions were delayed until July.

- US oil imports increased to an average 323,000 barrels a day (b/d) during the first six months of 1988, compared with an average 56,000 b/d during the same period in 1987. In June, US liftings from the Turkish export pipeline totalled 557,000 b/d, up from 347,000 b/d in May. Total exports through the Turkish line averaged 1.54 million b/d during the first half of 1988 — of which just over 1 million b/d was Kirkuk crude — compared with 939,100 b/d in 1987. Total Iraqi production was estimated at 2.6 million b/d in June. Other leading customers during 1988 were Turkey, taking 199,300 b/d, Italy (177,600 b/d), Netherlands (152,000 b/d), France (120,000 b/d) and Yugoslavia (105,200 b/d), New York's OPEC Listener reports.

- A Japanese industry delegation plans to visit Iraq at the end of September to investigate development plans, according to Japan's Ministry of International Trade & Industry (MITI). The team, which will include members of the Japan Federation of Economic Organisations and the Japan Chamber of Commerce, will report its findings to MITI.

- The Arab states should cut aid to Damascus, withdraw recognition from President Asad's government, and expel Syria from the Arab League for supporting Iran in the Gulf war, First Deputy Premier Taha Yassin Ramadan wrote in the Baghdad daily Al-Thawra on 14 August.

- A large fleet of heavy trucks has been collected by the **Military Industries Commission** and is ready for sale to the private sector.

- Private sector machinery importers will now be able to pay cash for up to 60 per cent of the cost of imported machines, instead of the previous limit of 50 per cent, the Industry & Military Industrialisation Ministry says.

- The government has allocated ID 15.3 million (\$49.3 million) for repair and maintenance work on mosques and shrines in 1988.

- Technical institutes will admit 26,385 students during the 1988/89 academic year, the daily Baghdad Observer reports. By 1992/93, the number of admittances is expected to be more than 31,000. Some 11,669 students graduated in 1986/87. Seven new institutes will open in 1989, in Dohuk, Arbil, Salahaddin, Kerbala, Muthanna, Diyala and Wasit governorates. For the first time, institutes are now offering courses which give students work experience.

- Companies specialising in the re-export of scrap 132/33/11-kV substations and aluminium conductors are sought by the **State Enterprise for Generation & Transmission of Electricity**.

- The purchase of 30,000 tonnes of tea, in

return for slightly more than 2 million tonnes of oil, will be one of the main topics for discussion with a Sri Lankan delegation visiting Baghdad. The provision of Sri Lankan labour will also be considered.

- The next meeting of the Iraqi-Italian joint economic commission will be held in Rome in September. The meeting was due to be held in July, but was postponed because of the ceasefire talks.

- The infant mortality rate fell to 47 a 1,000 by the end of 1987, according to a report issued by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). The target is 36 a 1,000 by 1990. The rate was 72 a 1,000 when the five-year health plan started in 1985. Almost 84 per cent of infants have now been vaccinated.

- The value of the Iraqi dinar leapt on the Kuwait exchange markets following the Iranian acceptance of UN security council resolution 598. After eight years as one of the world's least-favoured currencies the dinar rose over 400 per cent in one day before the Kuwaiti central bank suspended trading. The rate is now about ID1 = KD 0.250, around twice its former value. A similar rise occurred in Jordan where traders anticipated a big demand for the Iraqi currency when Jordan-Iraqi trade expands.

- Uday Saddam Hussain, the president's eldest son, is engaged to be married to the daughter of Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of the Revolution Command Council (RCC), the local Al-Baath al-Riyadhi newspaper reported on 13 August. The president's other son, Qusai, is married to the daughter of General Maher Abdul-Rashid.

- Reconstruction opportunities in Iraq will be discussed at the Middle East Forum — about energy and energy-related industries: a re-appraisal of projects, developments and business opportunities — due to be held in London on 15 September. The forum is organised by the World Energy Business Centre in co-operation with the Middle East Association, and will be held in the Royal Institute of British Architects' headquarters.

JORDAN

- The government has announced an import ban and tax incentives among other measures to encourage investment and increase exports. Bans on importing some locally available goods, including food, detergents and batteries, will be lifted and replaced with import tariffs. Import bans on some other items, including tomato paste, tobacco, fresh milk and cheese, mineral water and salt, will be retained. The cabinet has also decided to offer tax incentives for investment in productive fields. A department will be set up at the Supplies, Trade & Industry Ministry to deal with investment inquiries from local and foreign investors. The central bank and Finance Ministry are to draft new export guarantee rules and consider giving credit to local and foreign exporters. Other measures announced include speeding up the issue of licences for the tourist industry, and increasing the employment of nationals.

- The Education Ministry is seeking funds for its school construction programme, designed to cope with an annual 4 per cent increase in pupils attending government schools. The ministry plans to spend JD 309.3 million (\$835