

Feature

Gulf crisis

Western intelligence reports say

Terrorists, trained in Iraq, sent around the world

LOS ANGELES, Jan 25: Western intelligence agencies say they have uncovered leads to what they believe is a network of terrorists trained in Baghdad, Iraq, and sent around the globe, the Los Angeles Times reported yesterday, says AP.

Irregularities in passports used by two Iraqis involved in a botched bombing Saturday near a U.S. library in Manila provided a major break in the search for Iraqi terrorists, according to another unnamed official.

The revelations led to arrests Wednesday of two Iraqis and two Jordanians in Bangkok, Thailand. Evidence also indicates the Iraqi Embassy in Manila directed the bombing, the Times said.

It is clear that what has happened here (Manila) is part of a global deployment by the Iraqis, an unidentified Western official told the newspaper. "We think this is a well-planned and extensive operation in which groups were sent out and pre-positioned all over the place."

the Nation said the diplomats, whom it did not identify, left Thailand after being expelled from Australia and the Philippines. The paper quoted unnamed senior sources.

The report said at least four other Middle East nationals who had contact with the Iraqi Embassy have been repored as a precaution.

Several Thai government and security officials denied the report. A man at the Iraqi Embassy, who refused to identify himself, denied that any diplomats had left. Western diplomats would not comment but some indicated there was some truth to the report.

The official said the search will be most intensive in countries with concentration of Iraqis, Lebanese and Palestinians, "places where they have a local community in which to hide."

diplomats and other foreigners. Muwafak Ant, Iraq's second-ranking diplomat in Manila and intelligence chief, left the Philippines on Thursday after he was expelled for allegedly directing the bombing that killed one Iraqi and injured another. Ant met repeatedly with the two terrorists at the embassy, and his car was used to drop them near the library, the Times said.

He denied involvement in the bombing. Ant, his wife and children flashed "V" for victory signs and shouted "Long live Saddam Hussein" as they boarded a Malaysian Airlines jet bound for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They planned to fly on to Iran and then Iraq, he said.

Another Iraqi diplomat and intelligence operative is being denied accreditation and will be asked to leave Manila. Investigators say the envoy on Jan. 14 gave cash to Iraqi and Palestinian students, including two brothers who are now suspects in the bombing.

Meanwhile, Germany expelled 28 Iraqi diplomats Thursday. Government officials said there was "very great suspicion" some of the diplomats controlled extremist groups in Germany and could direct terrorist activities.

Wednesday, Canadian police seized a cache of weapons and explosives after arresting a man wearing military fatigues and a Palestinian flag a short distance from the US consulate. An anti-terrorist team was investigating the case Thursday morning, a spokesman said.

One of the first tolls of the new heightened security was the cancellation of public tours in the White House for the first time since World War II.

Officials decided that the tours provided would be terrorists too easy access to the mansion, even though visitors had been required to pass through metal detectors and have bags searched. Some 3,500 visitors a day -- more than 1 million annually -- had been taking the tours.

The tours offer the most immediate opportunity for unwarranted intrusion into the White House, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said.

'A new threat for Saddam to worry about' WASHINGTON, Jan 25: U.S. submarines cruising the Mediterranean and Red Seas have launched Tomahawk missiles at targets inside Iraq, Defense Department sources said Thursday, reports AFP.

The military initiative marks the first use of American submatelanchased missile in a combat environment, according to one source speaking on condition of anonymity.

The use of submarine fired Tomahawk missiles in the US led Operation Desert Storm "just gives (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein a new threat to worry about", the source added, noting missiles are now coming at him from the north as well as the south.

Whether the submarines would perform other Desert Storm duties, such as delivering secret SEAL (Sea-Air-Land) teams for special operations not carrying small troops units into combat zones, was not disclosed by the two sources.

40 cases being probed Iraq gets stolen US military technology?

MIAMI (Florida), Jan 25: U.S. authorities are investigating a wealthy Chilean Arms manufacturer who allegedly sold stolen American military technology to Iraq, judicial sources said Thursday, reports AFP.

US customs agents last week raided the offices of a Miami real estate firm they believe may be linked to the Chilean businessman, Carlos Cardoen, and a grand jury began deliberations, Tuesday to consider bringing charges against him, the officials said.

Mr. Cardoen was interviewed Sunday on the NBC news magazine programme "Expose," in which he was described as one of the richest people in South America with vast real estate holdings in Miami as well. He was said to have made his fortune selling weapons and bombs to Iraq during that nation's eight-year war with Iran.

The agents who raided the Swissco Development Co. seized file cabinets, computer disks and any other documents they thought might contain evidence of illegal arms sales to Iraq.

US Customs Commissioner Carol Hallit told NBC her agency is probing 40 cases involving alleged exports of sensitive material to Iraq, ranging from chemicals to devices that can be used to detonate nuclear weapons.

Mr. Cardoen told a network interviewer he had "a great deal of respect for President Hussein although I am not responsible for his opinions or his doing."

The NBC programme showed a photograph of Mr. Cardoen, who was educated in the United States and spends much of his time in Miami, shaking hands with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The two men are seen smiling broadly.

Mr. Cardoen told a network interviewer he had "a great deal of respect for President Hussein although I am not responsible for his opinions or his doing."

The city of Haifa al-Baten, some 70 kilometers (43 miles) from the Iraqi-Kuwait border, was almost deserted Monday, with most of its residents having headed south.

Butter from Washington adds: The U.S. Defence Department said on Monday it was reluctant to release of allied bomb damage to targets in Iraq and Kuwait because that information should be kept away from the Iraqi government.

Pentagon spokesman Pat Williams said current bad weather in the region was hampering bomb damage assessment and that targets which were not badly damaged would be hit again, if necessary.

If identities of targets with minor damage is released, he told reporters, "that is, more or less, a no-tice to the Iraqis that we will come calling again."

White House security tightened for war

WASHINGTON, Jan 25: President George Bush's Secret Service agents now routinely tote gas masks. Dozens of riot-helmeted guards stand sentry along the White House fence. Sharpshooters prowl the roof.

A line of police vehicles is stationed in the median strip of Pennsylvania Ave. Sometimes, when protests get unruly, traffic in front of the nation's most famous address is stopped entirely. And that's just what you can see. Officials understandably won't fireproof there.

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Gas masks Gas masks are now routinely carried by agents who work at the White House. An agent was even stationed near the Oval Office on the night when Bush addressed the nation, with a mask in a military bag, presumably for the President if needed.

While sharpshooters always have been stationed as a precaution on the roof of the White House, now there clearly are more of them. As well, security has been increased for the president's children and grandchildren.

They said they came across columns of munitions trucks loaded with rockets and missiles, ambulances with Red Crosses painted on their roofs and armoured vehicles on roads leading north of the Saudi desert.

US forces ready for land battle

RIYADH, Jan 25: U.S.-led ground forces are stepping up their preparations for the land battle, they expect to enter with Iraq, reporters said from the front Sunday and Monday, reports AFP.

Under the reoperting ground rules, correspondents were not allowed to disclose their location but said they saw France trucks, British machine-gun mounted cars and hundreds of U.S. vehicles.

The convoys included columns of M1-Abrams heavy tanks, M2-Bradley infantry armoured vehicles, armoured M-113 troop transports heavy duty machine guns mounted on jeeps and 155 millimeter Howitzers on trucks which could be seen for miles, over which flew attack helicopters, they said.

On the ground, hundreds of thousands of soldiers are awaiting "K" day (for Kuwait), with a mixture of impatience and apprehension, eyewitnesses said.

Civilians did not wait to leave ahead of the land war.

Feature

Education

Choosing a Career in Geography

by Prof. Nazrul Islam

ENVIRONMENT, population and development are three critical issues that concern the contemporary world most seriously and geography is a discipline which addresses all these issues from an integrated scientific approach.

The role of geography in the understanding of the complex relationships amongst environment, population and development can be a very significant one. In addition geography has other contributions to make, particularly in producing culturally and socially conscious educated youths.

Traditionally, geography has been regarded as the "study of the earth as the home of man" and its main business is the analysis of man's relationship to his natural or physical environment, the tracing of the limits of possibilities, with human happiness in view on some agreed standard of measurement of the material basis of it.

The geographic tradition is characterized by three emphases, namely (1) the locational or spatial emphasis which tries to analyze the patterns and processes of distribution of both natural phenomenon and socio-economic elements on the earth's surface, globally, regionally or locally; (2) the ecological emphasis, also known in geography as the man - environment theme; and (3) the regional analysis emphasis, which combines the other two themes in the study of chosen regions, both macro and micro. This approach provides the traditional multi-disciplinary inventory type interpretation of the various regions, countries and local areas.

production. In terms of methodology, geography depends heavily on field mapping and household surveys but also on secondary data. The techniques of geographic analysis involve quantitative statistical methods, cartography, aerial photo and satellite imagery interpretation and computer applications.

Contemporary geography is essentially a modern scientific discipline which combines elements of physical sciences, social sciences, humanities and aesthetics. As a university discipline it was first introduced in Germany in the 1870's and subsequently in Britain and the United States.

In our own country geography was introduced first in Dhaka University in 1948 and then in Rajshahi and Jahangirnagar universities. Today Jagannath College also offers Honours and Master's degree programmes while Eden Girls College has only an Honours programme. At present nearly 400 students take Master's degree in geography a year from the four departments.

Students can seek admission to the Honours programme after their Higher Secondary Certificate (H.S.C.), with either Science or Humanities background. However, to be a good geographer, one needs to be equipped with some mathematical and physical science training. In addition, one should also have skill in cartography (map making) and graphic arts. But above all one should have the temperament of going out to the field to observe and record natural environmental phenomena and

geographic research in Bangladesh. Another important area of geographic analysis is the subject of habitat or human settlements. Our geographers have made significant contributions to the understanding of the process of rural settlement development and of urban development.

The welfare geographic (or political - economic) approach in geography has encouraged some of our geographers to study the questions of "Who gets What and Where" and of the nature of poverty (particularly urban poverty, urban slums and squatters). Geographers in Bangladesh have for long looked at the problems and prospects of agricultural and rural development, and also of industrial and transportation development. Some of our young geographers have been able to add new dimensions (such as of the role of environmental and technological factors) in agricultural land utilization and development.

The role of human perception in people's adjustment to the changing natural environment has also received particular attention from Bangladesh geographers. Significant contributions are also being made by our women geographers, to the understanding of the role of women in agricultural development or in urban formal and informal sector activities.

In all these areas geographers show a predilection for analysis of relationship between the natural environment and the cultural factors. It thus appear that geographers can have career opportunities in many sectors of national development. Indeed they do and the demand for advanced geographic skill is very widely felt. This is particularly so because of the increased focus on the environment bias in contemporary development thinking. In Bangladesh geographers with post-graduate university degrees have found employment in such organizations as the Geological Survey of Bangladesh, Soil Survey Department, Water Development Board, Inland Water Transport Authority, Urban Development Directorate, Planning Com-

mission Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakhya (RAJUK), Dhaka Municipal Corporation (as planners and geographers), Rural Development Academy, Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) and a host of research organizations and consultancy groups. The geographer's training and skill of field work, is making them popular with NGOs involved in rural or urban development with environment and population NGOs and research centers. The geographic expertise in the scientific study of fluvial or weather hazards, have been very well recognized by the inclusion of several senior geographers in national level committees. Similarly their leading role in urban analysis has also been recognized by the invited participation of geographers in several national commissions committees and task forces on urbanization and urban development.

A career opportunity in geography (for any other well established discipline) of course, is to be found most widely in the teaching of the subject at university, college and high school levels. In this area, however, geography is less fortunate than some of the other disciplines in Bangladesh. Chittagong University is yet to have a geography department and not many colleges in the country have as yet introduced geography as a subject. Such gaps are unfortunate and should be corrected as soon as possible. Geography is a useful applied science (or social science) and it has potential for making contributions towards national development efforts.

Since my entry into the arena of the geographic discipline back in 1958 and my choosing a career in geography teaching and research, I have never regretted. Indeed, for me, it has been a wonderful experience being a geographer in a developing country.

A former chairman of the Department of Geography, Dhaka University, Prof. Nazrul Islam is the Director, Centre for Urban Studies, DU, and President Bangladesh Geographical Society.

Breaking the Myths About Women Teachers

By Salma Akhtar

Misconceptions about female primary school teachers are widespread. There is a shortage of qualified women teachers, people say. Or women are unwilling to work in rural schools. Or female teachers do not perform as well as men in the classroom.

But when 6,000 primary posts were advertised recently, more than 72,000 qualified women applied compared with less than 18,000 men - which suggests that there is no shortage of suitable women for the job.

And national statistics show that about 80 per cent of female teachers are professionally trained, with C-in-Ed degrees as well as their general educational qualifications. It is true that women are poorly represented in rural primary schools. A recent study by Shamina Islam calculated that there was only one female teacher for every seven rural schools.

Similarly, Dhaka division has the highest number of female teachers (10,000), which represents 23 per cent of the total, followed by 21 per cent in Chittagong division, 15 per cent in Khulna and 13 per cent in Rajshahi.

But there are reasons for this urban bias. During the rule of the Jatiya Party the upazila administrations were given responsibility for recruiting, and the chairman controlled selection of candidates. This, it is said, led to the widespread appointment of relatives and supporters. Qualifications were not given proper consideration.

It is even alleged that some primary teachers job could be bought for Tk15,000-35,000 - a year's salary - which particularly disadvantaged female candidates. Women generally have less access than men to money and family assets.

In addition, many men were antagonised by the government's target of appointing women to at least half of all posts, and the slightly lower entry qualifications for women. Nevertheless, the proportion of women primary teachers has increased since liberation, from two per cent (2,541) in 1971 to eight per cent (14,913) and 18 per cent (33,575) in 1988.

The upswing reflects growing recognition of the abilities of female teachers, of their role in reducing the 70 per cent drop-out rate among children, and the encouragement their presence gives to young girls. Government policies have also been important, although no plan targets have been met. The first five-year plan set its sights on at least one female teacher in each primary school, and the second and third plans aimed at filling half of all new vacancies with women.

In an attempt to ensure that targets were met and that women were not discriminated against, the last government switched responsibility for recruitment from upazila to central level, and instructed that 60 per cent of vacancies should be filled by women.

With universal primary education still the target, now is the time to discard the myth that there are not enough qualified women primary teachers willing to serve in rural schools.

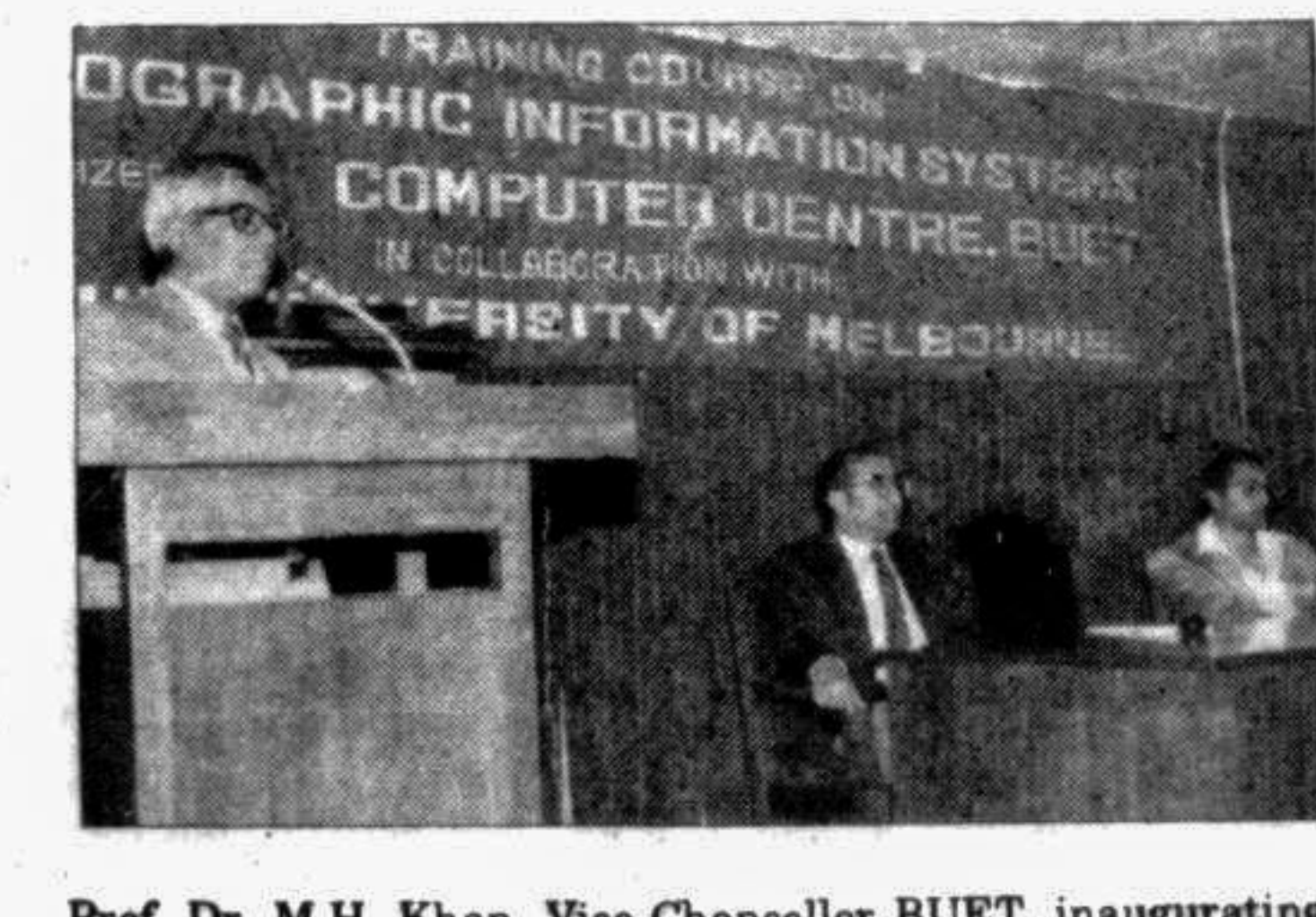
[Ms Salma Akhtar is an assistant professor of the Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University.]

Where Speaking the Mother Tongue is an Offence

A new degree course at Uganda's leading university could herald the introduction of a national language for the first time in 27 years since independence from British rule.

Mekerele University is introducing a Bachelor of Arts degree in a new local language - Runyakitara - to promote the study of local culture and literature.

It also seems to be the first practical step towards evolving a national language for this country of 17 million people speaking 32 or more languages.



The geographic tradition is also characterized by political - economic approach to the analysis of resource distribution and access to factors of

Prof. Dr. M.H. Khan, Vice-Chancellor BUET, inaugurating a training course on Geographic Information System jointly organised by BUET Computer Centre and the University of Melbourne, Australia, at BUET Seminar room, recently.

Swahili, already used over much of eastern and central Africa, may be a good bet. GEMINI NEWS