

BRIEFLY

Missile claims 1 in Tel Aviv: One person died and 69 were wounded Friday in an Iraqi missile attack on the Tel Aviv region, the Israeli army spokesman said in Jerusalem, reports AFP.

One of the wounded was in critical conditions. Five others were seriously wounded while the rest suffered superficial injuries, he said.

Seven Iraqi Scud missiles were aimed Friday at the Tel Aviv and Haifa regions. One hit the city of Tel Aviv while the others were intercepted in flight by US supplied Patriot missiles an Israeli military source said.

Iraq dumping oil in Gulf: The United States Friday accused Iraq of environmental terrorism in dumping huge quantities of Kuwaiti crude oil into the Gulf, sparking fears of a major ecological disasters, reports Reuters.

Oil is being dumped into the Gulf from a Kuwaiti oil-pumping station creating a massive oil spill, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams told a press briefing, in Washington.

This is "clearly an act of environmental terrorism," he said.

The amount of crude spilling into the Gulf was "more than a dozen times larger" than the 11 million gallons spilled off the coast of Alaska in 1989 and could have "frightening consequences," he said.

10,000 Iraqis killed: Kurds — Kurdish rebels said Friday up to 50 percent of Iraqi and industrial targets hit by allied bombing had been destroyed and nearly 10,000 Iraqi troops killed, according to Kurdish sources in Eastern.

The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), waging a guerilla campaign for autonomy in northern Iraq, also predicted that some Iraqi army units would mutiny to try to force President Saddam Hussein to end the Gulf war.

The KDP said that although security forces were still in control in Iraq, there were some lapses.

Their control is a matter of time and we anticipate a mutinous action by certain army units calling upon Saddam Hussein to stop the bloodshed and destruction, it said.

Australia expels Iraqi envoy: Iraq's Charge d'Affaires in Australia has been ordered to leave the country for security reasons, a foreign affairs department spokesman in Sydney said, reports Reuters.

Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Gareth Evans announces the expulsion of Saad Omran Saturday morning, but would not elaborate on the security reasons behind the move, the spokesman said by telephone from Canberra.

He has been expelled under article nine of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations, the spokesman said.

The spokesman further said, the expulsion was not a result of remarks by Omran last week urging Arabs in Australia to answer Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's call for a Jihad (Holy war). Omran has been given 72 hours to leave the country.

Explosion rips Italian disco: An explosion ripped through a crowded discotheque in central Italy late Friday night, killing one person and wounding about 30, Italian news agencies reported.

The explosion occurred shortly before midnight (2300 GMT) in the Discotheque Principe in the Tuscan city of Arezzo in Rome about 136 kilometers (84 miles) north of Rome.

The cause of the blast was not immediately known but the agencies quoted investigators as saying it could have been a bomb.

There were about 600 people in the nightclub at the time of the explosion, which caused widespread panic, according to witnesses. The blast apparently occurred in the women's bathroom, the news agency AGI reported.

AGI said the fatality was a 27-year-old woman. None of the injuries were reported as life-threatening.

Italy has been on guard against possible terrorist attacks in response to the allied attack on Iraq.

Saddam Hussein has promised worldwide terror in revenge, and there have been bombing incidents in Beirut, Lebanon, Manila, and Athens linked by authorities to the attack on Iraq.

US cuts aid to Pakistan: The US State Department in Washington has announced sharp military and economic aid cuts to Pakistan even if it gives up its nuclear weapons program and less severe cuts to many other countries, reports AP.

The action came in final allocations of 15.5 billion dollars in foreign aid from US President George Bush in its package for fiscal 1991.

Another country receiving a big slash was Yemen, which opposed the United Nations sanctions of force against Iraq to make it withdraw from Kuwait. There is also a cut from planned assistance to the Philippines and generally smaller cuts to several other countries.

The total for Pakistan was reduced from fiscal 1990's half billion dollars to 208 million dollars this year, and the bulk of that will not be available unless US officials are convinced the country is not developing a nuclear weapons potential.

Shekhar-Rajiv unanimity: The Prime Minister Mr Chandra Shekhar, has said he was in agreement with the Congress President Mr Rajiv Gandhi that India's initiatives to defuse tension in the Gulf should be on the basis of principals of its foreign policy, reports PTI.

Mr Chandra Shekhar, in his reply to two letters sent by Mr Gandhi on the Gulf situation in the last two weeks, said in New Delhi government was in contact with the non aligned nations and also referred to the initiatives by India's permanent representative at the UN.

The Prime Minister said, he would keep Mr Gandhi informed as the situation developed in the war-torn Gulf.

Underlining the need for forcefully implementing the principles of our foreign policy, Mr Chandra Shekhar said he was obliged by the suggestion made by Mr Gandhi in regard to the Gulf situation.

Soviet submarine sinks: A Soviet diesel submarine from the Pacific fleet Friday sank off the port of Vladivostok, after springing a leak during decommissioning operations, Tass news agency in Moscow reported, reports AFP.

The submarine, whose name or type was not given, was to have been scrapped, but as crew error caused the leak which could not be plugged and the ship was lost. There were no casualties, Tass said.

US bombings cause oil slick: Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 26: Iraq complained to the United Nations in a letter circulated on Friday that US planes bombed two Iraq tankers in the Gulf last Tuesday, creating a "vast oil slick" likely to cause serious environmental harm, reports Reuters.

"This is not the first time the United States has damaged the environment and exposed men and fauna to serious danger by undertaking nuclear tests and dumping nuclear wastes and other toxic chemicals", it said.

The letter, containing the text of a statement issued on Tuesday by an Iraqi military spokesman, was circulated the day the United States accused Iraq of deliberately pumping millions of gallons (litres) of crude oil into the Gulf, threatening a major environmental

disaster.

The Iraq statement appealed to world public opinion and organizations, particularly environmentalists, to "denounce this criminal act and to do everything within their power to put an end to such acts".

"For its part Iraq, which respects the right to life of all human beings and which God has endowed with natural wealth, is prepared to cooperate with any party with a view to putting an end to these crimes", it concluded.

Moscow blasts bid for UN meeting

Another reports adds: The Soviet Union on Friday strongly criticized north African nations and others who want an open debate in the UN Security Council to advocate a ceasefire in the Gulf war.

Pentagon keen to see Saddam entombed

US commandos in Iraq

WASHINGTON, January 26: The United States would be happy to see Saddam Hussein entombed in one of his air-raid shelters, but the Pentagon said Friday the hunt for the Iraqi President was not a top priority mission or allied warplanes, report AFP.

"We go after command and control targets and if he happens to be there, great," said a Pentagon source. But it would be "too inefficient and iffy" to devote a great deal of time to a hunt for the Iraqi leader the source said.

In Riyadh Major-General Robert Johnson Chief of Staff

in the Central Command told a military briefing Friday that Mr. Hussein could hide in "an infinite number of locations" and that seeking him out was "not really our job".

"We are not going after a single target," he said.

The Washington Post reported Friday that allied forces had traced Mr. Hussein's whereabouts last week, but an air strike on the site had to be called off because of weather condition.

The newspaper, quoting a senior U.S. administration official, said the mission was part of broader effort to "decapitate

Iraq's Armed forces by destroying their command and control infrastructure. It gave no further details of the aborted strike.

CIA coordinating operations

The paper quoted U.S. officials as saying the Central Intelligence Agency had coordinated efforts to identify and locate Mr. Hussein's "fingerprints". A reference to characteristic patterns of movement and communication which accompany his travel around Iraq.

According to the officials Mr. Hussein traveled mainly at night and used look alike as decoys complete with motor-cades and guards.

There have also been reports that Mr. Hussein seeks protection by hiding out in residential areas not targeted in raids by the allied forces. Observers noted that statements from officials Friday did not amount to a denial of the Washington Post report.

But the allied forces could well believe that Mr. Hussein was so well hidden either in populated areas or in deep, well-defended shelters that it was not worth making enormous efforts to seek him out, the observers said. Despite repeated statements by US officials that individuals were not targeted in the Gulf war, observers recalled that capturing strongmen Manuel Antonio Noriega had been a principal aim of the US invasion of Panama in December 1989.

And Libya leader Muammar Gaddafi had been one of the targets of the US air attack on Libya in April 1986, they noted.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater has said he did not rule out a bid to capture Mr. Hussein alive, but most experts here said it would be extremely difficult to pull off such a complex commando mission.

Alfonse Ad's Amato a republican Senator from New York has suggested that the Israeli intelligence organization Mossad or special Israeli units could hunt down the Iraqi leader.

After Iraqi Scud missile attack on Israel Mr. D'Amato said "Saddam Hussein will find himself a very real target."

PTI adds: US Special Forces Commandos have infiltrated Iraq as part of allied efforts to search out locations of Baghdad's mobile missile forces, the Washington Times reported quoting Bush administration sources.

The commandos, part of the Pentagon's Special Operations Command, are also taking part in covert sabotage, intelligence collection and search operations to find and rescue downed allied pilots deep inside Iraqi territory, the officials said.

The commandos are using high technology communications equipment to talk to military commanders and to provide information from inside the country.

The commandos' missions include intelligence gathering in areas where mobile Scud missiles have been operating in western and southern Iraq, and reconnaissance patrols near Kuwait to assess the situation on the ground near Iraqi forces there.

The paper said, the commando teams are supplying information that US intelligence agencies are unable to collect electronically.



RIYADH — A civilian (l) argues with the US soldiers blocking his access to the site where a six-storey building was struck by an Iraqi missile here late January 25. The photo was taken by AFP. According to reports, three Bangladeshis were injured during one of Iraqi attacks.

15 km oil spill forming in Gulf

RIYADH, Jan 26: A 15 kilometer oil spill is forming in the northern Gulf across from Kuwait's Mina Al-Ahmadi pumping station, a Saudi military spokesman said here late Friday, reports AFP.

Cited by the official Saudi Press Agency, he said five tankers were sailing on the periphery of the spill but gave no further details on the quantities of oil poured into the Gulf.

In Washington, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater accused Iraq of deliberately dumping huge quantities of Kuwaiti crude oil into the Gulf.

"We have indications over the past few days that Iraqi forces have been deliberately dumping large amounts of crude oil in the Persian Gulf," Mr. Fitzwater said, adding that the spill could be aimed at slowing down an allied invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. officials said here earlier the damaged Mina Al-Ahmadi Station had poured thousands of tons of oil into the Gulf threatening Saudi installations, and a Saudi officer said Iraq might be leaking the oil deliberately.

U.S. Marine Major-General Robert Johnson told reporters the spillage could total 100,000 barrels a day.

He said sabotage was a possibility but details of the damage were still unknown.

The spill was moving with Gulf currents tides and wind and heading away from the Saudi desalination plant at Al-Khafji, near the Kuwaiti border, a Saudi Naval official said.

The Mina Al-Ahmadi oil terminal is 25 kilometers off the Kuwaiti coast, a Saudi military spokesman said.

Earlier this week, Iraqi forces in Kuwait set alight several oil wells, sending huge clouds of billowing black smoke into the atmosphere possibly to disrupt visibility to allied aircraft.

Environmental havoc let loose

World outraged over oil spill: Bush

WASHINGTON, Jan 26: President George Bush said Friday that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was shocking the world with bombing Israel, showing prisoners of war on television and now spilling oil into the Gulf, reports AP.

"He clearly is outraging the world," Bush said at a White House news conference.

"Now he resorts to enormous environmental damage in terms of turning loose a lot of oil," Bush said. "It's not going to help him at all."

"I can't figure out what he's doing when he brutally parades American prisoners," Bush said, referring to the display of captured US and allied airmen on Iraqi television.

"The brutal parading of

American prisoners... it's just outrageous what he has done," Bush said.

"It's not a performance that's winning him points anywhere," Bush said.

Calling Iraqi action "sick," Bush said "looks desperate, it looks last gasp, it doesn't measure up to any military doctrine."

The United States and its allies began bombing military targets in Iraq and Iraqi-held Kuwait on Jan. 17.

Iraq has retaliated by launching Scud missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia, but has refrained from other reactions.

Bush also mentioned the meeting scheduled this week-end between Secretary of State James A. Baker III and the new

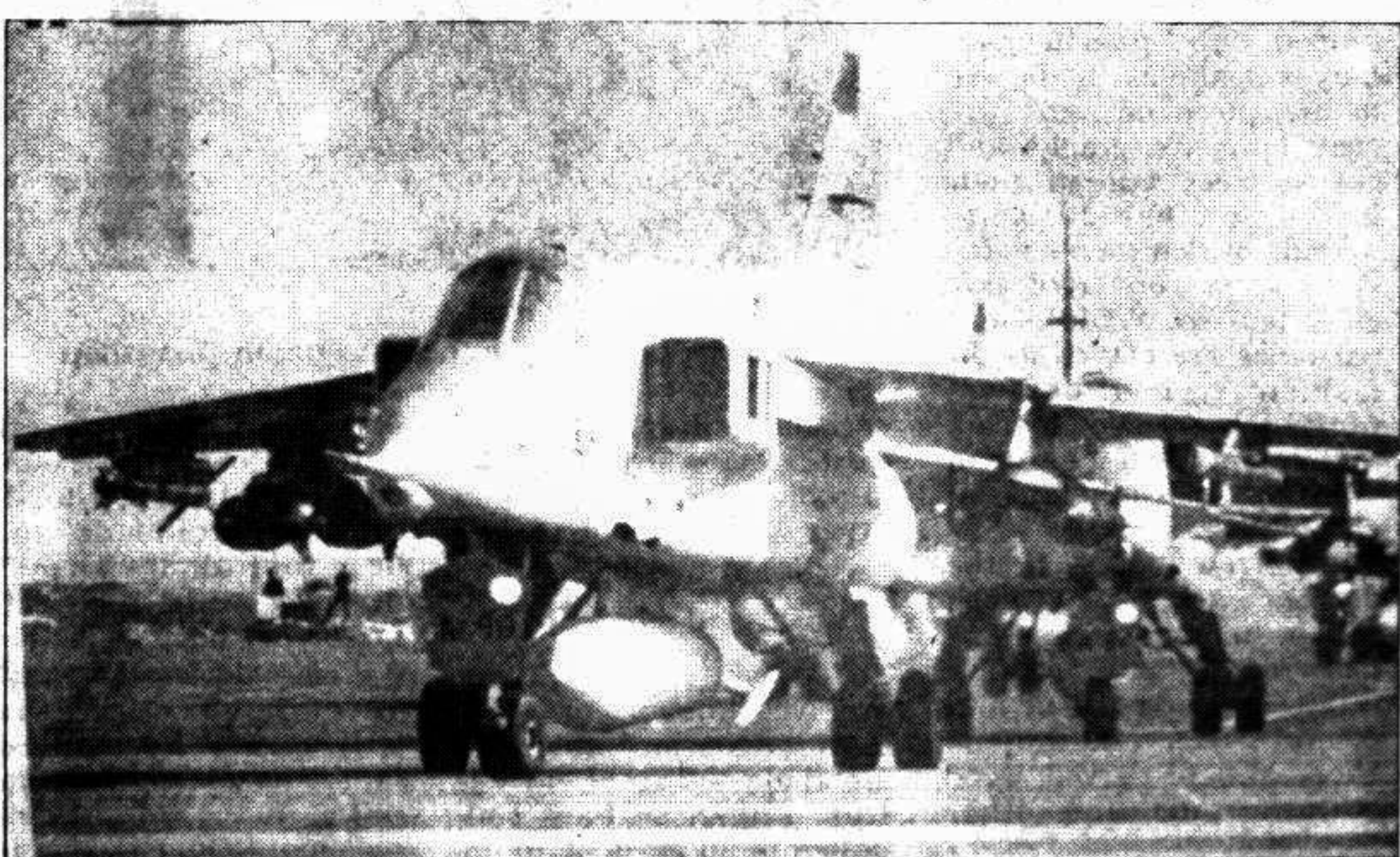
Soviet Foreign Minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh.

"I'm looking forward to the consultations secretary Baker is having with Mr. Bessmertnykh," Bush said.

The meeting comes amid harsh condemnation of the crackdown in the Baltics, in which at least 19 people have died as a result of actions by Soviet forces.

Reuters adds: The huge Gulf oil spill could cripple crucial water treatment plants, disrupt fishing and wreak environmental havoc, environmentalists and US government officials said on Friday.

"This... could destroy the Gulf for decades," said the Sierra Club, a California-based environmental group.



SAUDI ARABIA — French Air Force Jaguar jetfighters get ready to take off, from Al-Hasra Air Base early January 25 for a bombing mission over Iraqi strategic positions. — AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record

Even condoms now camouflaged

LONDON, Jan 26: A British company has won a special contract to supply allied troops in the Gulf with 500,000 camouflaged condoms, reports Reuters.

London International Group PLC said the sand-coloured prophylactics were intended exclusively for military use - to stop sand getting into rifle barrels - not their usual purpose.

The lone journalist

NEW YORK, Jan 26: The lone American television correspondent still in Iraq said Friday he counted nearly two dozen homes destroyed following what he was told was an air attack on a small town northwest of Baghdad, reports AP.

"There was no way this could have been a staged event," the correspondent, Peter Arnett, said in a live telephone interview from Baghdad, broadcast by Cable News Network.

"I've seen bomb damage in 17 wars in the last 30 years, and this was just typical. It filled all the qualifications, all the appearances."

"This wasn't set-up," Arnett said.

Arnett said that he had been taken to the small town, Aldur, about 100 miles (160 kilometres) northwest of the capital city, by Information Ministry officials. He said he was told the bombing took place about midnight Jan. 21.

Arnett said he was told 24 civilians were killed and 100 injured in the attack.

The correspondent said he spoke to at least two people who said their entire families had been killed in the raid.

Eves scales the high

BEIJING, Jan 26: China, the world's most populous nation, faces a peak number of women at child bearing age that may cause a new population explosion, the official Farmers' Daily newspaper said Friday, reports Reuters.

"Our country's population situation is still grim, and the task of birth control is extremely arduous," the paper said.

China's population topped 1.14 billion at the end of 1990. China's chief birth control official, Peng Peiyun, Director of the State Family Planning Commission, told the newspaper.

She predicted it would grow by around 17 million people per year in the first half of this decade.

The number of women entering their fertile years and the number of women at the peak of their fertility would continue to increase each year until 1996, when figures would finally begin to decline, Peng said.

China began strict population control measures in the 1970's, including limiting most couples to only one child.

Dangerously low

BEIJING, Jan 26: Workers' faith in the Chinese leadership is at a dangerously low, the Workers Daily warned Friday calling for immediate steps to ward off social unrest, reports AP.

"Workers bitterly hate the negative corruption within the (communist) party and society," the official newspaper said, citing a survey of labours in various industries.

"Workers worry that the struggle to oppose corruption and to build clean government is like the wind," the paper said.

The Chinese authorities have acknowledged the problem of widespread corruption within their ranks, one of the main grievances of the pro-democracy protests of 1989 that drew tens of thousands of workers to the streets.

Numerous campaigns have been launched, but corruption particularly among lower and middle ranking officials continues to permeate the government, the party and the state enterprises they oversee.

Charles the painter

LONDON, Jan 26: A book of watercolor paintings by Britain's prince Charles is to be published this fall and any profits will go to charity, the publishers said Thursday, reports AP.

A spokesman for Little Brown and Co. UK Ltd. said the Prince of Wales will write the text to accompany reproductions of about 70 of his paintings. Diana Holmes said the book will be available in both Britain and United States, where Boston-based Little Brown and Co. will publish the prince's work.

Most of the watercolors are landscape painted in Britain or around a 14th century house in Urbino, Italy, birthplace of the painter Raphael, Ms. Holmes said.

Some of the works in the book were exhibited by the 42-year-old heir to the British throne last year to raise funds for the repair of the spire of Salisbury Cathedral. Other paintings in the book are to be shown in May in a one man show, the publishers said.

The profits will go to the Prince of Wales Charities Trust. Some previous fund recipients include flood relief for Wales and the Prince's Trust, which helps disadvantaged young people. Charles is involved with more than 400 charitable organizations.

Nawaz Sharif in Cairo

CAIRO, Jan 26: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif arrived in Cairo yesterday evening on a one-day visit to Egypt to seek possible peace initiatives to end the Gulf war, reports Xinhua.

Sharif was met at the airport by Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki and Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul-Meguid. He is scheduled to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak this morning.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency said the Pakistani Prime Minister's visit to Egypt is part of his current tour of several Arab countries in the region in an attempt to halt the ongoing war in the Gulf.

Sharif has already visited Iran, Turkey, Syria and Jordan. He is scheduled to travel to Saudi Arabia following his stay in Cairo.

Land battle to be bloody, says British Minister

London, January 26: A Britain Government Minister warned on Friday that a land battle in the Gulf war would be "long, drawn-out and bloody," reports Reuters.

Archie Hamilton, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, said if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against the allies there could be a "massive retaliation," which would be devastation for the Iraqi Nation.

Speaking to the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service, Hamilton said nobody should try to forecast the length of the struggle.

India follows Dhaka's events with interest

BEIJING, Jan 26: Indian External Affairs Minister VC Shukla has said the recent developments in Bangladesh are essentially an internal matter of that country, reports PTI.

However, being a close neighbour which enjoys a shared history and culture with Bangladesh, "we have been following events there with deep interest," he said.

In an exclusive interview with Chinese News Agency Xinhua, Mr. Shukla said "We are very happy to note that, with the successful culmination of the movement for the restoration of democracy, free and fair elections are due to take place in the near future."

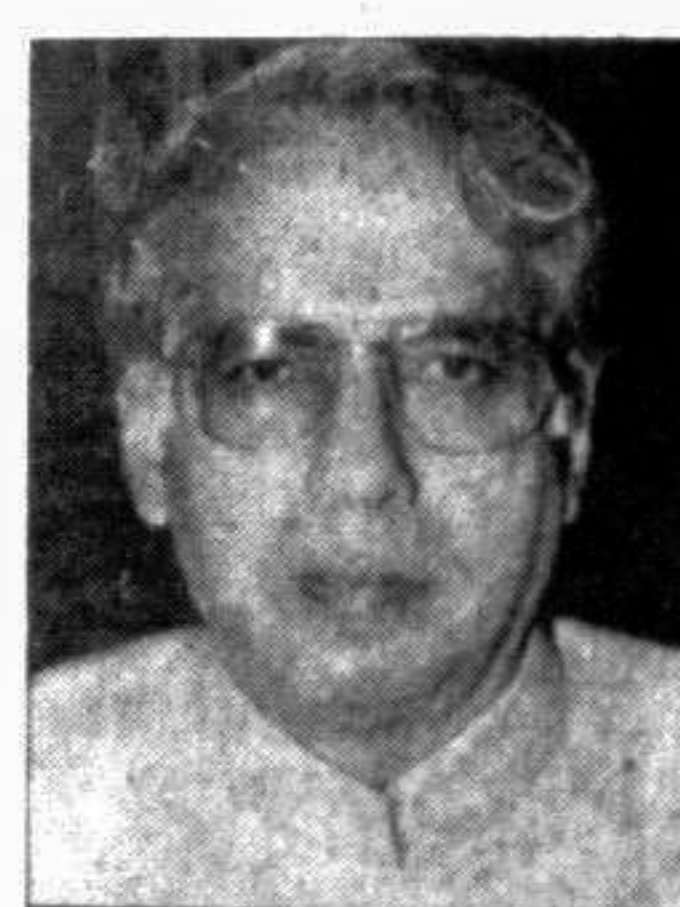
He said India was looking forward to working closely with the democratically elected government in Bangladesh.

On relations with Pakistan, Mr. Shukla noted that some progress was made at the third round of foreign secretary level talks held in Islamabad last December, hoping that this process will be carried forward in the next round which is scheduled for the last week of February in Delhi.

It is India's endeavour to resolve all differences between the two countries through dialogue, he said, adding New Delhi believes that the establishment of friendly relations between them will not only be of mutual benefit but also in the interest of peace and stability in the region.

SAARC

Speaking about the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, he said this forum has so far been confined to social, cultural, technical and scientific fields, helping member countries understand each other and it is time to step into areas of economic



cooperation to carry the momentum further.

Economic cooperation will be more beneficial to small countries than to India, Mr. Shukla said.

Mr. Shukla said such cooperation will lead to significant economic development including generation of employment in the region.

Through the cooperation, SAARC members can also gain an advantage of the region's collective promotion or marketing of products by utilizing economies of scale, he said.

Zhivkov faces trial Feb 25

SOFIA, Jan 26: Former Bulgarian communist leader Todor Zhivkov will stand trial next month for embezzling millions of dollars of public funds and abusing his power the newspaper Duma said on Friday, reports Reuters.

The Socialist (former communist) Party newspaper, quoting well-informed sources, said the 79-year-old former president would go on trial on February 25 with his close associate Milko Balev a member of the former ruling politburo.