

Iranian sub starts cruising Gulf

NICOSIA, Nov 23: Iran on Monday became the first nation in the oil-rich Gulf region with a submarine. It and another Russian-built submarine on order could dramatically alter the region's naval balance, reports AP.

Iran inducted the ship into its navy, state-run Tehran Radio reported in the first official confirmation by Iran that it has acquired the submarine, which has alarmed the United States and Iran's Arab neighbours in the Gulf.

Iran "gives itself the right to acquire equipment which raises and strengthens its defensive base," said Brig-Gen. Abbas Mohtad, deputy commander of the navy.

The radio, monitored in Nicosia, said the kilo-class diesel-electric submarine was named, "Tareq 901," after a famous Muslim warrior, at the ceremony at the naval base of Bandar Abbas in the southern Gulf.

The US Navy tracked the Iranian boat as it sailed through the Red Sea on the last leg of its voyage from St. Petersburg, which it left September 23.

But the Americans have provided no new information about the boat for more than a week. The US Navy claimed the USS Topeka, a nuclear-powered submarine, was in the area only for routine maintenance.

The submarine is the first

of two bought by Iran from Russia. The second is under construction. Tehran has an option to buy a third.

The subs are likely to be based at the naval base Iran is building at Chahbahar on the Gulf of Oman coast, 65 miles (100 kilometers) west of the border with Pakistan.

That will give them access to the deep waters of the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Tehran has long sought to acquire a blue-water naval capability to bolster its ambition to be the dominant military power in the region.

This has raised fears that the Iranian purchases could trigger a submarine race in the region, whose oil-rich states are among the biggest spenders on arms.

But a French naval commander Tuesday advised other Gulf states not to rush to buy submarines, but to acquire minesweepers.

Rear Adm. Huber Follard, commander of French naval forces in the Indian Ocean, said the Iranian submarines could be used for laying mines in the Gulf without being detected.

That would threaten merchant shipping in the Gulf, through which 20 per cent of the world's oil supplies pass, particularly the chokepoint in the Strait of Hormuz, the only way in and out of the Gulf.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presenting a TV set to students of Badrunnessa College yesterday. — PID photo

Diplomats term Yangon's plan for democracy 'a farce'

YANGON, Nov 23: Almost three years after it rejected an opposition election victory, Myanmar's military government is taking what it says is the first step back to democracy, reports Reuters.

A national convention to discuss guidelines for drawing up a new constitution will begin on January 9, but the political opposition and some diplomats say the only sure thing about the convention is that it will enshrine the military's role in politics.

"We are laying the foundations for a multiparty system," said U Aye, the Foreign Ministry's Director General for Political Affairs. "There will be participation from all walks of life."

But a foreign diplomat disagreed, saying: "It's going to be a total farce in terms of democratic aspirations. The delegates are handpicked and the SLORC will present the findings."

The SLORC — the State Law and Order Restoration Council — is the latest embodiment of the military oligarchy that has ruled this former British colony in suffocating fashion for the past three decades.

The junta took direct power in 1988 as troops crushed a nationwide democracy uprising by killing large numbers of demonstrators.

It ignored the opposition victory in 1990 elections and stands internationally condemned for systematic repression.

Lately, however, the junta has eased up. About 1,200 political prisoners have been released since April and some martial law decrees revoked.

Arrests have stopped, diplomats say, and the lifting of the night curfew has brought a noticeable easing of tension in the capital at least.

Foreign journalists are being welcomed by urbane and articulate officials such as U Aye who argue the military's case.

Diplomats are divided as to whether this is just sleight of hand by the junta to deflect international criticism and get foreign aid flowing again or a glimmer of light in Myanmar's dark ages.

"Change yes, improvement no," said one. "Fundamentally it's the same." The optimists say Myanmar

is not the only Asian country where the military has played a leading role in politics. What is happening now must be welcomed and encouraged, they say.

Often mentioned is the example of Indonesia whose army, like Myanmar's, was forged in an anti-colonial struggle and which still enjoys political privileges.

Much about the convention remains vague — how long it will last, when the actual drafting of a constitution will begin and how much freedom of speech will be allowed.

"We would be lying if we said the process would take a month or few months," U Aye said.

He said he had no idea if elections would eventually be held or if the national assembly chosen in the 1990 elections would be allowed finally to convene.

The junta has already announced that the leading political role of the armed forces will be enshrined.

The right to secession, laid down in the post-independence constitution will also not be given, U Aye said.

Benazir starts train journey

KARACHI, Nov 23: Opposition leader Benazir Bhutto set off on a train journey here late Monday to rally public support for her campaign to force new elections in Pakistan, reports AFP.

The Khyber Mail Express rolled off from the Karachi Railway Station at 10:05 pm (1705 GMT) amid chants of "long live Bhutto" by a crowd of supporters travelling on the same train.

Bhutto was accompanied by leaders from her four-party People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) as well as prominent figures from another opposition grouping, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), witnesses said.

Bodos go for 1001-hr strike from today

GUWAHATI (India), Nov 23: A tribal group fighting for separate statehood within India has called for a 1001-hour strike from Tuesday and officials said they feared land links with the remote north-east region could be disrupted, reports Reuters.

Phukan Bodo, spokesman for the all India Bodo Students Union, said today that the strike had been called to press for Bodo control over traditional tribal areas in Assam state.

Another tribal group, the outlawed Bodo security force, was blamed for the killing of 40 people in two bomb blasts in Guwahati on Saturday.

State government officials said they feared the Bodo groups could damage land links in Assam and cut off states further east from the Indian mainland during the strike.

"The Bodos have already blown up a major road bridge," said Assam Home Secretary Tapanlal Baruah. "They are likely to attack other communication links like rail tracks and we are worried about it."

Road links via Sirajganj snapped as ferry runs aground

MANIKGANJ, Nov 23: A loaded ferry ran aground in a diversion route, across the Jamuna Sunday evening, disrupting road communications between northern districts and the capital via Sirajganj for several hours, reports UNB.

MV "Dhaka" with passengers and vehicles aboard stranded on a shoal in the Nalchia-Sirajganj channel, just commissioned on Sunday, about 1 kilometre off Sirajganj terminal. BIWTC officials here said.

River flow

From Page 1 Col 4 Association (CARDMA) the recommendations of the workshop on an environmental action plan would be submitted for consideration by the SAARC summit.

Chaired by CARDMA President and Vice-President of Global 500 Forum Hasna J Moudud the workshop recommended to initiate cleaner river programmes based on natural biological methods of waste water treatment.

It suggested to ensure Indian ocean as a zone of peace and to honour the right prior abstraction of marine resources by the littoral countries in an eco-sustainable manner as well as to develop mechanism which would give south access to the bio-technologies that are developed through the genetic resources provided by the South during the past.

It also suggested environmental impact assessment for big development and engineering projects before their planning and implementation.

The workshop recommended to avoid construction of big dams and major river valley and river training projects for preventing loss of biodiversity and generation of environmental refugees.

Referring to the rich mangrove ecosystem of the Sundarbans the workshop suggested to declare it as a world heritage site.

The recommendations also included initiating a regional agreement of SAARC countries to impose a total ban on the import of all waste and toxic substances, setting up of a SAARC monitoring system of flora and fauna, protection of marine life support system from dumping of hazardous toxic waste, monitoring of exchange of information on sea level rise, and initiating an integrated regional watershed management to manage trans-boundary river water.

The Midnight File

Hindu fanatics won't be allowed to build temple: Rao

NEW DELHI, Nov 23: Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao said Monday the government will not allow Hindu zealots to build a temple on a site occupied by a mosque. There can be no compromise on this. We could consider any possible option that respects the basic democratic values and constitutional principles," Rao told a meeting of politicians and eminent persons, reports AP.

Five killed in Nagorno-Karabakh

YEREVAN (Armenia), Nov 23: At least five people were killed Monday when Azerbaijani militants shelled the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, a government spokesman said. Azerbaijani also downed two Armenian military helicopters flying in Azerbaijani airspace, the JTAR-Tass news agency quoted Azerbaijan's defence ministry as saying, reports AP.

Flamadol: Show cause

From Page 1 Col 7 as a solvent in a preparation of sulfanilamide. In the incident 105 out of 353 people injected with sulfanilamide-diethylene glycol preparations died from renal damage.

The BDA allegation against Famadol Syrup came following a recent seminar conducted by the Dhaka Shishu Hospital authorities where Dr Hanif claimed that certain brands of paracetamol syrups available in the market contained the poisonous diethylene glycol.

Dr Hanif, in a bid to substantiate his comment, produced a report of a United States-based laboratory that had tested the syrup and arrived at the decision that the Famadol contained diethylene glycol, the fatal cousin of propylene glycol.

According to Hanif, 239 out of total of 309 children admitted into the Shishu Hospital in recent months with Acute Renal Failure (ARF) were found to have taken paracetamol syrups. 233 children later died.

The BDA has also asked the owners of the Adflame Pharmaceuticals Ltd to withdraw their syrup from the market.

While talking to this correspondent, Brig (ret'd) Mokheer Rahman, Director General of the BDA, however, confessed that although the BDA had issued show cause on the owners of Adflame Pharmaceuticals, the BDA was yet to have authentic laboratory test reports on the controversial syrup.

He further told The Daily Star that the BDA had no arrangements to test the excipient ingredients of the drug so far.

At the request of the BDA, a doctor from the World Health Organisation (WHO) had taken the responsibility to conduct tests on five suspected syrups including Famadol in a new Delhi laboratory and that the report was expected to reach to the BDA this week.

The BDA Laboratory is only

capable of testing the active ingredients of a certain drug, and Laboratory tests conducted twice on the Famadol Syrup in the past showed that it contained the ideal amount of paracetamol, the Director General of the BDA told The Daily Star.

When contacted, Dr Anwar Pasha, one of the owners and Managing Director of the Adflame Pharmaceuticals Limited, admitted receipt of the show cause served on him by the BDA but denied the allegation made against him.

Dr Pasha said that the BDA had tested and approved the syrup twice in the past since the company started producing it in July 1989.

On the other hand the Shishu Hospital stopped purchasing the syrup of the company in September 1990, Dr Pasha also said adding that the question of mixing diethylene glycol in the syrup did not even arise.

He however admitted that the Shishu Hospital authorities complained though vaguely, about side effects of the syrup before it stopped purchasing it.

Dr Pasha, quoting from Davidson's Medicine argued that paracetamol itself, when injected into patients with nephritis, could cause renal failure and kidney damage and thus lead the patient to fatal consequences.

A Dhaka-based expert, said on the condition of anonymity, that it was also to be properly investigated whether the children had died of renal failure and kidney damage because of alleged taking of the 'suspected paracetamol' syrup or due to wrong treatment.

The fatal consequences due to diethylene glycol was, however, not new in the world. According to a report published in the Newsweek November 5, 1990, at least 109 children, aged 6 months to 6 years, died of kidney failure in Nigeria in 1990 due to paracetamol containing diethylene glycol.

Hasina: BNP

From Page 1 Col 8 local AL leaders Zillur Rahman, Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, Fazlul Haq, Monam Sarker, ABM Mohiuddin Choudhury, Mosharraf Hossain and Idris.

The Awami League leader alleged that ruling BNP is gradually losing the confidence of people and governing the country by enacting "black laws."

Criticising the anti-terrorism law, Hasina said, "the country is virtually placed under a 'mini-martial law' out to persecute the opposition to consolidate the power bases of the government."

She wondered how BNP leaders or workers were not being arrested under the anti-terrorism law when, she alleged, terrorists belonging to the ruling party and its front organisations have let loose a reign of terror in the society.

Referring to the economic scenario, Hasina said the government failed to initiate pragmatic approach to salvage the national economy from stagnation. "Corruption, bribe and nepotism threw the economy into shambles," she alleged.

The Opposition Leader also rebuked the government leaders for what she called distorting the history of the country's independence war. Refuting BNP's claim that late President Zia had declared the war of independence, Hasina said, "possibly BNP leaders have become mad."

The Awami League President also visited the Chittagong Medical College Hospital to see Razuan thana Chhatra League leader Jasmuddin Parvez who was shot at and injured, allegedly by JCD activists on Sunday. She also visited the homes of Chhatra League workers who were recently killed by their political opponents.

Hasina demanded withdrawal of "false" cases against her party workers in Satkania, Rouzan, Mirerswarai and Fatikchhari. She demanded release of detained leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations.

Govt college teachers call off programmes

From Page 1 Col 8 Bangladesh Government College Professors Association and the Lecturers' Association yesterday announced withdrawal of their programmes of strike and gherao following 'fruitful discussions' with the Secretary, Ministry of Education Shaful Alam and the DG Secondary and Higher Education Directorate, Mohammad Younus Miah, who, a Professors' Association press release said, had agreed to accept 10 points of its 12-point demand, reports BSS.

Eliadah

From Page 1 Col 8 (Switzerland) from Bangladesh on February 25 this year will be produced before the second Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka, today.

Two other accused, a Bangladeshi Abdul Qayum and another Nigerian Okoy Godwin are still absconding.

Eliadah was arrested with the heroin at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on February 25 and later two other foreigners were arrested following Eliadah's statement given to police.

The charges against the five accused will be framed and the date for examination and cross-examination of the witnesses will be fixed today.

Gunmen

From Page 1 Col 7 hospital correspondent.

Several others who suffered injuries were also given first aid at the DMCH, reports the correspondent.

A police team led by the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Labagh Police Station rushed to the spot immediately after the incident and was patrolling the area until filing of this report last night.

Labagh police said that a case was registered with them under the Anti-Terrorism Ordinance. But no arrest was made until 11:00 last night, they added.

SAARC summit

From Page 1 Col 4 laration on South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC). The First Summit in Dhaka in 1985 adopted the Charter to form SAARC.

The 13 areas of cooperation under the IPA are: agriculture, health and population activities, meteorology, postal services, prevention of drug trafficking and drug abuse, transport, education, rural development, science and technology, sports, arts and culture, telecommunications, women in development and tourism.

According to a Bangladeshi diplomat, the summit is expected to formally launch a "framework agreement" under the style SAPTA to promote trade among member nations, but it is unlikely to suggest any "across the board" duty cut.

"Under the framework agreement, the countries will decide on tariff through consultations on bilateral plane," said the diplomat, refuting fears that SAPTA might not be helpful to the less developed countries in the region.

The SADF, which aims at mobilising additional regional and external resources to fund projects for sustained eco-

nomie development, has been proposed to be established on a small scale which could be expanded in future to meet resource needs of the subcontinent, home to a fifth of humankind.

A panel of experts headed by Bhutanese Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering has suggested that the Dhaka Summit greenlight the formation of the sub-regional financial institution.

The Commission on Poverty Alleviation has suggested an approach which should be "innovative, pro-poor, politically-directed and based on an analysis of the inadequacies of past development planning in South Asia while deriving lessons from the cases of poverty alleviation drawn from the ground."

The report of the Commission, headed by a former Nepalese Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, speaks of a culturally-relevant and people-centred approach to development as people are South Asia's greatest asset.

"Poverty alleviation, though primarily political, is also multi-dimensional and hence cannot be purely technocratic approaches."

SAARC: \$ 20000 a day

From Page 1 Col 3 Each floor was being prepared for a particular head of state or government and his entourage with equal facilities being provided.

On each floor, the management pointed out, similar suites will house the heads of state or government and according similar suits distributed among the FMs, secretaries and others.

The hotel's ambitious renovation programme taken up in the backdrop of the summit is gradually turning the hotel into a leading one.

Wooden panels, light silk wall paper, soft and elegant curtains, imported woollen carpets, new furniture with imported upholstery and nicely decorated plants in locally crafted eastern pots, traditional terracotta wall and, above all, rare yet exquisite granite tiles on the floor has enhanced the beauty of the lobby tremendously.

The granite was imported from India while woollen carpets were brought from Thailand, fabrics from Belgium, bathroom fittings from the USA, equipment for upgrading the lifts from Japan and kitchen utensils from Switzerland.

The hotel management informed that the goods were allowed to be imported without customs duty and sales tax.

At one end of the lobby, a Cafe has been opened to offer a selection of pastries team and coffee.

According to Hotel officials, an additional Mediterranean style open-air cafe specialising in Antipasta, Pizza and Pasta has also been opened.

To facilitate the holding of parties and evening receptions, and dinners, a Roof Top Terrace is being constructed to provide guests a magnificent view of the lush green Ramna Garden.

The corridors of the hotel have been painted with bright and soft colours.

Set on four acres of land adjoining the city's main park, the Ramna Garden, the hotel also has a health club with exercise equipment.

The function room Melonce has also been renovated and expanded to accommodate more guests than before.

The lifts have been modernised and made speedier with their inside tastefully decorated. The hotel is already equipped with fully automatic fire detection and sprinkler systems.

The Sheraton will also supply food for the SAARC VVIPs at the opening and closing ceremonies to be held at the International Conference Centre, the banquets to be hosted by the President at Bangabhaban and by the Prime Minister at Senakunja and also during a river cruise of the SAARC guest on board VVIP vessel Ostrich on the Buriganga.

The renovation programme of the Dhaka Sheraton which started in August, is expected to be completed in the current month. The government will take control of the hotel December 4.

The hotel, the first of its kind in the country, was originally constructed in the 60s as Hotel Inter-continental and later changed ownership in the early 80s.

Ershad's cell

From Page 1 Col 5 present at the press conference at the Islam Chamber building.

Ahmed also challenged the government to provide papers substantiating the charge of funneling out money and said that the report of US Senator John Kerry was misquoted by the local media.

The former vice-president said that Kerry committee report, based on different American newspapers, stated that 520 million US dollar fund misappropriation was a claim of Bangladesh government. It was not investigated by the committee, he added.

"The government can sue Ershad on this ground so that the truth will be revealed," Moudud said providing reporters with Bangladesh-part of the Kerry's report. JP's acting Secretary General ABM Shajahan, former minister Nitoy Roy Chowdhury, Tajul Islam MP, Monirul Huq Chowdhury MP and Mahbulul Huq Dolon were, among others, present at the conference.

A full-scope four-page written statement signed by two lawyers quoted Ershad as saying that a writ regarding his solitary confinement is now pending with the High Court for hearing. In such a situation the authorities move to set camera in his room, aims at disrupting his mental balance."

The writ petition was expected to be heard on Tuesday.

They said that they talked with their client with the help of an interpreter and saw his hazy face through a small airtight glass-window.

Three plain cloth Special Branch policemen stood closely behind them (the lawyers) during the one-hour meeting at 3.30 pm Saturday.

Ershad was also quoted as saying that he had been suffering acute pain in his knee for the past few days while the condition of his eyes and abdominal ailment deteriorated.

He said that "Ershad does not need any special facilities in jail and demanded only a first class prisoner's status under the Jail Code."

Moudud said that a 5-member medical team's recommendation about a year earlier to check up Ershad's eyes and abdomen in the PG Hospital, was ignored by the authorities.

The JP leader said that the "repressionary" measures so far taken against Ershad were "degrading, inhumane, cruel and political revenge" which were contradictory to democratic practice.

Full Court decision

From Page 1 Col 4 "there is nothing about consulting with the 'Full Court' in the Constitution."

But Barrister Amir-ul-Islam, an eminent lawyer and Constitutional expert, said that this consultation had to be such that it ensured separation of the executive from the judicial branch and that Article 116 must be read along with Article 116a, which states that "all persons employed in the judicial service and all magistrates shall be independent in the exercise of the judicial functions."

He noted that a Lawyers Coordination Committee meeting earlier this month passed a resolution condemning the move to ignore the 'Full Court' decision.

If the government failed to implement the 'Full Court' decision within the next few days, he warned, the lawyers would unitedly take appropriate measures against the government move.

Barrister Islam observed that if the decisions or recommendations of the 'Full Court' regarding postings, promotions and disciplinary matters were not complied with or if there was no effective consultation for the purpose of ensuring rule of law and separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of government then an impression would be created that it was not the decision of the High Court Division that would prevail on the matter.

"The Judges under that circumstances will be dependent upon the executive branch through the executive branch for their promotion and transfer and not on the evaluation of their performance as is regularly made by the High Court Division, which obviously is the only authority capable of evalu-

ating the performance of the sub-ordinate judges," he added.

However, he added that if the executive branch could override such evaluations, recommendations and decisions, then the independence and separation of the judiciary ceased to exist.

The government's attitude and its stand that the 'Full Court' decision is not binding represents a frame of mind which is totally inconsistent with the working of a democratic constitution," he said.

Earlier this year, the Law Ministry, after considering the dossiers of 30 Sub-Judges, recommended a panel of 25 for promotion on the basis of seniority as Additional Judges, according to the informed source.

Headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and three senior High Court Division Judges, the General Administrative (GA) committee initially approved 19 of the 25 Sub-Judges recommended for promotion by the Law Ministry.

The GA committee further recommended that the other six cases along with the remaining five of the original list of 30 cases be decided by the 'Full Court'.

In May, the 'Full Court' scrutinized the 11 cases and recommended that four be included with the initially approved list of 19 and said that the remaining seven cases should be considered in the next panel for promotion based on their subsequent annual confidential report.

The government ignored the 'Full Court' decision and approved only two of the four cases, superseding one Sub-Judge in the process, the source added.

Auranga's prayer rejected

From Page 1 Col 5 Court No 8 Dhaka, on November 11 and November 14.

Petitioner's counsel Khandker Mahub Hussain argued that the trial of this case can not continue unless it is revived by an application under Section 339D of the code of criminal procedure.

According to the case records, FIR was lodged with Ramna police on January 28, 1980 by one Sepahi Fazlul Huq, a driver of DGFI against Auranga for involvement in the murder of Naik Ali Azam of DGFI in Dhaka and he was charged on May 11, 1981. After submission of the charge sheet the magistrate

stopped the case by an order dated July 7, 1982.

After a lapse of more than ten years the case was revived on August 20 last. After revival of the case, the magistrate passed the order on September 22 last by taking steps for in absentia trial against Auranga. In the meantime the accused Auranga was arrested on October 24 last from Purbani Hotel in city.

The Sessions Judge, Dhaka took cognizance of offence against him on October 26 last. Thereafter the Additional Sessions Judge 8th court, Dhaka, framed charge against Auranga on November 14 and the trial now is pending in the same court.

stated the case by an order dated July 7, 1982.

After a lapse of more than ten years the case was revived on August 20 last. After revival of the case, the magistrate passed the order on September 22 last by taking steps for in absentia trial against Auranga. In the meantime the accused Auranga was arrested on October 24 last from Purbani Hotel in city.

The Sessions Judge, Dhaka took cognizance of offence against him on October 26 last. Thereafter the Additional Sessions Judge 8th court, Dhaka, framed charge against Auranga on November 14 and the trial now is pending in the same court.

stated the case by an order dated July 7, 1982.

After a lapse of more than ten years the case was revived on August 20 last. After revival of the case, the magistrate passed the order on September 22 last by taking steps for in absentia trial against Auranga. In the meantime the accused Auranga was arrested on October 24 last from Purbani