

Syria rejects phased return of Golan

DAMASCUS, May 18: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher today briefed President Hafiz Al-Assad on his talks with Israeli leaders as the official press dismissed the idea of a phased return of the Golan Heights, reports AFP.

Christopher was met on arrival from Israel by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Al-Shara and went directly to the presidential palace.

As the US envoy brought his peace mission back to Syria, the official Ath-Thawra daily said: "Syria firmly and categorically rejects partial solutions as well as a phased withdrawal from the Golan," which Israel has proposed.

"We will not accept any Israeli presence on a single inch of the Golan," the newspaper said.

Israel has proposed a withdrawal over several years from the Heights, which it captured in 1967 and annexed in 1981.

The Washington Post, citing unnamed officials involved in the mediation between Israel and Syria, said Damascus has shown a keen interest in an is-

raeli offer for a three-stage pullout in exchange for peace.

Israel wanted international monitors and electronic devices installed on the plateau, a demilitarised zone extending to neighbouring parts of Syria, the Post said quoting unnamed officials involved in the mediation.

Syria's response to the proposals prompted Christopher's return to the Syrian capital after his talks in Israel, the paper said.

Christopher said in Israel he would try to "find a common basis between the parties" during his new talks with Syrian officials and that he had Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's "encouragement" to return to Damascus.

Rabin commented: "If the Secretary of State, has decided to return this week to Syria to pursue the negotiations there, there is perhaps a glimmer of hope."

"We have to extract everything we can from this opportunity. I believe Christopher will find a joint basis for dialogue," he added.

People's participation a must to protect environment'

By Staff Correspondent

Forest and Environment Minister Col (Retd) M Akbar Hossain yesterday said increased participation of the people is a must for facing the environmental challenges of the country.

The minister was addressing as chief guest the concluding session of a grassroots level workshop organised by the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) at Sreepur of Gazipur district.

The concluding session was also addressed by Michael Constable, Acting Representative of the UNDP Resident Mission and ADAB chairperson, Khushi Kabir.

Couple caught giving proxy in SSC exam

CHANDPUR, May 18: A young couple was caught red handed while giving proxy for each other in the SSC examination centre at Faridganj A R High School on May 12, reports UNB.

According to police, Mizanur Rahman, who already passed the SSC examination in first division, in 1993 again filled up the form along with his wife Parul Begum this year from the same school just to give proxy for his wife.

In the examination centre he used to put his wife's roll and registration numbers in his answer scripts while his wife Parul used to do so in favour of her husband.

In this way, they sat for Bangla, English and General Mathematics examinations but on the day of General Science the matter came to light. The authorities caught both the husband and wife and sent them to the jail.

Rao vows

From Page 1 Col 4

try's "integrity."

About 8,000 people have been killed since the four-decade-old insurgency flared up in 1990 in the state.

Outside the auditorium where Rao spoke, a group of about 40 demonstrators representing a variety of groups, chanted, "Stop the Killing, Stop the Rape." Some carried signs that read, "Freedom for All, Freedom for Kashmir."

But Seraj Ul Haque of Braintree said he was there to protest Indian construction of a dam that he says will deprive Bangladesh of water.

He said jute, jute goods, cosmetics, toiletries, newsprint, and pharmaceutical products are likely to be sold to Myanmar through the agreement while rice, timber, forest products, betel nuts and shrimps are likely to be imported from Myanmar.

He said the lists are only indicative and not exhaustive.

Both the countries have advantages, which could be exploited," the minister explained.

The Myanmar delegation led by Lt. Gen Tun Kyi, which had an eight-day stay in Dhaka, arrived in Bangladesh via Chittagong on May 12.

Tun Kyi said that Myanmar believed in an independent foreign trade policy and it had and will continue to enhance trading with all countries of the world except those embargoed by the United Nations.

Shamsul Islam read out a list of items that are likely to be traded across the border of the two countries.

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