

International

Glimmer of hope as Clinton refuses to let ME peace go

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt, Oct 17: A glimmer of hope emerged in the early hours of today as US President Bill Clinton stubbornly refused defeat in his bid to salvage a make-or-break Middle East summit with a diplomatic war of attrition against belligerents Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, reports AFP.

Clinton, after dinner at a golf club in this Red Sea resort with all the summit's participants, indefinitely delayed a planned midnight departure to huddle down with summit host Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Palestinian leader Arafat.

He once again turned his powers of persuasion on Arafat, then dispatched him to receive a bleary-eyed Barak, the Israeli premier, in hopes of wrenching a truce in the two-week spurge of Israeli-Palestinian violence that is threatening to bury the peace process.

The summit finally adjourned

in the pre-dawn hours after more than 16 hours of intense negotiations.

"We have no schedule but we expect to begin meetings in the morning," White House spokesman P.J. Crowley said, adding that Clinton intended to head back to the summit site around 7:45 a.m. (0545 GMT) after a few hours of rest.

"The president remains determined and will back get at it first thing in the morning," he told reporters.

"We worked intensively on the substance of areas of concern, particularly on how to change the realities on the ground so that we can begin to build a bridge back to peacemaking," said another spokesman, Jake Siewert.

Both declined to characterise the state of the summit, but they called the talks "hard work" and said much more would be needed.

"Our departure time is indefinite," Crowley said earlier.

Clinton had to leave by noon (16:00 BST) to attend a memorial service in Virginia for sailors killed in last week's suspected terrorist attack on a US naval destroyer in Yemen, but Crowley said he could have a few more hours' leeway.

Arafat kept alive hopes of a solution when he returned to the hotel from his meeting with Clinton. "I hope so," he replied with a stern face to a clutch of reporters who asked whether there might be an agreement.

Barak spokesman Gadji Balliansky said the Israeli side remained committed to finding a way to stem the violence that has left 109 people dead, mostly Palestinians, since September 28.

"There is some movement, but they still have to finalise some elements," said another participant in the working dinner, the European Union's top diplomat

Javier Solana. "They haven't lost hope."

Crowley described the conversation at the dinner as "animated" but refused to comment on the substance of the remarks by those present: Clinton, Mubarak, Barak, Arafat, Jordan's King Abdullah II, UN chief Kofi Annan and Solana.

If Clinton manages to salvage something from this summit, he will have achieved perhaps the last coup of his presidency against huge odds: a backdrop of bitter acrimony at the discussion table and continued violence on the ground that claimed two more lives on Monday.

Two marathon meetings of foreign ministers -- which degenerated into veritable shouting matches, according to diplomats -- were broken off and a third abandoned "because there was no basis for an agreement," said Alon Pinkas, a senior Israeli foreign ministry official.



From L to R, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah II of Jordan meet in Sharm el-Sheikh yesterday on the second day of the Middle East summit aimed at bringing an end to the unrest that has threatened the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. --AFP photo

Because his wife's nose bleeds

DUBAI, Oct 17: An Emirati man has obtained a divorce and the return of 27,000 dollars he paid to marry his wife because she had frequent nose bleeds, a newspaper reported today, says AFP.

An Islamic Shariah court in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah on Monday annulled the marriage contract after finding the wife and her family guilty of deceit, Gulf News said.

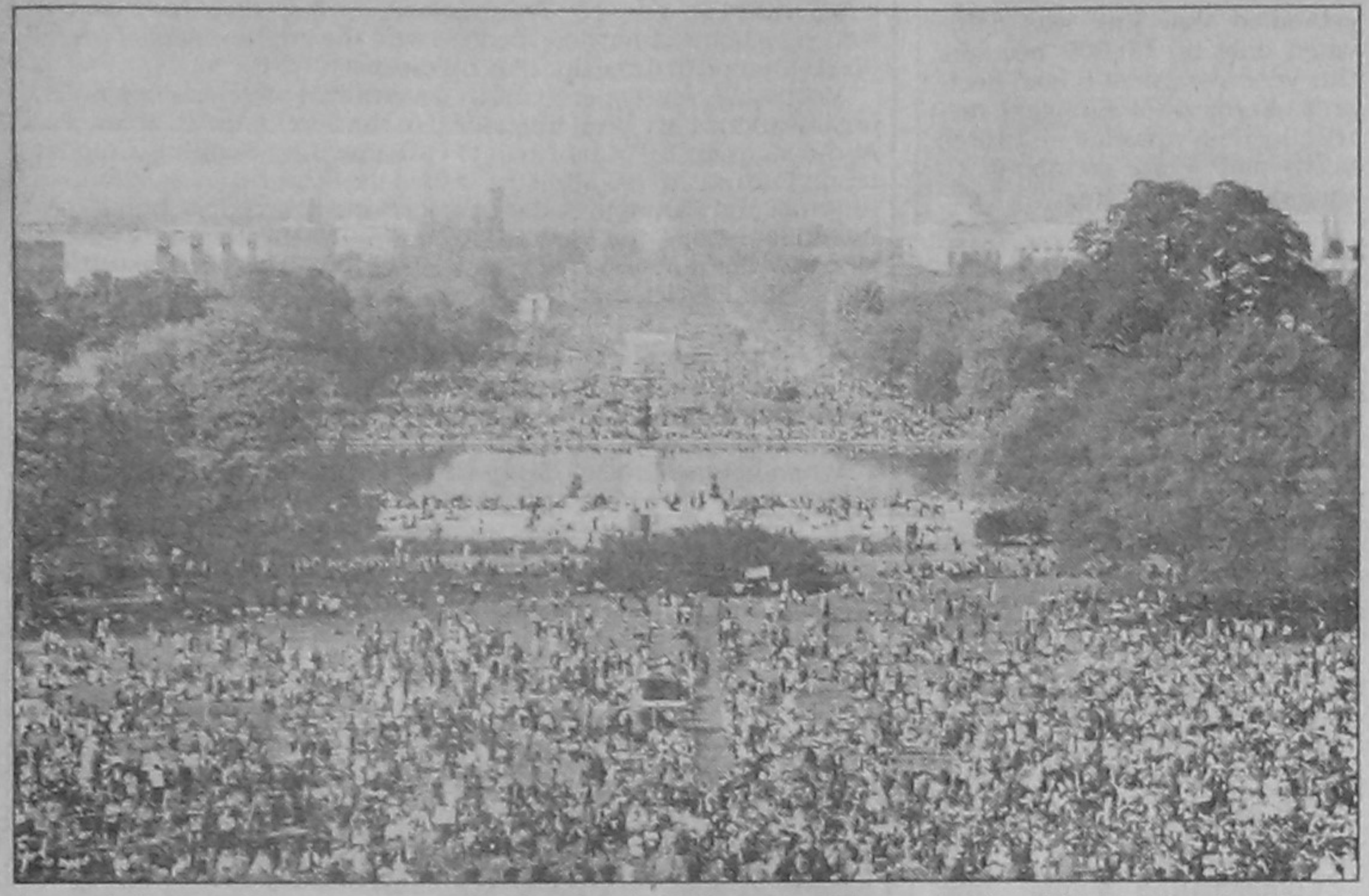
The court had ordered a medical report and doctors found the bleeding was caused by a chest complaint for which she had been treated and can be cured.

However the court still ruled in favour of Saeed Rashid saying the marriage could not be saved.

Islam grants a man the right to divorce on medical grounds if the wife and her family withhold medical history, the court said.

Maryam Mohammad's father was ordered to pay back the 27,250 dollars he received for his daughter as well as court costs.

The court turned down the husband's demands for financial compensation.



Tens of thousands gathered on the National Mall to participate in the 'Million Family March' convened by Louis Farrakhan on Monday in Washington DC. Farrakhan was also expected to wed 10,000 couples during a sacred marriage ceremony at the march. --AFP photo

Tens of thousands attend 'Million Family March'

WASHINGTON, Oct 17: Tens of thousands of people answered the call from controversial Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to take part in the "Million Family March" in the US capital on Monday, reports AFP.

From all over the United States, the mainly African-American crowd took over the Washington Mall here to listen to a string of speakers addressing them from the base of the Capitol, which houses the US Congress.

"Whenever you have a great society or civilisation as the United States of America and 50 percent of those who marry get divorced within the first three years, these are signs of the decline of a civilisation," said Farrakhan, explaining the need for a march to celebrate family values five years after he organised a "Million Man March" on Washington.

"The family is the basic unit of civilisation," said Farrakhan during an improvised three-hour speech he delivered from behind a bullet-proof screen, in which he strongly spoke for the institution of marriage.

"You have the right to choose. Choose well the man that you're going to give yourself to."

"That's pro-choice," he said, then in further reference to abortion: "If you are now expecting a new life, I'm begging you, on behalf of Almighty God, do not abort that life."

The masses promised by organisers failed to materialise at an event: the highlight was to have been a blessing ceremony for 10,000 newly-wed couples, but barely 80 couples turned up.

Local media estimates were that tens of thousands of people attended the event, as police and local authorities failed to provide reliable figures.

Other religious leaders at the event included Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church; some

Roman Catholic bishops; Baptist and Lutheran clerics, and even some Jewish rabbis who joined with Farrakhan to sponsor the event.

Philadelphia grandmother Faloni Muhammad, surrounded by nine grandchildren, said the occasion would bring black families back together again.

"This is a memorable day," she said. "You see, slavery took black families and broke them up. So our optimum objective is to have families come together."

Sporting the white robes of the Nation of Islam, Valerie Muhammad, a 29-year-old teacher, travelled from Charleston, South Carolina, to take part.

"I came to be part of history, to be one in the numbers, to play a role in this great movement in rebuilding families," she said.

The day began with Muslim and Buddhist prayers and Bible readings followed by Native American dances and discussions.

Gayokla Nichi from Oklahoma, a member of the Black Feet US Indian tribe, wore a traditional feathered costume.

"This is a very symbolic day, the spiritual foundation for people to come together and for the unity of the world," he said.

The crowd followed on giant television screens speakers who spoke of God and the importance of the human family, also paying tribute to slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, a civil rights pioneer.

Others were more overtly political, condemning the Jewish "occupation of Palestine."

Dressed in suits with bow ties and dark glasses, members of the Nation of Islam's militant branch, the Fruits of Islam, assured discreet but omnipresent security at the rally.

Six Muslims killed in Bihar

PATNA, India, Oct 17: Suspected Hindu gunmen in eastern India dragged five members of a Muslim family from their beds and shot them, in apparent retaliation for communal killings at the weekend, police said today, reports AFP.

The police chief of Bihar state, K.A. Jacob, said the latest attack occurred Monday night in a remote village in Siwan district, 170 km northwest of the state capital Patna.

As well as the family of five, one other Muslim villager was gunned down.

"We are treating the incident as a retaliatory attack for the killing of 11 Hindu villagers in Siwan three nights before," Jacob said.

The violence stems from a long-standing property dispute between rival followers of an ancient poet-cum-religious cult leader, Sant Kabir, who has devotees in both the Hindu and the Muslim communities.

Local residents say the dispute had already resulted in 30 deaths before the latest spate of killings.

Security reinforcements were rushed to Siwan on Saturday as the first attack sparked off Hindu-Muslim tensions in the area.

Bihar is prone to communal and caste conflicts.

Clashes between private militias operated by upper-caste landlords and Maoist guerrillas have left more than 500 people dead there over the past two years.

US Governor of Missouri killed in plane crash

HILLSBORO, Missouri, Oct 17: Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan is believed to have died late Monday when his plane crashed in rural Missouri, the local sheriff's department said, reports AFP.

Carnahan, a Democrat, was travelling with two other passengers aboard his Cessna when it crashed during a rainstorm at around 7:30 pm (6:30 BST Tuesday) in Jefferson County.

Although there was no official word from the governor's office on the fate of Carnahan and the other passengers aboard the plane, witnesses reported seeing a large fireball and hearing a loud explosion in a heavily wooded area where the plane went down, some 56 km south of St. Louis.

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Bush, Gore face public in final debate before polls

ST. LOUIS, Missouri, Oct 17: Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush will answer questions from the public today in their third and final debate before one of them is elected to the White House November 7, reports AFP.

With only three weeks to go, the yo-yo-like polls are slightly in Bush's favour, but neither candidate can safely claim a clear winning edge.

Tonight's debate format, a town hall meeting, would appear to favour Gore, who is much more experienced in fielding questions from the public. Bush has had few such question-and-answer sessions and usually with friendly audiences.

The televised 90-minute show-down is scheduled to start in St. Louis, Missouri, at 9:00 pm (7:00 BST Wednesday).

The debate will begin with a sad note as both candidates will

likely lament the apparent death of Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan, a 66-year-old Democrat who was reported missing after a small plane crash just south of here late Monday.

Bush and Republican John Ashcroft, a local politician who was running against Carnahan to represent Missouri in the US Senate, have both cancelled their campaign activities for Tuesday, local media have reported.

Although domestic issues are likely to be the foremost concern of people asking questions of Bush and Gore Tuesday night, the explosive situation in the Middle East also loomed large in the campaigns of the White House rivals.

With President Bill Clinton attending a summit in Egypt aimed at restoring calm in Israel and the Palestinian territories, Gore and Bush made measured public statements Monday about

the crisis.

"The governor hopes that the summit will be a success. It has been important to him that we speak with one voice. He's talked about support for the president this time and he certainly hopes he can bring calm," Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security advisor, told CBS.

Analysts were unusually unwilling to say whether the Democratic vice president or Republican governor stood to reap more political gain from the unrest, which has claimed some 109 lives since September 28.

Going into their final exchange, Gore faces the greater challenge: despite his much-vaunted debate savvy and encyclopaedic mastery of policy details, national opinion polls show him trailing Bush by a handful of percentage points after their first two one-on-one encounters.

ROK opposition ends truce with Kim after Nobel celebrations

SEOUL, Oct 16 (AFP) - The South Korean opposition on Tuesday ended a political ceasefire with President Kim Dae-jung following his Nobel Peace Prize win, launching fierce attacks on his government.

Opposition leader Lee Hoi-chang called on Kim to apologise to the national assembly, accusing his government of squandering public money.

And former president Kim Young-Sam accused Kim Dae-jung of winning the peace prize by making excessive concessions to communist North Korea.

'US navy ship blast was a premeditated criminal act'

ADEN, Yemen, Oct 17: Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said Monday the blast that ripped through a US Navy warship killing 17 sailors was a "premeditated criminal act", the official Saba news agency reported, says AFP.

Saleh told the commander-in-chief of US Central Command, General Tommy Franks, that "according to preliminary indications in our possession it was a premeditated criminal act", Saba said.

Franks, the top US military official in the region, arrived Monday in Aden on a morale-boosting trip as hundreds of US agencies continued a probe into the cause of Thursday's explosion aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole.

Saleh gave Franks "the results and important evidence which the security services of Yemen have reached about the circumstances of the deplorable incident."

The president condemned "this regrettable criminal act destined to damage good and friendly relations linking Yemen and the United States."

Yemen would pursue inquiries and hunt down those responsible, he added.

Meanwhile, 16 Yemeni port workers remained in custody

helping with investigations, relatives told AFP. Nearly 30 others taken in for questioning have since been released.

Franks, commander-in-chief for the Gulf and Horn of Africa, met Saleh to "review the October 12 attack on the USS Cole as well as areas of continuing cooperation."

"General Franks expressed his appreciation to President Saleh and the Yemeni people for their support and efforts on behalf of the embarked sailors," a US Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST) statement said.

Franks visited the sailors aboard USS Cole and met senior US officials in charge of security of the crippled ship.

FEST, for its part, said it "continues to receive superb support from the Yemeni government and its citizens, and looks forward to working closely in the future to bring this investigation to closure."

Saleh, who at first denied the possibility that the blast could have been a terrorist act, had a change of heart, according to US Defence Secretary William Cohen said Sunday.

The president was cooperating with the investigation and "now believes it was in fact an external act, a terrorist act as such," Cohen said.

BSF official, 2 rebels killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 17: An official from India's Border Security Force (BSF) and two Muslim militants were killed in a gunbattle in the restive Indian state of Kashmir, police said today, reports AFP.

An assistant commandant and two BSF troops were injured in the attack overnight Monday at Sumbal village in Baramulla district, about 60 km north of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar, they said.

Police said BSF troops cordoned off the village and launched search operations after a tip-off that some militants were hiding in the area.

The holed-up militants opened fire, killing deputy commandant R.S. Rathore and injuring three others. Two rebels died in the ensuing gunbattle.

Troop reinforcements were rushed to the spot.

Several homes were damaged and residents had fled the area, reports said.

Tender Notice

Work/Supply: Repairing and maintenance work residences of D-4 unit 1st floor of Kayotkhali Grid Maintenance Division, PDB, Mymensingh.

Eligibility of contractors: 'Kha' and 'Ga' classes of enlisted contractors Power Development Board during 1999-2000 year.

Cost of tender: Taka 400/= (four hundred) (non-refundable). It will have to be deposited in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of the Deputy Director, Regional Accounts Office, PDB, Mymensingh. Place of availability of tender and date: Office of the Chief Engineer (Transmission)/ Superintending Engineer, Grid Circle, PDB, Dhaka/Sonali Bank, Kayotkhali Branch, Mymensingh. It can be purchased till 30/10/2000. Date of receiving and opening tender: at 12:00 Noon and tenders will be opened on the same day at 12:30 PM before tenderers (if anyone remains present). Other terms and all rules and regulations as mentioned in the schedule must be followed properly. Estimated expenditure: Taka 4,29,055/62.

Executive Engineer
Grid Maintenance Division
PDB, Mymensingh.
Biddut/Jana-700(4)/2000-2001
DDP-24759-12/10
G-1820

BRIEFLY

Fever claims more lives in KSA:

Saudi Arabia said 76 people had died within its borders so far in an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever, taking the total death toll in the kingdom and neighbouring Yemen from the disease to 146, Reuters reports from Riyadh.

A Saudi Health Ministry statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency said that by Monday night 408 people in Saudi Arabia had contracted the viral disease since it broke out last month and 156 people had been cured. The death toll in Saudi Arabia stood at 73 on Saturday.

Iran hangs 2 for 'perversion':

Two Iranians found guilty of "sexual perversion" have been hanged at Qom to the south of the capital, Kayhan newspaper reported Monday, AFP reports from Tehran.

The two men were hanged Sunday and Monday, the afternoon paper said, without giving details of the alleged perversion a term which in Iran can cover rape, adultery or homosexuality. But the term is most commonly applied to rape.

China nets 2 more for graft:

Two former members of China's powerful central committee were Tuesday fingered for graft in Beijing's unrelenting sweep against corrupt Communist Party leaders, AFP reports from Beijing.

The reports came after a third official was last week kicked off the 190-strong central committee, China's most powerful political body, amid accusations of irregularities.

US CP leader Hall dead:

Gus Hall, a longtime leader of the US Communist Party who ran for president four times and maintained a hard-line Marxist ideology to the end, died in at the age of 90, party officials said Monday, AFP reports from New York.

Communist Party vice chair Scott Marshall said Hall died Friday in New York of complications from diabetes. Hall was general secretary of the party from 1959 until 1987, when the party reorganized and made him chairman. He served in that capacity until March 2000, when he was named senior chairman.

Anti-Taliban forces capture another district in Takhar

KABUL, Oct 17: Afghan opposition forces today captured another district in the northeastern province of Takhar close to Tajikistan after bitter fighting overnight, a spokesman said, reports AFP.

Troops loyal to former defence minister Ahmad Shah Massoud overran Taliban forces in Chal district to the south of Takhar's capital, Taloqan, after two hours of heavy fighting.

"Fifty Taliban soldiers surrendered to us in the course of fighting and 13 others were killed," Habel told AFP from an opposition base in Takhar.

The spokesman put Massoud's losses at one soldier dead and three wounded.

Massoud last week launched a campaign to recapture territory lost to the Taliban militia in recent weeks, including Taloqan, a key opposition base which fell in early September.

Habel insisted opposition troops still controlled Imam Sahel district and major parts of Dasht-i-Ardhi in nearby Kunduz province, which they captured three days ago.

Taliban officials on Monday rejected the claims, saying their forces were in full control of the two districts as well as the area of Khwajaghar in Takhar.

The Taliban militia rule most of Afghanistan and have made significant inroads into opposition-held territory in the rugged northeast this year.

Bin Laden warns against attack on Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, Oct 17: Suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden issued a terse warning Tuesday to the "enemies of Islam", an apparent reference to the United States, Israel and the Saudi royal family, reports AFP.

In a statement published in Pakistan's largest circulation Urdu-language newspaper, the Jang, meaning War, bin Laden warned the United States not to attack Afghanistan, where he is living, in an attempt to target him.

Since the suicide bombing last week that destroyed a US Navy vessel and killed 17 Americans off the coast of Yemen, newspapers in Pakistan have carried almost daily stories about a possible retaliatory strike against Afghanistan by the United States.

While there has been no credible claim of responsibility for the attack on the USS Cole, which was waiting to refuel in Yemen, immediate suspicion fell on bin Laden and his organisation, Al Qaida.

"The dream to kill me will never be completed," bin Laden was quoted as saying. The newspaper referred to bin Laden as an Arab freedom fighter.

"I am not afraid of the American threats against me," he said. "As long as I am alive there will be no rest for the enemies of Islam. I will continue my mission against them."

The statement was apparently

issued from Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, the headquarters of the country's ruling Taliban.

Even bin Laden's involvement in the Yemen attack, seemed concerned about a possible US strike.

A Cambodian boy travels on an inflatable beer advertisement through a flooded area in Kompong Speu some 45 km West of Phnom Penh yesterday. --AFP photo

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Tender Notice

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01.	Supply of printing materials.	Tk. 500.00 per set	2.5% of the quoted value.
02. Place of selling, receiving & opening of tender:			
a. BGSJ, Head Office, Chapapur, Comilla.			
b. BGSJ, Sales Department, 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong.			
c. BGSJ, Liaison Office, House No-3, Road No-2/A, Banani, Dhaka-1213.			
03.	Time limit of selling tender documents	: 19/10/2000 to 31/10/2000	
04.	Date & time of receiving tenders	: 01/11/2000 up to 12.00 Noon.	
05.	Date & time of opening tenders	: 01/11/2000 at 12.00 PM.	

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