

Iran's participation at ME summit uncertain

AP, Cairo

Iran's level of participation remained uncertain yesterday as Iraq pushed ahead with plans to hold a March 10 conference with its neighbours and key Western countries on the Iraqi security crisis.

Some Arab neighbours like Egypt, for their part, still have grave doubts the gathering will accomplish much.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said Wednesday the Iranians had agreed to participate in a meeting with Iraq's other neighbours. But he said "they have some questions" about a separate session that would be held the same day with the five permanent UN Security council members the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China.

His words seemed to indicate that Iran was at least partly unhappy with the arrangements for the conference. Iran has had little public comment on the conference so far beyond saying it would weigh attending and that it generally supported regional efforts to stabilize Iraq.

In the past, Iranian leaders have accused the United States of trying to use the UN Security Council as a way to "gang up" on it.

UN diplomats said the Iranians might be waiting to see if the United States is prepared to discuss issues other than Iraq at the conference. Or, Iran may be reluctant to go to Iraq and face questions about the discovery of a factory north of Baghdad for assembling roadside bombs from Iranian-made components, the diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity.

Even as attention focused on whether Iran would attend, some of Iraq's Arab neighbours also remained leery of the conference potentially creating another complication.

Iraq's relations with its Arab neighbours have been rocky because of fears that the Shia-led government is falling under Iran's influence.

Originally, the Iraqi government had been reluctant to endorse the regional conference, fearing pressure from Sunni-dominated regimes, but it dropped those objec-

Industries ministry

FROM PAGE 20

Although the probe body was supposed to submit its report yesterday, it received 24-hour extension of time as it failed to complete its analysis of the findings, senior information officer of the ministry told reporters yesterday.

Meanwhile, the ntv authorities yesterday told their staff at a consultative meeting in the city that they would soon move to a new office and resume their activities.

Addressing the consultative meeting held at a city hotel yesterday, eminent citizens, artistes, professionals and journalists asked the ntv authorities to resume their activities at the earliest possible. They also suggested broadcasting on a small scale if full-scale operations were not possible.

Some speakers also asked for the resumption of Rtv broadcasting.

Yesterday, security men allowed staffers of different offices in the ill-fated building to enter their offices. However, they did not allow curious onlookers to visit the building charred in the fire that left four people dead and 50 others injured.

Staff of different offices visited their offices to retrieve their files and

Yunus asks

FROM PAGE 20

He himself, Yunus also said socio-economic problems, such as begging, continue to be taken as "normal" and since it is not seen as a problem it would not be resolved.

He said innovative ideas need new and flexible laws in practice as the legal mould of outdated laws would force these cutting-edge projects to eventually fit old strictures.

Citing the case of his draft submitted long ago for a state-owned micro-credit bank, Yunus said it has been collecting dust because it required a separate banking law. He regretted that it still has not been accepted even after he, along with others, had drafted the outline of a regulatory body and its operations.

Asiatic Society President Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said Yunus has pulled off a rare victory in applying his economic theories successfully into practice.

BSF kills 1

FROM PAGE 1

guards of Alipur camp opened fire on Shafiqul when he went near main border pillar no 197 at about 6:00am to bring back his cattle home. He died instantly.

Immediately after the incident, the BSF troops took away the body.

BDR protested the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

BTV director, news editor made OSD

UNB, Dhaka

State-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) Director M Mahbubul Alam and News Editor DK Fuad Hasan have been made OSD (officer-on special-duty) as part of the administrative reshuffle under the caretaker government.

According to an official announcement yesterday, both Alam and Fuad have been attached to the head office at Shahbag from the BTV programme and news sections.

Mahbubul Alam, BTV director (programme and planning), was in current charge of the deputy director general (programme) while DK Fuad Hasan was holding the additional charge of chief news editor.

al-Qaeda invoked in US embassy at Jakarta threat

REUTERS, Jakarta

A bomb threat against the US Embassy in Jakarta yesterday was conveyed to authorities by a pair of cell phone text messages signed, "al Qaeda," local officials said.

"We received an SMS at 11:22 (0422 GMT) saying, 'We will blow up the U.S. embassy in Jakarta in 30 minutes. Al-Qaeda,'" Desab Alkhooli, an officer at the Traffic Management Center told Reuters. "We received the same SMS again at 11:23."

A US embassy spokesman confirmed the threat, as relayed by police, and said security officials searched the heavily-fortified compound and found nothing suspicious. He said it was the second such incident in recent days.

Ex-AL MP held

FROM PAGE 20

In response, Sattar only identified himself as a former MP.

Saifur offered Sattar a ride on his motorbike to pass the road and was refused. Moreover, the former lawmaker also slapped him at this stage.

Sattar also slapped Additional Deputy Commissioner (Traffic South) Md Shahajan when he arrived on the already crowded scene.

He also slapped ATN Bangla special correspondent Ashok Chowdhury and The Daily Star senior reporter Julfikar Ali Manik when they enquired about his misconduct.

Admitting that his behaviour was wrong, Sattar told The Daily Star he did it whimsically.

His wife Rokeya Sattar said he has been mentally disturbed for the last 10 days.

Family sources said Sattar, a contractor of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), went to its Motijheel office to collect a bill around 9:30am. The incident took place while he was returning to his Dhanmondi residence.

They also said he recently developed the habit of addressing people by touching their faces and claimed this is not "slapping".

Police arrested and sent him to Shahbagh Police Station. Liakat filed a case with the Shahbagh PS.

Bail sought

FROM PAGE 20

Central Jail in connection with two cases filed with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations on different dates.

On the other hand, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam rejected Abbas' bail petition in connection with the case filed against him for possessing illegal local and foreign currencies and sent him to jail on February 26.

Akhtar was implicated in the case filed for making a huge amount of money through corruption and was sent to jail after he was produced before the court with a proposal for a month's detention from the home ministry the same day.

PINTU'S CASES

Kabir Hossain, a BNP worker of Baragram in Kamrangirchar, filed an attempted murder case with the chief metropolitan magistrate's court on January 25 against Pintu after local police refused to record his complaint.

Shahidul Islam, another resident of Munshihati in Kamrangirchar, filed a theft case against Pintu on February 13.

ABBAS'S CASE

The joint forces seized a huge sum of local and foreign currencies and other items from Mirza Abbas' South Shahjahanpur house in the capital on February 4.

Motijheel police filed a case against him under the Special Powers Act, Money Laundering Act and Excise Act on February 24.

The seized items include sales slips for gold ornaments worth Tk 40 lakh, 4,600 US dollars, 17,000 Thai bahts, 418 Singapore dollars, 432 Malaysian ringgits, several mobile phone sets and five passports.

Complainant of the case Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam alleged that Abbas had kept those in his possession evading a huge amount of taxes.

AKHTAR'S CASE

The forwarding report placed before the court alleged that Akhtar misappropriated a huge amount of money when he was the power secretary.

Formalin fish

FROM PAGE 1

fisheries department official requesting anonymity.

BSTI during its recent drives found almost all the fishes imported from Myanmar treated with toxic formalin.

No official record was found from any of the departments concerned about the importers of fish to Bangladesh and the amount of annual import.

Unofficial sources said two importers -- Babul, owner of Sunmoon Enterprise in Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar and Masud Ahmed, owner of Masud Enterprise in Potia, Chittagong -- import around 70 thousand kg of fishes and supply them to different markets in the country.

A ship carrying fishes from Myanmar anchor at Teknaf port wherefrom the fishes are sent to different markets including Dhaka.

On Saturday, a mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula, seized around 6.5 tonne formalin-treated fish and 187 kg jatka (small hilsa) from the wholesale fish markets at Swarighat, Kaptan Bazar and Waizhag in the capital. The fishes were mostly from Myanmar.

Mokhles, one of traders caught by the joint forces during the drive at Swarighat, introduced himself as an employee of Masud Enterprise.

He produced papers to the court that show that Myanmar Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and Myanmar export control section certified those fishes as 'edible'.

Mokhles, who failed to produce any papers of Bangladesh government, however, said if there is any formalin in those fishes it was put in Myanmar before dispatch.

He also produced a paper provided by the Department of Pharmacy of Dhaka University

signed by Prof ABM Faruque and Dr Abu Sara Shamsur Rauf on February 02 that says these fishes are 'free from formalin and edible'.

When contacted, Prof Faruque said he provided the certificate to Biojit Morol, a producer working at private television channel Banglavision, as the three samples of fish sent to the department were found to be formalin-free.

"At first we informed him [Bijot] verbally that the samples were free from formalin. As he insisted on giving a certificate saying that he needed it to produce at his office, we consented," said Prof Faruque.

He expressed his wonder at the certificate's going to the traders.

When asked about the matter, Biojit said he handed over the report to the traders without thinking of the consequences.

An amount of fish is also smuggled into the country, sources said.

The government is going to formulate new rules for Fish and Fish Products (inspection and quality control) Law modifying the existing one, but the new draft too lacks any rules for importing fish, fisheries department officials said.

Admitting the gravity of the problem caused by formalin-treated fishes, Director General of the Department of Fisheries Nazrul Islam said he will raise the issue at the upcoming meeting of the committee working for a new law.

There should be strict law on formalin issue and policy on fish import, he said.

Even in absence of strict laws for imported fish, BSTI, health department and the city corporations could test the standard of all foods including fish under the existing laws.

Next graft suspect

FROM PAGE 1

statements, and several writs have already been filed with the High Court (HC) raising various questions regarding the move.

The ACC first wants to examine related laws including the ACC Act, bring necessary amendments to the act, and formulate necessary rules so that it does not have to face similar legal challenges when it publishes lists of corruption suspects in the future.

On February 19, after publishing the first list comprising the names of 50 corruption suspects, ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain said, "It's a continuous process. There will be more lists in the future."

The current three-member ACC did not even exist when its secretary published the list of 50 suspects in the name of the commission ordering them to submit their wealth statements, although the ACC Act states that it is the commission which must decide whether to order anyone to submit a statement of wealth. The ACC Secretariat was however functioning at the time since dissolution of the immediate past commission.

Questions have been raised in several quarters, whether the ACC secretary has the authority to ask anyone for his or her wealth statement without a decision from the commission.

The newly appointed ACC chairman and commissioners have given an ex post facto approval to the ACC secretary's moves made prior to the formation of the current commission.

The ACC had asked those among the listed 50, who had not been in jail, to submit their wealth statements in person, and the already detained could submit theirs through their representatives.

Yet, the ACC has been compelled by a High Court order to accept the wealth statement of former Awami League lawmaker HBM Iqbal from his wife, as he was considered too ill to submit the statement in person.

On the other hand, the wealth statement of Sylhet's BNP leader Ariful Haq Chowdhury was not accepted from his representative on Sunday, because the ACC Secretariat in Dhaka had not received information that Ariful had surrendered to a court in Sylhet on the same day.

The commission accepted his wealth statement on Monday, a day after the deadline had passed, when it was confirmed that Ariful had surrendered.

Now there are seven writ petitions pending at the HC filed by

Robbers kill 1

FROM PAGE 20

Kishoreganj police arrested Hakim for interrogation. Hakim told the police that they went to bed at around 1:00am. He woke up early in the morning at the muffled grumbling coming out of Shahin and Bishnu's throats.

Hospital sources said both the injured were first taken to Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital, but the doctor on duty there referred them to Baijputr Medical College & Hospital. Shahin died on way to the hospital.

Rabiul, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, said the incident was mysterious because the robbers did not have to break into the shop to commit the crimes.

Car bomb kills 5 guests at Iraqi wedding

REUTERS, Baghdad

A car bomb targeting a convoy of cars carrying guests at the wedding of an Iraqi policemen killed five people and wounded 10 in the western city of Falluja yesterday, a police source said.

The source said the victims were guests driving in procession behind the bride and groom, as is traditional at Iraqi weddings.

Falluja is in Iraq's western province of Anbar where US and Iraqi forces are battling a fierce insurgency by al Qaeda and other Sunni Arab militant groups. Police are frequently the target of bombers seeking to discourage recruitment.

HC asks Amini

FROM PAGE 1

Passing the order, the court, however, directed the law enforcers not to arrest him by the time.

On February 19, Hafez Mufti Sanaulah filed a case with Lalbagh Police Station accusing Amini, also a former lawmaker, and some others of looting his shop.

Barrister Abdur Razzak appeared for Amini.

Rajuk demolishes

FROM PAGE 20

from the Tejaon Gulshan Link Road, adjoining Tongi Diversion Road, and continued up to Gulshan section one intersection.

Many building owners have started relocating their illegal establishments from the parking place, the magistrate said. "We find a significant change as people themselves have been knocking down illegal portions of their buildings and have started using the ground floors and basements as car park," he added.

If the people continue to use their car parks for other purposes, the Rajuk authorities would take tough action against them, the magistrate reiterated.

CI sheets

FROM PAGE 20

of local Jamaat-e-Islami leader Maulana Abdul Latif at Kushodanga village in Kalaroa upazila.

Police also raided the house of a Jamaat activist and top local businessman Abdur Rahim at Katia in Satkhiira town and seized 18 pieces of CI sheets from his possession.

In Netrakona, joint forces recovered 55 CI sheets from the house of Abdur Rashid, member of Purbadhala Sadar UP in Purbadhala upazila, at Nachhibpur village early yesterday.

They also recovered 40 CI sheets for relief from BNP leader Abul Kashem's house at Laljana village in the same upazila.

In Mymensingh, joint forces recovered 23 such CI sheets from the house of Surya Banu, mother-in-law of arrested chairman of Rajoir UP Anwar Hossain, at Jamirpara village in Bhaluka upazila yesterday noon.

The joint forces recovered two abandoned firearms and six bullets from Fatehpur village in Hathazari upazila yesterday morning.

Pak pace

FROM PAGE 20

SamI will be sent as their replacements.

Shoaib, who has played only one test and four one-dayers since February 2006 due to fitness concerns, has not recovered from the knee injury that forced him to be sent back from South Africa last month.

Asif has been carrying a nagging elbow problem since that tour and the pair were receiving treatment in London.

The loss of the new-ball pair, coupled with all-rounder Abdul Razzak's withdrawal, is setback to Pakistan's hopes before their opening match against hosts West Indies on the first day of the tournament on March 13.

EC drafts

FROM PAGE 1

The EC has also proposed disqualifying the loan defaulters of financial institutions from the polls like the existing provision does with the bank loan defaulters, sources said.

The current provision that deals with the bank loan defaulters will be amended to set a time frame for rescheduling the loan before the election, sources said.

Humayun Kabir, acting EC secretary, at a press briefing at the EC Secretariat said the commission would soon sit with all stakeholders including the political parties to discuss the reform proposals.

He however did not specify whether discussions with the political parties would begin this month.

Asked how much time the reforms will take to be carried out, the secretary said it would be done within the shortest possible time.

Replying to a query, he said the EC is now busy with the reform proposals and is not thinking about any time limit for holding the election.

"Without completing the reforms, it is not possible to specify the time frame for the next parliamentary election," he said.

He said the EC has yet to decide whether there should be a voter list with photographs or identity cards.

South Korea urges Japan to atone for atrocities

REUTERS, Seoul

Japan must atone for the atrocities committed during World War Two through concrete measures. South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said yesterday, adding it was key to better ties between the two countries.

Roh in a speech marking the 1919 uprising in Korea against Japanese colonial rule said the international community had not forgiven Tokyo for its wartime aggression.

"(Japan) may try to cover the sky with its hand, but we were able to confirm once again that the international community does not forgive the atrocities committed by imperial Japan," the South Korean president said.

Japan colonized the Korean peninsula from 1910 until its defeat in World War Two in 1945. Former Japanese prime ministers have apologized for the country's colonial past, but Roh has said Tokyo had not done enough to back its words with action.

"We hope that Japan will not try to glorify or justify a mistaken past, but instead show sincerity by following its conscience and the international community's generally accepted precedent," he said.

Roh spoke of harrowing tales of abuse related by three women who were forced into sexual servitude by Japan during the war in testimony to the U.S. Congress last month.

SEX SLAVE APOLOGY

Two South Koreans and a Dutch-born Australian woman rejected Japan's official apologies as an insult and said Tokyo's efforts to atone for their ordeal were insufficient because they were not accompanied by offers of government compensation.

New CJ for restoring

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier, in the morning Justice Amin was sworn in as the chief justice. President Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath at a ceremony at the Bangabhaban.

"Discipline, cordiality and mutual respect were the order of the institution," observed Ruhul Amin adding that for no reason the ardently followed and practised discipline and other traditions have become a matter of the past.

"And thereupon has risen a situation which is not desired by any one who feels proud of introducing himself as the member of the institution," he said.

Supreme Court and High Court judges, lawyers, and the government law officers including the attorney general attended the felicitation programme at the CJ's courtroom.

Ruhul Amin said, "Time is high now for realisation by all that discipline, cordiality and mutual respect among the members of the legal community in its entirety is a must, since in the absence of those and other allied matters it would be difficult for the institution to function and of being a meaningful institution for the purpose same exists."

The CJ sought cooperation of the Bar and others having something to do in the discharge of the matters connected with the administration of justice in discharging the functions

N Korea pledges

FROM PAGE 20

July, when Pyongyang test-fired a series of missiles, prompting a halt in shipments. Relations between the two countries further soured after the North's nuclear test in October.

This week's Cabinet-level talks are the first in seven months. They came after North Korea's Feb. 13 pledge to shut down its main nuclear reactor within 60 days in exchange for aid.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said Thursday that the nuclear deal "should be successfully implemented so that a peace regime can be firmly established on the Korean peninsula."

The Feb. 13 deal calls for a separate forum on discussing a peace agreement to replace the cease-fire that has held the Korean War at a standstill since 1953. Roh's comments came during a speech for the national holiday marking a March 1, 1919, uprising during Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of the peninsula.

Countries involved in the nuclear talks the Koreans, China, Japan, Russia and the US have begun preparations to implement the disarmament pact.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in Washington that US and North Korean officials will meet in New York next Monday and Tuesday to discuss normalising relations, one of the steps to be taken under the nuclear deal.

South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min-soon left for Washington Thursday for talks with his counterpart, Condoleezza Rice, on the North Korea nuclear issue, and he

"Recently, at a U.S. lower house hearing on comfort women, there was vivid testimony by elderly women who had to endure hardship and persecution beyond any human imagination," Roh said.

Japan in 1993 acknowledged a state role in the wartime brothel program and later issued apologies and set up the Asian Women's Fund. About 285 of the women who accepted payments of about \$20,000 from that fund received personal apologies from Japan's prime minister.

But in a move likely to upset South Korea, some Japanese ruling party lawmakers planned to urge the government to water down parts of the 1993 apology, a news report said.

The group of Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers said the apology -- dubbed the Kono statement after the chief cabinet secretary at the time, Yohei Kono -- "damaged Japan's image and invited misunderstanding of the facts" the Yomiuri Shimbun quoted the group as saying.

The current chief government spokesman, Yasuhisa Shiozaki, said on Thursday that Tokyo stood by the apology.

But he said parts of the U.S. Congressional resolution "are not based on facts" and the Japanese government had conveyed this to the House.

Japan's ties with both South Korea and China have been further strained in recent years over its leaders' visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine, seen as a symbol of its past militarism because World War Two leaders convicted as war criminals are honored there along with millions of war dead.

and duties of the office of chief justice.

SCBA President Barrister Amir-UI Islam welcomed the new chief justice and said, "We will be determined in our efforts to uphold the image and protect independence of the judiciary."

Attorney General Fida M Kamal said Justice Amin has always showed respect and commitment for the protection of human rights and human dignity in every aspect of his judicial work.

Harris Chy's

FROM PAGE 1

the court were close associates of Harris Chowdhury. Moreover, they had been in hiding for a long time to evade arrest. They need to be quizzed further to know whereabouts of Harris and his associates.

On the hearing, the court placed each of the two on a three-day remand.

The ACC on February 18 disclosed names of 50 corruption suspects and asked them to submit their wealth statements by February 25. Instead of appearing before the ACC in person, as required by the corruption watchdog, Harris sent a lawyer to the ACC to submit his wealth statement on his behalf. The ACC rejected the statement.

also will travel to Moscow.

Seoul wants North Korea to make a firmer commitment to the international nuclear accord during this week's meetings. But the North has shunned discussing the nuclear issue with the South, as it has in the past, saying the matter is only between Pyongyang and Washington.

The North focused instead on inter-Korean issues, proposing the resumption of a range of contacts with the South to move forward on reconciliation, delegation spokesman Lee Kwan-se told South Korean pool reporters Wednesday.

In exchange, the North is expected to agree to a South Korean proposal that they resume reunions of families separated since the 1950-53 Korean War.

After Wednesday's meetings, South Korea's chief delegate, Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung, said the negotiations were "very difficult."

Lee,