

## Male summit restores SAARC momentum

MALE (Maldives), Nov. 23: President Hussain Muhammad Ershad said that the current SAARC summit had been able to restore the momentum of the organisation belying the doubts expressed about the viability of the South Asian Regional Cooperation, reports BSS.

"If our organisation has to maintain its forward momentum, we must continue to exert ourselves to find ways and means to revitalise our organisation and to bring concrete results to our people", he told the fifth SAARC summit while addressing its concluding session at 'Dharubaaruge' (conference hall).

President Ershad underscored the need for addressing matters of priority concern to member states individually and collectively. "Our activities should be brought in line with our ability to service them", he added.

He said the decision of the summit to work out modalities for funding joint ventures, establish cottage industries and handicrafts and mobilising resources to encourage and strengthen individual and collective self-reliance had opened up new horizon of cooperation in the region.

President Ershad said the decisions on the studies on the causes and

consequences of natural disasters and protection and preservation of the environment and trade, manufacturers and services should ensure early launching of cooperation among member states.

He noted with happiness that the Centre for Human Resources Development would be established soon. He said our reaffirmation of the recommendations of the world summit on children and decision to

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### Male summit

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observe the years 1991-2000 as the SAARC decade of the girl child are demonstration of the continuing high priority that we attach to their welfare.

President Ershad said the launching of SAARC travel document and the decision to facilitate increased interaction among journalists, news agencies and mass media were important steps forward to promote people-to-people contact in the region.

### Gulf situation

On the Gulf situation the President said "we have pronounced ourselves on the Gulf crisis and called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate government.

"We have assessed the implication of the changes in eastern and central Europe, the end of cold war and the progress achieved in the area of disarmament for the world and our own region", he added.

On the international economic issues, President Ershad said the summit had taken concrete decisions to intensify consultations and coordinate "our positions" at the United Nations and in other international fora. "We have underscored the need for effective implementation of the decisions adopted by the second United Nations conference on the Least Developed Countries", he added.

President Ershad thanked host President Maumoon Abdul Qayoom, members of the SAARC secretariat and the conference officials for the excellent arrangements to successfully hold the summit.

He said the summit had allowed the leaders of member states vital opportunity to renew old contact, make new friends, to share insights and assimilate new ideas and perception.

"But for SAARC it would have taken a long time to get to know and to work in close collaboration with our new colleagues from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the cause of regional cooperation, harmony and understanding", he said.