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## About 5000 people flee curfew-bound Sopore

# Indian troops take over Kashmir town after bloody gunbattle

SOPORE, Aug 16: The army took over this curfew-bound apple town in Kashmir today after a bloody gunbattle between Muslim militants and federal forces left at least 38 dead, reports AFP.

Soldiers armed with machineguns took up positions as the military assumed administrative control a day after the Indian Independence Day shootout, which also left 40 wounded in the town 60 kilometres (36 miles) from Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital.

Kashmiris observed a valley-wide general strike to mourn the 30 alleged militants killed

along with eight members of the Border Security Force (BSF).

The 40 wounded included 10 civilians caught in the crossfire.

The gunbattle flared on the third day of an indefinite curfew in Sopore, known as much for its apple orchards as for its role as a citadel of Muslim militants waging a bloody campaign for Kashmir's secession.

The curfew had been called amid fears of anti-Indian demonstrations by the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, a militant group which favours Kashmir's accession to neighbouring Pakistan, during Thursday's celebrations.

The firefight created war-like scenes. BSF troopers used five-centimetre (two-inch) mortars during the battle, which one senior official said was the longest the security forces had fought against militants during the three-year-old secessionist campaign.

"It is for the first time that an encounter lasted more than 12 hours", the officials said.

Empty mortar shells littered the streets of Sopore, many of whose residents fled in terror of an imminent crackdown by security forces.

One resident who stayed behind, 77-year-old Ali Mohammed, alleged the BSF

used him and his nine-year-old grandson as a shield against the militants.

He accused the troopers of killing in cold blood a 44-year-old mentally retarded man, who was wounded in the gunbattle.

Some 4,000 to 5,000 men, women and children fled either through farms or waded across a river during the bloody shootout, a fact confirmed by BSF intelligence chief Ashok Patel in New Delhi.

"We saw women and children wading across the river when they (militants) started to



Snap from a dance drama, part of a cultural programme, staged at Shilpakala Academy on Friday in observance of the anniversary of Tagore's death. — Star photo

## Radio, TV misleading people : Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has rebuked the government-owned media for projecting what she said untrue and misleading story about the country's liberation struggle with evil motive to confuse the people, reports UNB.

Addressing a group of political leaders who joined the Awami League at the Bangabandhu Bhaban Friday afternoon, Hasina said that during the anti-autocracy movement the opposition branded Radio-Television as "a box of saheb, bibi, golam" and demanded to make these two organisations autonomous and credible to people.

She said although democracy had been restored through mass movement, radio-television were not made autonomous. "Instead these were now turned into boxes of bibi-golam."

The Awami League President said despite the ouster of the autocratic regime, its anti-people policy and programmes were still being pursued.

Welcoming the newcomers to Awami League, Hasina asked all her party men to work unitedly to materialise the ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Over 3,000 leaders and workers of Chandpur district units of CPB, NAP, JSD and BNP joined the Awami League, a press release of the party said.

They included CPB district President Shahjahan Chokdar, Nirmal Chandra and Baker Ali

Matbar of CPB, Mokhesur Rahman Miji and Bahadur Khan of NAP, and Moklesur Rahman of BNP.

Awami League leaders Abdul Jalil, Mesbahuddin MP, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Momtaz Hossain and Abdul Mannan were present on the occasion.

In another meeting with Bangladesh Water Development Board Sramik-Karmachari League, Hasina demanded immediate implementation of the Wages and Pay Commission report for workers and employees as well as accepting their five-point demand.

Workers and employees are groaning under economic hardships because of the VAT system and price-hike of essentials, Hasina told the meeting at the Bangabandhu Bhaban.

The union leaders apprised the Awami League President of the CBA election in the Water Development Board and its other problems.

Sramik League leaders Yakub Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak Sikdar, Abdul Mattin, Asadullah Al-Raji and Sukkur Ahmed, and Water Development Board Sramik League leaders Rab, Maniruzzaman Molla, Ali Akbar and Abdur Rab Sikdar were among others present at the meeting.

Hasina said Awami League is pledge-bound to continue its movement for economic emancipation of the deprived people. She sought support from all professional groups to her party's effort.

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## Mirza Hafiz BNP's favourite

# AL may contest for presidency

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League is also expected to put up a candidate in the presidential election which will be organised after the holding of the September 15 referendum on the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill, it is reliably learnt.

From the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the most probable candidate appears to be Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, even though another couple of names are discussed as contenders for the presidency.

A reliable Awami League source told The Daily Star last night his party would nominate a candidate. He, however, em-

phasised that the presidential election was still far away and it was too early to speculate on the probable candidate.

Sources close to the BNP high command say Mirza Golam Hafiz, Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas and Education Minister Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury are the probable candidates from amongst whom a selection will be made.

But none of the three is interested to ask for the nomination of their own, and ultimately BNP Chief Begum Khaleda Zia might have to ask one of them to be a candidate. Insiders say Law Minister

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## Probable BNP, AL candidates for

### by-elections

By Staff Correspondent

Barrister Zamiruddin Sirce and Major (Retd) Qamrul Islam are likely to be the BNP candidates for bye-election in Dhamondi-Mohammadpur and Cantonment-Gulshan constituencies in Dhaka city.

Advocate Shahara Khatun, General Secretary of Bangladesh Mohila Awami League, is likely to be the Awami League candidate from Cantonment-Gulshan constituency, according to reliable sources.

Both the parties are expected to announce within a day or two the names of their candidates in the bye-election in 11 parliament constituencies scheduled for September 2.

BNP sources said Amir Khasru Chowdhury and Zamiruddin Khan were seeking

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## DU VC on containing campus violence

# Response from political parties not encouraging

By DU Correspondent

The Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Moniruzzaman Miah Friday said he was not getting "expected response" from political parties regarding containing violence on the campus.

The Vice-Chancellor termed campus terrorism as "number one problem" in the educational arena saying its cause was political and lied outside the campus. There ought to be a political solution to this problem, he said.

If the crisis remained un-settled, the nation would be thrown into uncertainty and

dispair, he observed.

Prof Moniruzzaman was inaugurating a three-day workshop on mathematics in the city organised by Bangladesh Gant Samity for the teachers of various colleges.

Meanwhile, the Provosts Committee of Dhaka University at a meeting said any effort to enter the residential halls by the students defying the Syndicate decision would be considered as violation of discipline.

The meeting, presided over by Prof Abu Zafar Mahmud, Provost of Fazlul Huq Hall, said the question of reopening the halls on August 17 could not arise in such a volatile situation. Meanwhile, a group of resident students has decided to enter the halls today at 11 am defying the Syndicate decision as part of the movement of Dhaka University Education Action Committee (DUEAC) against frequent closure of the university.

The DUEAC, a platform of non-party students, will hold a rally today at the 'Aparajeya Bangla' of the university before they proceed towards the halls.

A meeting of the DUEAC held on Friday evening said the "token" programme would be observed peacefully.

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## Jakarta- Beijing ties enter new stage : Suharto

JAKARTA, Aug 16: Indonesia's relations with China have reached a new stage since they re-established formal ties last August after a 24-year break, President Suharto said Friday, reports BSS.

Jakarta, which broke off relations with Beijing in 1967 after accusing China of complicity in a failed 1967 Communist coup attempt, last week removed the final remaining restrictions on visits between the two countries.

"A new page has been written in relations between the Republic of Indonesia and the People's Republic of China," Suharto said in his annual address to the House of Representatives on the eve of the 46th anniversary of Indonesia's independence.

Until Aug 7, Jakarta allowed visits to and from China only for businessmen, athletes and those attending international conferences with clearance from Indonesian intelligence officials.

The new travel regulations were expected to boost economic cooperation and trade between the two countries.

Trade between the two countries was worth \$1.18 billion in 1990, up from \$1.8 billion in 1989, reports BSS.

Chinese exports to Indonesia include cotton, textiles, machinery, chemicals and mineral products, Indonesia's

See Page 12 Col. 7

## 69 killed in Indian plane crash

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: An Indian Airlines Boeing 737, carrying 63 passengers and a crew of six, plunged into a lake today as it approached the tiny northeastern city of Imphal, killing all on board, report agencies.

RK Ranbir Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur state, said all 69 people aboard were killed. Aviation officials here and in Calcutta, where the round trip originated, said the plane crashed about eight kilometres (4.8 miles) southwest of Imphal at 12.50 pm (0720 GMT) and fell into the Lokh Tokh Lake.

Contact with the 126-seat plane, on a Calcutta-Imphal-Dimapur-Calcutta flight, was lost four minutes before it crashed close to a hydroelectric plant where workers were on duty.

"Air Force helicopters have

spotted the wreckage and it seems there are no survivors," an official in Calcutta reached from here by telephone said.

The 63 passengers on board Flight IC-257 included 54 men, seven women, a child, and an infant. Two pilots and four air hostesses made up the crew of the six-year-old plane.

The flight took off from Calcutta's Dum Dum airport at 11.46 am (0616 GMT), and made its last contact with Imphal while flying at an altitude of 5,000 feet (1,524 metres) and descending.

"We are about to land," said the last message received from the doomed plane before it plunged into the lake.

What caused the accident was not immediately known, but aviation sources here said there were no indications of a mid-air explosion preceding

the crash, apparently ruling out sabotage.

"The cause of the crash will be known only after an investigation," a source said, adding that a statutory probe had been ordered and workers were trying to salvage evidence including the black box, or flight recorder.

Air Force personnel and senior airline officials were also on their way to the crash site, the source said.

It was the first disaster involving a civilian plane in India since 90 people were killed in February 1990, when an Indian Airlines Airbus A-320 crashed in the southern Indian city of Bangalore.

The state-owned Indian Airlines is the country's main domestic carrier, flying to 57 domestic and 10 foreign destinations.

## Close Rajiv aide assaulted in Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: A close aide of slain former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was injured today along with two federal MPs when attackers pelted them with egg shells filled with acid, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

Palaniappan Chidambaram the Federal Commerce Minister, was hurt in the legs and the MPs suffered head injuries when the missiles fell on them in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu, PTI said.

Tamils demanding a share of the Cauvery river waters with nearby Karnataka state raided a convoy carrying Chidambaram and the MPs in Tiruchappalli town, it said, quoting Congress (I) party sources in the southern state.

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# Fresh fighting between Serbs, Croats as EC monitors' copter fired upon

BELGRADE, Aug 16: Fresh fighting between Serbs and Croats peppered a ceasefire in rebel Croatia today and a helicopter carrying European Community peace monitors was forced to land after it was fired on there, reports Reuter.

With sporadic violence continuing between Serbian guerrillas and Croatian forces, plans to send neutral Yugoslav truce observers — a different team from the EC ceasefire monitors — remained stalled despite talks.

Croatian radio, cited by the official Tanjug news agency, said the EC helicopter was flying to the east of the Croatian capital Zagreb when it was hit

by three bullets. It landed in the village of Rajici, about 100 km (60 miles) outside Zagreb.

Croatias Information Ministry and the EC mission in Zagreb, reached by telephone from Belgrade, confirmed the incident.

"It came under fire but no one was injured," said a ministry official. Zagreb Radio blamed Serbian guerrillas.

The Dutch Foreign Ministry in the Hague said it was seeking more details. The Netherlands holds the rotating EC presidency.

Under an agreement reached in July, the EC has sent 50 unarmed observers to monitor a ceasefire in Slovenia

and Croatia. But in Croatia, their mandate does not include a brief to monitor the ethnic clashes between Serbs and Croats in which more than 200 people have been killed.

The EC monitors dress in white and travel in white vehicles marked with the EC flag, a blue background with a circle of 12 yellow stars.

Belgrade Radio said Serbian guerrillas opened fire on Croatian security forces near the small town of Okucani in a part of Croatia where local Serbian leaders have unilaterally declared their autonomy.

It said the Serbs attacked Croatian police and national guards in two villages in west-

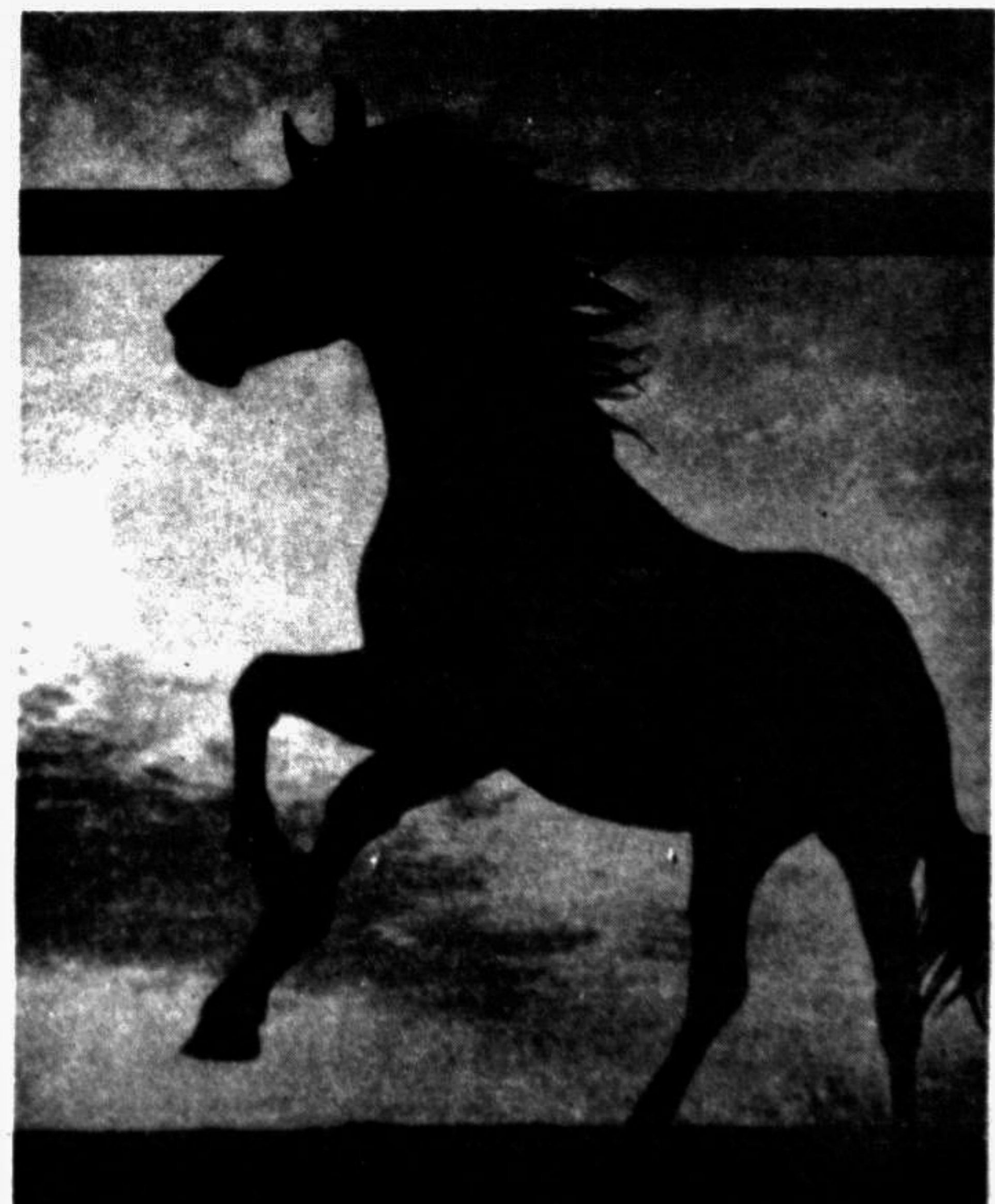
ern Slovenia after they refused an ultimatum to pull out by midday.

Zagreb Radio said "terrorists", its way of describing Serbian guerrillas, had opened firing with a variety of weapons.

The sudden flare-up of violence brought fresh pressure to bear on Yugoslavia's federal authorities which are struggling to make the August 7 ceasefire in breakaway Croatia work.

More than 200 people have been killed there in gun and mortar battles between Serbian guerrillas and Croatian security forces since Croatia, See Page 12 Col. 7

# Green Delta Never Looked Back .....



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