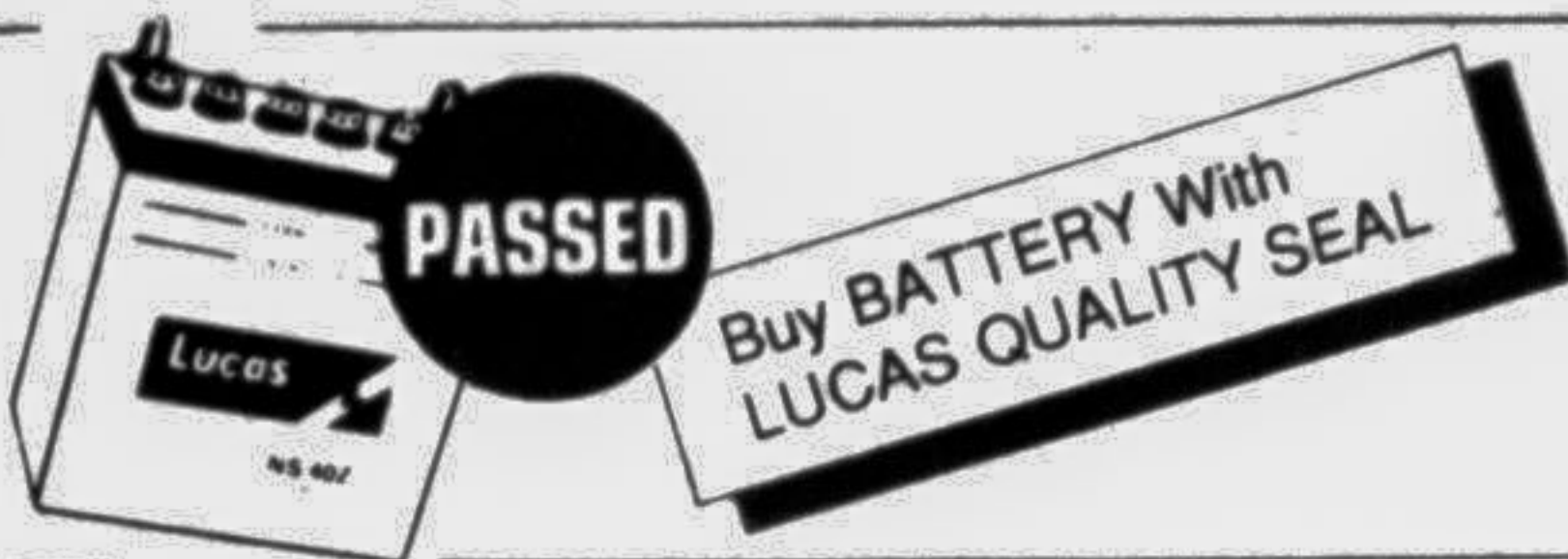


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Violence claims 17 more in Kashmir Pakistan accuses India of 'unspeakable crimes'

ISLAMABAD, Aug 26: Pakistan accused India today of "unspeakable crimes" in its attempts to crush a separatist revolt in the disputed Kashmir region, reports Reuters.

PTI adds from New Delhi: Seventeen persons were killed in the militancy ridden valley of Jammu and Kashmir in various incidents of violence over the last three days, while hectic efforts are being made to rejuvenate the dwindling tourism in the state.

Five people, including a militant, were killed and 16 others, one of them an "Amir Nizam" (chief administrator) of a militant outfit, were arrested in the Kashmir valley overnight Sunday.

"Pakistan urges India to abandon violence and brute force, to return to the path of peace, to adopt reason, and to resolve the Kashmir question in accordance with the accepted principles," he said in a speech to the Senate (Upper House).

Princess Masako expecting?

TOKYO, Aug 26: An inadvertent nap in public. A previously unobserved pallor in her complexion. As far as Japan's skitish tabloids are concerned, it can only add up to one thing: Crown Princess Masako is pregnant, reports AP.

Well, maybe. "Could It Be? Are They Preparing for Pregnancy?" read the title of a recent cover story in *Josei Jishin* (Ladies' Own), a popular gossip magazine for women.

"She's lost weight, she's looking pale, she never ventured off the grounds of the Nasu villa (during her summer vacation)," the article said.

Tk 120 cr project to double Ctg WASA capacity

Chittagong WASA is going to take up a Tk 120 crore project to double the capacity of its existing water treatment plant, reports UNB.

This was disclosed at the 16th meeting of Parliamentary Standing Committee on LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan yesterday.

With the completion of the project, the total demand of Chittagong port city will be fulfilled and the revenue income would be enhanced by 25 per cent.

Presided over by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, the meeting disclosed that system loss of Chittagong WASA has been reduced to 34 per cent from 48 per cent in the previous year.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Md Abdul Hye, Abdur Razzak MP (AL), Rashed Mosharraf MP (AL), Abdul Wahab MP (BNP) and Zainul Abedin Farook MP (BNP).

Meanwhile, work in government offices in all the six districts of the valley was paralysed Monday following a strike by state employees to protest against the alleged atrocities of the security forces.

Seven persons including five militants and a retired police officer were killed and 12 militants were arrested in Kashmir valley overnight Monday.

Four senior functionaries of the Jammu and Kashmir government including the Kashmir Divisional Commissioner, Wajahat Habibullah, escaped an attempt on their life, while five persons, three of them militants, were killed overnight Tuesday.

In other major incidents in the state, huge quantities of gelatine sticks with a very high explosive potential were seized by army jawans on the line of control in Uri sector in northern Kashmir Monday amidst indications that militant groups were running short of ammunition.

BCL torch rally attacked in N'ganj: 5 hurt

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Aug 26: Five persons were wounded when armed youths attacked a torch procession of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League workers at Mandolpara of the town this evening.

The infuriated processionists damaged several motor vehicles soon after their scuffle with the attackers.

According to witnesses, the procession was suddenly obstructed by a group of armed youths on board a microbus, leading to a skirmish between the two sides.

The injured processionists were treated at the Narayanganj General Hospital.

Earlier, the Chhatra League workers, carrying torches, paraded through the town's main road from the Government Tolaram College, where they held a rally in the morning. The rally was organised to protest what they called the alleged terrorism by the ruling party's front organisations and police inaction in this regard.



Female fans of Michael Jackson displaying a banner supporting the pop idol in front of his Bangkok hotel yesterday. Jackson is battling an allegation that he sexually molested a 13-year-old boy. Jackson also cancelled his concert yesterday for the second time due to illness. (Story on Page 5)

Mother Teresa turns 83 today

NEW DELHI, Aug 26: Well-wishers sent birthday flowers Thursday to Nobel laureate Mother Teresa, who was recovering from malarial fever, reports AP.

Mother Teresa turns 83 on Friday, according to records. But her order, the Missionaries of Charity, said friends and colleagues celebrated the birthday a day earlier.

"We got excited and decided to go ahead today itself," said Sister Joann, at the New Delhi



Mother Teresa

branch of the Missionaries of Charity. She said the nuns sent her greeting cards, flowers and said special prayers in their chapel.

The Indian Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, also sent a greeting message on Thursday. Doctors said the Roman Catholic nun was feeling better and was on her feet for the first time since she was admitted on Friday.

"She is making steady progress, is cheerful and is taking normal food," said B K Dash, a hospital spokesman.

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje in the former Yugoslavia of Albanian parents. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work among the destitute.

Britain's Princess Diana was among those who sent greetings.

Sharif vows to make Pakistan debt-free

LAHORE, Aug 26: Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed in a manifesto on Wednesday to make Pakistan debt-free if voted to power in elections next October, reports Reuters.

Pakistan's external debts, amounting to 18.4 billion dollar last June, Sharif stepped down the following month in an army-brokered deal to end his six-month power struggle with president Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who also resigned.

The former premier told a news conference in Lahore, his hometown, that if his Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party was elected in the October 6 vote it would enable Pakistan to enter the 21st century "in a dignified manner as a strong, invincible and debt-free country."

Sharif, whose 30 months in government were marked by economic liberalisation, promised to launch a "second industrial revolution" and wage a war on poverty.

Sharif said he was seeking to be returned with a two-thirds parliamentary majority so that

90 more Afghans killed in Kandahar fighting

QUETTA (Pakistan) Aug 26: Ninety more Afghans were killed today in fighting between rival guerrillas in the southern province of Kandahar, raising the toll in five days of battles to 220, Afghan sources in neighbouring Pakistan said, reports Reuters.

More than 400 other people have been wounded so far in the battles between the followers of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Mujahideen guerrilla sources in the southwestern Pakistani town of Quetta said.

More injured from the fighting were brought to Pakistani hospitals, hospital sources said.

Pakistani officials at the border town of Chaman said they had also received reports of heavy fighting in a dispute over the control of an arsenal at Arghandab, about 15 km (10 miles) northwest of Kandahar town, the provincial capital.

Both sides were using tanks, artillery and rockets, guerrilla sources said.

Kamal's convention begins today

From page 1 col 7
The draft of the political document will be placed before the delegates in the evening session today and five commissions will be constituted to examine it.

The commissions, comprising experts and one representative from each district, will review and give their recommendations on different chapters of the document. While the various commissions will meet separately, the plenary session starts deliberations from Saturday morning.

The document is expected to be adopted by the plenary session tomorrow evening.

On Sunday, the concluding day of the convention, a political declaration will be made which is likely to spell out the necessity of forming a new political party. Following the acceptance of the proposal to form a party a temporary leadership on the basis of an interim constitution will be elected.

Convention sources said the interim constitution was under consideration of the steering committee which met last night. "However, it is certain that the idea of a collective leader-

All Nicaraguan hostages freed

MANAGUA, Aug 26: Pro-Sandinista gunmen freed Vice President Virgilio Godoy and four other hostages here late Wednesday, ending a week-long dual hostage crisis, officials said, reports AFP.

The leftist commando released their remaining hostages hours after rearmend Contra rebels in northern Nicaragua released their last five hostages.

The Sandinista group's captives, members of the conservative national opposition union (UNO), were taken Friday at UNO headquarters in retaliation for the wright wing rebels kidnappings.

Along with Godoy, the commando released former national assembly President Alfredo Cesar and three other UNO politicians.

No cholera epidemic in Bangladesh: Press Note

The government yesterday clearly stated that there was no cholera epidemic in Bangladesh and therefore "there is no cause for panic," reports BSS.

A Press Note issued by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry said the report published recently in a section of the press about "Bengal cholera epidemic" was not based on facts. Describing the report as rather misleading the Press Note said it might create apprehensions in the public minds.

Ravi Shankar hospitalised

CALCUTTA, Aug 26: Sitar maestro, Pandit Ravi Shankar was admitted to the University of California Medical Centre (San Diego) in the USA following a heart attack today, according to a message received by his secretary, R Paul here.

Nazrul

From Page 1 Col 8
The Nazrul Academy, the main national organisation, devoted to research on the poet has organised a three-day programme which began yesterday. Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda inaugurated the programme, being participated by many Nazrul scholars and intellectuals.

Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television will put up special programmes while the National dailies will publish special articles marking the day.

The Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, in a statement, said the best way of showing respect to the great poet is to establish people's rights through fighting against all sorts of injustices, repressions and exploitations.

"On the occasion of the poet's death anniversary, I hope that his literature will inspire us to renew the struggle for establishing people's rights," Hasina said paying profound respects to the memory of the rebel poet.

In her message, the AL leader noted that Nazrul was the champion of Bengali renaissance and the anti-imperialism movement in the region. His creative and pungent writings enriched Bengali literature and culture, she added.

The Awami League leaders will lay wreaths at the mazar of the national poet and offer fatcha for the peace of the departed soul at 8.30 in the morning.

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will hold a discussion at the academy auditorium at 7 pm. Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed will preside over the meeting which will be followed by a cultural function with the participation of the academy's own artists and those of the BFA, the Nazrul Parishad, Nazrul Academy and the Benuka Lalitakala Kendra.

Director General of the academy Mobarak Hossain along with the officials, artists and employees of his office will place wreaths and offer fatcha at Nazrul's mazar in the morning.

The Bangla Academy will hold a discussion meeting at its premises at 5 in the afternoon.

AFM Abdul Haq will be in the chair while the speakers will include Dr Karunamoy Goshwami, Prof Aatur Rahman and Abdul Mannan Syed.

Bangladesh Krishak Mukti Andolon has decided to arrange a discussion at 4 pm at its Chamelbagh office in the city. Besides, it will lay wreaths at Nazrul's mazar and offer fatcha there at 7 in the morning. Editorial on Page 4

The Midnight File

NATO chief to meet Ghali

BRUSSELS, Aug 26: NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner will meet United Nations Chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Geneva next week to discuss the war in Bosnia, the alliance said today. The meeting next Wednesday would be the second between the two men, who last met in Brussels in April, reports Reuters.

PLO-Israeli accord on territories finalised

AMMAN, Aug 26: A PLO official said today Israel and his organisation had finalised a provisional accord on partial Palestinian control in the occupied territories in secret high-level contacts over the last few days. The proposal, floated by the Palestine Liberation Organisation to revive stalled Middle East peace talks, calls for Israel to withdraw first from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho while the rest of the occupied lands remain under a five-year period of interim Palestinian self-government, reports Reuters.

Khaleda urges FFs

From page 1 col 7
Rahman had, for the first time, realised that the freedom fighters could be utilised in changing the lot of the people.

"Shaheed Ziaur Rahman made the freedom fighters realise that their utility would never end," she recalled.

The Prime Minister, pointing at the failures of the post-independence government and the nine-year autocratic rule, said, "Today we have to start all over again."

She assured that the present government has initiated programmes to materialise the dreams and the spirit of the Liberation War.

Begum Zia said the nationalist freedom fighters are today uniting themselves responding to the need of the time.

The Jatiyatabad Muktiyoddha Dai has been formed to give the nationalist freedom fighters an opportunity in making significant contribution towards nation building," she added.

The Prime Minister warned that certain quarters were trying to create confusion among the people and take the country backward. "Today hartals are being called to destroy the country," she lamented.

"The freedom fighters have to come forward to resist this," she said.

Changes at NBR

From Page 1 Col 8
Finance when asked to comment about the changes, said the steps were taken to revamp the revenue administration in order to 'stop leakage' and for streamlining the system.

Top officials of the Finance Ministry said the new appointees all had a good and efficient track records and were known for their honesty.

Filipino crew

From Page 1 Col 5
taining an out-pass. After a body search the gold-bars, strapped to their thighs were recovered.

Port sources said initially the crew resisted the search and there was a brief scuffle with the security people. But the two Filipinos were overpowered and frisked revealing the smuggled gold. It was the biggest such haul here in recent times.

The pair was handed over to the Port police along with the seized gold.

Police suspect the two were carrying the gold to their local agents here.

Meanwhile, the rummage team of Sea Customs launched a search operation inside the vessel today suspecting more hidden gold there.

'UN bankrupt, can't pay for more troops in Bosnia'

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 26: The United Nations is bankrupt and unable to pay for the extra manpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina requested by UN mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg, a senior UN official said reports AFP.

Stoltenberg asked Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali earlier this week to raise an extra 40,000 soldiers, if the peace plan under discussion in Geneva is implemented.

But the United Nations is unable to finance the force, Boutros-Ghali said, according to the senior official.

Babangida steps down

From Page 1 Col 5
flight chartered by the Nigerian Foreign Ministry to attend the ceremony held on a parade ground the size of a football pitch known as "Ibrahim Babangida Square."

The ceremony, watched by an estimated 10,000 spectators, began with a parade under arms and a review of the troops. The event was not transmitted live by television due to technical difficulties, television officials told journalists, but was due to be broadcast this evening.

The parade could also be followed by the departure of other senior junta members, the influential Guardian newspaper reported today, citing military sources.

Meanwhile, tension remained high in the economic capital Lagos.

The streets there stayed deserted early today, the second day of a civil disobedience campaign orchestrated by pro-democracy groups in protest at the military's refusal to appoint as president Moshod Abiola, the Muslim millionaire widely regarded as having won the June 12 presidential elections annulled by Babangida.

Nigeria's strongest labour movement, the National Labour Congress, has vowed to launch indefinite protests from midnight (2300 GMT) Friday if the military have not transferred power to the Senate Speaker by then.

Several Nigerian Senators and members of the House of Representatives decided to boycott Babangida's farewell ceremony in protest at his decision to hand over power to an interim government instead, one Senator told AFP late Wednesday, on condition of anonymity.

Last week the Senate urged Babangida to hand over to Senate Speaker Iyorchia Ayu on August 27, as stated in the 1989 Constitution, which was approved by the outgoing military administration.

Two successive sessions of the House of Representatives, the Lower House, broke up in chaos this week as opposition MPs chanted the name of Abiola, while others shouted their support for Babangida.

In London, Abiola, who contested the poll for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), said, "Many people don't believe that he (Babangida) will go. He will merely replace himself with one of his own surrogates."

Editor: S. M. Ali
Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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