Arafat rejects Clinton's call to resume ME talks

TUNIS, Mar 17: PLO chairman Yasser Arafat rejected President Clinton's call to resume peace talks with Israel on Thursday, insisting that the United Nations first endorse international protection of Palestinians, reports AP.

Arafat spoke after a meeting with Vatican envoy Jean Louis Tauran at the Palestine Liberation Organisation headquar-

Arab-Israeli peace talks were suspended after a Jewish settler massacred 30 Palestinian worshipers at a Hebron mosque February 25.

After a meeting at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Wednesday, Clinton called on Arafat to return to the negotiating table to prevent extremists from scuttling the peace

But Arafat told reporters: "What is required now is that the United States, the two cosponsors of the Middle East peace process and the Security Council respond to the just demands of the Palestinians to provide international protection to our children, our women and our holy places."

The United States has blocked passage of a Security Council resolution on the Hebron massacre to put pres-

sure on the Palestine Libera tion Organisation to renew

Arafat also has demanded that Jewish settlements in Palestinian population centers be dismantled and settlers

Israel has rejected Arafat's demands, saying they infringed on the September 13 autonomy accord which stipulated that the future of the settlements will be discussed after the transitional, five-year period of Palestinian self-rule starts in the occupied town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

Arafat met with Tauran as Rabin met with Pope John Paul Il at the Vatican on Thursday. Rabin asked the pontiff's support to get the peace process "back on track" and pledged every effort to bring peace to the Holy Land.

The Vatican has stepped up its Middle East diplomacy since agreeing in December to establish diplomatic ties with Israel, and Tauran told reporters that he came to Tunis with a strong message from the Pope to Arafat in support of the peace process.

"All the faithful believe that peace is within reach ... and we

peace' programme saying the

pecting," said an official at

North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

sation headquarters here. "Di-

scussions are underway on

arrangements for the signing

ture. We welcome their partici-

"We welcome Russia's signa-

Russian Foreign Minister

Up to now, 12 countries

programme which will involve

ning and peacekeeping opera-

tions with NATO. It was de-

signed to extend defence guar-

antees without granting full

immediate membership in

Romania, Lithuania, Poland

Estonia, Hungary, Ukraine

Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia,

Trial of Nazi

collaborator

Touvier begins

VERSAILLES. France. Mar

7: War-time Nazi collaborator

Paul Touvier went on trial

today in a bullet-proof glass

cage here, charged with cri-

mes against humanity, reports

Touvier, 78, grey-haired

Wearing a red shirt without

with his hair brushed back, did

not object as photographers

a tie and a grey jacket, he

walked with measured steps

into the glass box and spoke

on a personal phone with his

lawyer, Jacques Tremolet de

gence chief of the war-time

militia that aided Nazi occu-

pation troops, is the first

Frenchman to face the charge

of crimes against humanity, 50

years after the crime was

selecting seven Jews for

execution by his militia at

Rillieux-la-Pape, a suburb of

Lyon, Eastern France, on June

Indian police kill

7 communists

shot and killed seven Commu-

nist activists and wounded four

in eastern India on Thursday

when they tried to prevent the

arrest of several of their

The victims were members

Communists in Bihar state

of exploiting poor villagers by

forcing them to work on their

farms and taking away their

Police arrived in Narigaon

comrades, reports AP.

NEW DELHI, Mar 17: Police

He is specifically accused of

Touvier, who was intelli-

Viller.

committed.

29. 1944.

and cameramen filmed him.

Albania, the Czech Republic

and Moldova.

These 12 countries are:

Andrei Kozyrev is expected to

sign the document.

"That is what we were ex-

news had been expected.

Russia to join NATO peace programme

report quoted Grachev as say-

Treaty Organisation headquarbloc countries, this month.

Tributes

From Page 1 Col 8 ghter of Bangabandhu Sheikh

Leaders of Awami Jubo League, Mahila League, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad Mujib Adarsha Mullayan Parishad, Awami Shilpi Goshthi, Kendrio Khelaghar Ashar, Bangladesh Tanti League and Sonar Bangla Jubo Parishad also garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib.

Bangabandhu Parishad organised a children's painting exhibition in the morning and a children's rally in the afternoon at the Bangabandhu Bhaban on the occasion. Poet Begum Sufia Kamal inaugurated the exhibition. Nearly 500 paintings on the history of the War of Independence of the

programme was held in front of the Bangabandhu Bhaban under the auspices of Lions and Leo Clubs of Greater Dhaka.

Meanwhile, the Bengah yesterday at Tungipara of the Gopalganj district. The programme included laying of wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu and discussion meeting. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina attended the function as the chief guest while Begum Sufia Kamal presided.

mahfil were also held at Bangabandhu's residence at Tungipara.

ssador to Bangladesh Dr Eduard S Shevchenko yesterday paid glowing tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of 74th birth anniversary of the

In a message sent to Opposition Leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, the Ambassador said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, globally known as the founder of Bangladesh, had inspired the whole nation for achieving Bangladesh's independence and

sovereignty. Dr Eduard S Shevchenko said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had dedicated himself for the welfare of the country and the

envoy said.

peace talks.

elsewhere disarmed.

should work toward that end, Tauran said.

pation.

MOSCOW, Mar 17: Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said today that Russia would be ready to join the NATO "partnership for peace" programme by the end of this month, Itar-Tass said, reports AFP.

"We will be ready to join this plan by the end of March," the ing following talks with US Defence Secretary William Pe-

Sources at North Atlantic ters in Brussels said Wedhave joined this cooperation nesday that Russia would go in the programme, which extends joint maneuvers, military plana cooperative link to former east

Meanwhile, the NATO today hailed Russia's announcement to join NATO's 'partnership for

country were on display. A voluntary blood donation

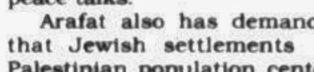
1400-year Celebration Council began a two-day programme

Quran Khwani and milad

UNB adds, Russian Ambalate leader.

of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and the Indian People's Front, two news agencies quoted the police as saying. campaign against upper-caste landowners, who they accuse

people. village Thursday to arrest "He would ever remain as a Communist activists accused of source of inspiration to all the killing a powerful landlord and freedom and peace-loving peoattacking a friend who is a ple of the whole world," the member of the governing Congress Party.





Two Israeli soldiers grab a Palestinian after he was arrested during clashes with the army and young Palestinians in the Jabalia refugee camp, north of Gaza Wednesday. - AFP photo

Israeli soldiers admit shooting at mosque

JERUSALEM, Mar 17: Soldiers testified Thursday that they fired at the entrance of a West Bank mosque where a Jewish settler killed 30 Muslim worshipers, and suggested second settler carried the murder weapon into the mosque, reports AP.

Palestinian witnesses to the February 25 massacre have said the gunman. Dr Baruch Goldstein, did not act alone.

Palestinian witnesses also have said at least one worshiper was killed and others wounded by army gunfire after the massacre. Palestinians are boycotting the Israeli panel investigating the shootings, saying it will not be impartial.

Sgt Kobi Yosef, one of the guards at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, said Goldstein carried an M-16 assault rifle when he walked past the guard post at about 5:20 am on February 25. The 110 spent shells in the Ibrahim Mosque were fired from a Galil, a different type of rifle.

Chief Justice Meir Shamgar, leader of the commission, asked Yosef whether he was sure about the type of weapon, nothing that other soldiers had testified Goldstein carried a Galil.

Israeli jets raid Hezbollah bases

NABATIYEH, Lebanon, Mar 17: Israeli warplanes blasted guerilla positions in south Lebanon on Thursday after killing three infiltrators in an overnight shootout, security sources said, reports AP.

In two consecutive sorties, two Israeli fighter-bombers fired four rockets into Mlita hill in Iglim Al-Tuffah, north of the Israeli-occupied border enclave, said the sources, who requested anonymity.

Clouds of black smoke were seen billowing from the tar geted hill, a stronghold of the Iranian-backed Shi'ite Muslim Hezbollah, or Party of God.

There was no immediate word of casualties.

An Israeli army statement said Israeli warplanes attacked Hezbollah bases in south Lebanon used for training and to launch attacks against Israeli targets.

Teller machine

From Page 1 Col 3 The machine will go into operation experimentally from tomorrow and if found suitable, the bank would place orders for import of more machines for the purpose.

Agrani Bank sources said that the automatic teller machines would enable customers to withdraw and deposit cash at any time. However, the bank would initially programme the machines for cash withdrawal only so as to avoid deposit of counterfeit notes.

"The automatic teller machine has to be particularly tested in the background of the generally soiled notes now in circulation," a senior banking official said on condition of anonymity.

"If we find the dispensation of the existing notes satisfactory against the soiled conditions coupled with the high humidity that may affect the currency movement through machines, we will definitely recommend the introduction of the automatic teller machines," a highly placed official of the Bank said.

 After introduction of the machines, customers will be allowed to withdraw cash up to a maximum limit of Taka 3000 in one transaction. Customers, according to the credit rating enjoyed by the bank, will be allowed to make a maximum number of three withdrawals in a given 24-hour period. The exact sum of withdrawal to be allowed will ultimately be decided by the management of the bank.

Customers who would enjoy electronic cash withdrawal benefits would be given a special card and also have a secret

code. The experimental machine, brought from a tender bidder, has been manufactured by 'Digital.'

Serbs, Muslims agree to end siege of Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Mar 17: Serbs and Muslims signed an agreement Thursday to open roads to civilian traffic in and out of Sarajevo, effectively ending the 23-month siege of the capital, reports AP.

The agreement takes effect Wednesday.

The deal, signed at Sarajevo airport under UN supervision, opens up a bridge and key roads linking ethnic Serb and Muslim sections of the city. It also frees a route from Sarajevo into central Bosnia, controlled by allied Muslims and Croats.

Though the agreement does not permit commercial or military traffic on the road leading from Sarajevo to Visoko and on to Zenica in central Bosnia, it envisages free passage of civilians in

buses or cars under UN escort. The agreement was the latest and perhaps most dramatic sign that the Bosnian

3 die in separate incidents By DMCH Correspondent

Three persons, including a minor girl, died in separate incidents in the capital yester-

An eight-year-old girl, Husne Ara, was killed when she was run over by an autorickshaw at Kajla under Demra police station in the afternoon. Fatally wounded, Husne Ara

was rushed to the Dhaka

Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared her dead. Witnesses said that the girl was run over by an auto-rickshaw while she was crossing

the road. She was a student of class three. Demra police seized the auto-rickshaw but its driver

managed to escape. Pollobi and Mohammadpur police recovered two bodies from their respective areas in

the morning. A 35-year-old woman was found dead in a slum at Pollobi while the body of a man, aged 50, was found near a mosque at Sher Shah Suri Road, Mohammadpur. None of them could be identified immedi-

The bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue and two separate unnatural death (UD) cases were lodged with police.

der Munshiganj district on March 12, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after the end of police-remand.

Police said that Qaayum made a confessional statement under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) before a magistrate in Dhaka yesterday.

12 injured as BNP. AL activists clash in Jamalpur

war is winding down after 23

months of carnage that has left

more than 200,000 people

drawal of heavy guns from the

immediate vicinity of the

Bosnian capital and a tentative

agreement between Bosnian

Croats and Muslims to stop

fighting, reform their alliance

The successes reflect in

creased outside pressure on

the warring parties, including

an active US and Russian role

in mediating agreements. But

it also appears to be recog-

nition by all sides that little

more is to be gained by

fighting, either politically or

Bosnian Liaison to the United

Nations, signed for the gov-

ernment and Momcilo

Krajisnik, chief of the Bosniah

Serb Parliament, signed for

Hasan Muratovic, the

territorially.

the ethnic Serbs.

and create a federation.

It follows the Serb with-

dead or missing.

JAMALPUR, Mar 17: About a dozen people were injured. two seriously, in a clash between the supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Awami League at Sharishabari this morning, reports UNB.

BNP supporter Manju and Chhatra League activist Mintu have been admitted to the Sharishabari thana health centre and the Jamalpur Sadar Hospital respectively with serious injuries.

The Awami League sources claimed that armed activists of the BNP attacked a peaceful procession of the Chhatra League, brought out in celebra tion of the 74th birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

The BNP supporters also ransacked the stage built in front of the thana Chhatra League office, sources said.

The BNP leaders in a case filed with Sharishabari police said their supporters, including Manju, were injured in the clash which started after derogatory slogans against BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder.

Nine houses gutted in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Mar 17: Nine thatched houses were gutted in a fire which broke out at WAPDA colony here on Wednesday night. The fire originated from an electric short circuit, local fire service sources said. About 100 persons were rendered homeless due to fire, reports BSS.

US report on BOI

pointed out that the economic reform measures continue to face 'formidable' resistance from the Bangladesh govern ment, although some civil servants and ministers receive good marks from the private sector for their "integrity and receptivity" to the reform programme.

When his attention was drawn to the growing interest of US investors in India and Vietnam in recent years, O'Hanian pointed out that businessmen essentially would look for opportunities to make money.

Acknowledging that the Bangladesh government was acting to create a congenial investment climate he, however, said that the international investors first want to see if the local investors feel confident and are investing money. If they do and make money, he added, then certainly foreign investors would come.

On this issue, the report

noted that the domestic pri-

vate investors, who invest

nearly all of what private in-

vestment is made, regard the

investment climate in Bangladesh as "unattractive, citing policy instability, government red tape, an uncertain law and order situation, poor infrastructure, and inadequate commercial laws and courts". It went on to add: "Conti-

nued huge losses to the economy from state-owned enterprises and slow disbursement from Bangladesh's bureaucracy-choked donor aid pipeline meant 1993 was another missed opportunity to boost economic growth significantly."

O'Hanian said that the US investors might be interested in investing in the telecommunication and power sectors in Bangladesh. US companies. he added, are now realising the necessity for expanding their activities in Asia and are looking at the options and it is upto individual countries to take measures in attracting

them. The meeting was also attended by Robert Hilton, Press Attache and Phillip Carter, Economic and Commercial Attache at the US Embassy.

By Staff Correspondent

The government in a handout yesterday declared March 20 a public holiday in the areas comprising the Magura-2 constituency. The decision has been taken to facilitate the people to cast their votes in the by-elections.

The government has di rected the government, semigovernment, autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations, commercial organisations mills and factories in the constituency to remain closed on the day.

The government also expressed the hope that those organisations which are run independently will also declare a holiday on the day to facilitate the staff to cast votes.

AL complaint

From Page 1 Col 7

Samad Azad yesterday urged international community, donors and national and international press to see how the ruling party "is violating election rules" in Magura-2 parliamentary by-election.

In a statement, he charged BNP ministers with gross interference in the conduct of free and impartial election by misusing power and the administration to manipulate votes for the ruling party candidate.

Azad alleged most of the senior ministers, abandoning their offices and assigned jobs in Dhaka, have been staying in Magura for last one week intimidating or tempting voters through administration to cast ballot for the BNP candidate.

"All arrangements have been made by the government to stage a mock election in Magura-2 seat on March 20" Azad said, adding election under BNP will never be free and

Campaigning

From Page 1 Col 5
Hasina is scheduled to come to Magura again from Tungipara and is expected to stay there until the polling day

The two top political par ties - BNP and AL - are attaching top priority to the Magura by-polls. They have been making allout efforts to help their candidates win the election. Both parties are considering the election as a prestige fight after the recent mayoral polls results.

The Magura seat had been held by the AL for the last three decades. Therefore, the AL is confident of retaining it and accordingly the party chief, a host of MPs and other senior leaders have been campaigning ceaselessly for their nominee, Shafiquzzaman Bachchu, the son of the deceased Asaduzzaman.

On the other hand, the BNP, shaken by its debacle in the mayoral elections in Dhaka and Chittagong, has been desperately striving to improve its image by winning the Magura seat. Cabinet ministers accompanied by a large number of MPs, have been touring different parts of the constituency.

According to EC sources. Chief Election Commissioner Justice A Rouf is expected to be present in Magura to oversee the conduct of the elec-

Meanwhile, some observers from a few foreign embassies may also go to Magura to monitor the polls. Our Jessore Correspondent

says: Door-to-door campaigning is continuing with the byelection date approaching nearer.

4-day hartal begins at Meherpur MEHERPUR, Mar 17: Resi

dents of the town set ablaze the house and car of a former police officer during a hartal to protest the arrest of four management committee members of the local Eidgah today, witnesses said, reports UNB.

Hamid Khan, a former police super of the district, filed a case against them for damaging the boundary wall he had erected around the Meherpur Eidgah in the town claiming that he owned the land. Hundreds of people demol

on Monday and offered their Eid prayers there. According them, the land was earmarked as Eidgah by the Royal Survey (RS) of 1927. The local people enforced the four-day hartal from 9 am today demanding the release of committee members Khade-

mul Islam, Ataul Hakil Lal Mia.

Abdur Razzaque and Tariqui

ished the wall on the Eid day

Islam, who were arrested earlier in the day. All political parties, including the BNP. Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat, extended their support to the hartal call. Activists of the parties also joined a big procession brought out during the

hartal The committee members were later released on bail.

Public holiday in Magura Mar 20 The Midnight Sile

Fire at Ukrainian N-plant

KIEV. (Ukraine). Mar 17: A nuclear reactor was shut down in a powerplant in central Ukraine after fire broke out in the turbine room, an official said on Thursday. An electric cable caught fire in the turbine room of Khmelnitsky nuclear power plant, 250 kilometers (156 miles) west of Kiev, Nuclear Safety Committee spokesman Nikolai Kurilchik said. The duty operator immediately spotted the fire, which began at 20.45 local time (18.45 GMT) on Wednesday, and two minutes later shut down the power plant's single water pressurised reactor, reports AP.

Rabin seeks Pope's support in ME peace process

VATICAN CITY, Mar 17: Yitzhak Rabin asked Pope John Paul II to help get the Middle East peace process "back on track" on Thursday and pledged every effort to bring peace to the Holy Land. In a 30-minute Vatican audience, the Israeli prime minister called the February 25 mosque massacre by a Jewish extremist "shameful", a Vatican spokesman said, reports AP.

Cabinet reshuffle

From Page 1 Col 8

in the Dhaka and Chittagong mayoral polls, party cadres have been mounting pressure on the leadership to take drastic steps to face future political challenges.

According to party sources. the BNP High Command is much concerned about the situation and also aware of the feelings of the party workers BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and other policymakers have been exchanging views on the future course of action.

We expect soon a new central committee which is likely to be accompanied by a cabinet reshuffle," said a central leader of the BNP requesting anony-

After the BNP's national council was held in September last year, a standing committee and the new central committee are yet to be formed. The BNP constitution empowers the party chief to appoint the office-bearers and members of the central committee.

The appointment of a new Secretary General replacing Abdus Salam Talukder is a major issue of discussion inside

According to sources, Salam Talukder is reluctant to continue, citing health grounds. To replace him, some names are being considered by the party high command. The possible choices for the post still remain confined to four names as of now — Tarigul Islam. Rafiqui Islam Mia, Abdul Manhan Bhuiyan and Dr Khondker Mosharraf Hossain, all minis-

A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Prof Badruddoza Chow dhury are also reportedly being considered for this vital post. However, as both of them had previously served as Secretary General, they are not much interested in this post.

In any cabinet reshuffle. Abdul Matin Chowdhury is most likely to lose the Home Ministry. If Matin Chowdhury is transferred to another min-

AIDS directorate

From Page 1 Col 7 clinical symptom and complaint.

There might be many more cases of HIV positive which could not be detected due to lack of extensive surveillance and sufficient blood screening mechanism in the country, he

added. Former chairman of National AIDS Committee Prof SGM Chowdhury carried out surveys in the brothels of Dhaka, Narayangani, Bani Shata, Jessore and Bagerhat as well as among floating masses. gay girls, truck drivers and sailors in 1989 but did not find

any positive case of HIV. Doctors and experts of IEDCR however detected seven positive cases in the brothels of Goalando in last January and another in Bani Shata in the country's second largest port city of Khulna. But surveys carried out at the English Road brothel of the capital could trace no positive case of

Based on the findings, experts hinted that the virus may have been carried by truck drivers making a stopover at Goalando while on their way back from the border.

They said two groups of people in the country are very vulnerable — the business group making frequent trips to high-prevalence HIV areas like Bangkok and the prostitutes who are coming in contact with them. AIDS is also known as a "traveller's disease".

The campaign to check the spread of the killer disease in the country which include telecasting of a message against AIDS only once a week on the television has so far been very ineffective. Aggressive advertisements cannot be used due to the conservative and religious faith of the people.

Sources, however said authorities are trying to make an appealing advertisement with famous TV characters in the lead role as part of a comprehensive AIDS prevention and control programme and for active promotion of condoms which is an effective safeguard.

istry, then Mostafizur Rahman may be appointed Home Minister. Mostafizur Rahman, the incumbent Foreign Minister, ran the Home Ministry under Ziaur Rahman and for some time under Justice Abdus Sattar

In such case, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury may become the new foreign minister. On the otherhand, Jute Minister Hannan Shah could also be appointed Home Minister. Changes in the portfolios of some other ministers and state ministers are also expected, said the sources.

Some party insiders expect that decisions regarding the party leadership and the cabinet would be taken by the Prime Minister before she leaves for Tokyo on March 28 on a four-day state visit. However, others expect the changes after the PM's return.

Hasına

From Page 1 Col 8 the people in order to fulfil the hopes of the late Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina accused the BNP of not fulfilling its pledge to cancel the Indemnity Ordinance. "This is a serious breach of commitment," she

"The BNP government is responsible for killings, terrorism and corruption. The government has no right to stay in power," Sheikh Hasina said. The function was presided

over by poet Shamsur Rahman, Joint Convenor of the Bengali 1400 Celebration Council. Others who participated in the discussion were AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman, presidium member Amir Hu-

Sarwar, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, MP, and Gaztul Hug. The Bengali 1400 Celebration Council also organised day-long programmes at the mazar premises of Sheikh Muji-bur Rahman on the occasion of his birth anniversary. The programme included recitation from the Holy Quran,

ssain Amu, film actress Kabori

milad mahfil, discussion, and a chil-dren's rally. Earlier, at sunrise, the Awami League chief, along with party leaders and workers placed wreaths at the grave of

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman. Vested quarters: PM

From Page 1 Col 7 unitedly for progress and prosperity of the country. "Every individual has to be integrated in the development

programmes for their success. Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Maj Gen (Retd) Majid ul-Hug, T & T Minister Tarigul Islam, Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman and a number of MPs also accompanied the Prime Minister during the campaign.

SAARC Press Clubs confce: Pak team arrives

A seven-member Pakistan delegation to South Asian Press Clubs' conference arrived in Dhaka yesterday afternoon, re-

ports BSS. They were received at the Zia International Airport by the National Press Club President, Hasan Shahriar, General Secretary, Shukat Mahmood, senior members of the club managing committee and officials of the Pakistan High Commission

The two-day conference will

be inaugurated by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zla at the Osmany Memorial Hall tomorrow morning. Participants from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, The Maldives,

Bhutan and the Secretary General of SAARC, YK Silwal, will arrive today. The Pakistan delegation comprises Hasan Abid, Pre-si-

dent, Karachi Press Club, Huma Ali, President, Lahore Press Club, Mohammad Nawaz Raza, President, Rawalpindi Presi Club, Magbool Kashmiri, Pre sident, Peshawar Press Club, M. Ziauddin, Editor, The News, Rawalpindi, Razia Bha-tti. Editor. The Newsline, Karachi and Anwar Mansuri, DPA Bureau Chief, Islamabad.

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