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**Tomorrow**  
**String of nines**  
**may disrupt**  
**computers**

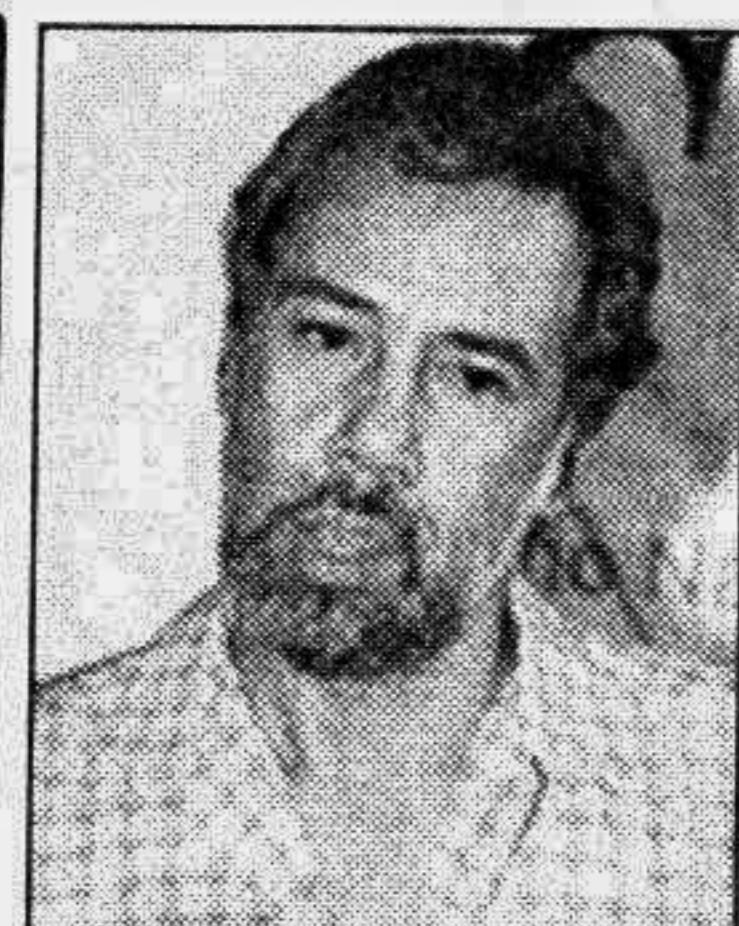
LONDON, Sept 7: Stand by for another dud millennium computer bug warning.

Thursday, September 9 may be represented as 9999 on many computer software programmes. In theory this string of nines might disrupt systems and provide a preview of the millennium bug chaos predicted when computer clocks click over into the next century at midnight on December 31, 1999, reports Reuters.

Many programmers on old computer systems, dating mostly from the 1960s used bunches of nines to instruct a computer programme to shut down, or prepare for maintenance.

So the theory is that on Thursday, computers will come across a series of nines and grind to a halt, throwing a spanner into the works of a huge range of businesses from banking to electricity generation and car manufacturing. You can relax, for the next 100-odd days at least. Experts say

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Gusmao freed

JAKARTA, Sept 7: East Timor resistance leader Xanana Gusmao was freed by Indonesia today, reports Reuters.

Documents formalising Gusmao's release after more than six years in Indonesian jails were signed at the Justice Ministry in Jakarta.

Gusmao's eyes were watering as the signing ceremony was completed. Justice Minister Muladi signed on behalf of the Indonesian government.

The resistance leader, widely expected to become president of independent East Timor, was given a wrapped gift by the government.

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## Martial law, shoot-on-sight curfew in East Timor

JAKARTA, Sept 7: Indonesia imposed martial law and a shoot-on-sight curfew in East Timor today, report agencies.

The violence continued unabated with people being terrorised to flee Dili, while pro-Jakarta gangs roamed the streets burning or looting buildings as part of an apparent scorched-earth campaign.

"Anybody who remains behind in Dili will be killed," Christian Brother Pat told Australian radio from his home in a deserted Dili suburb.

"Houses will be burned, buildings will be destroyed, the plan seems to be to wreck the city, so that what is left is not worth talking about. If East Timor is to be independent it will have nothing," he said.

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It was a comment taken up by one pro-Jakarta militia leader near a refugee area in West Timor.

"We will burn (East Timor) down and start all over again ... we are ready to go the jungles for 20 years," Hermínio da Silva Costa told Reuters in the West Timor capital of Kupang. West Timor is part of Indonesia.

Indonesia's Antara news agency said more than 10,000 refugees arrived in Atambua, West Timor today.

The United Nations, organiser of last week's ballot which gave overwhelming support to break away from Indonesia, said more than 40,000 East Timorese had fled their homes and many others were heading



A Japanese attack in the Ghanaian goalmouth during yesterday's final of the 2nd Bangabandhu Cup International Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. —Star photo by Anisur Rahman

300 kg explosives recovered from a house in Benapole

BENAPOLE, Sept 7: Sharsha police today recovered 300 kilograms of smuggled explosives from a house near the land port here, reports BSS.

Police arrested two people for their alleged involvement in smuggling the explosives from India.

Acting on a tip-off Sharsha police arrested Hafizur Rahman and Shahjahan from the house of one Shamsur Rahman, this afternoon and recovered nearly 300 kilograms of explosives loaded in six jute bags. But Shamsur Rahman managed to escape.

The sources said the primary investigation proves that the seized explosive is sulphur which can be used as raw material for making bombs. At least 3000 powerful bombs can be made by using the seized Sulphur, the sources added.

BDR patrolling in the border area was strengthened following the recovery of the explosives.

The arrested were taken to custody for interrogation.

**KMP body to probe 'criminal records' of Ershad Shikdar**

**From Staff Correspondent**

KHULNA, Sept 7: A six-member committee has been formed to investigate criminal records of top terrorist Ershad Shikdar.

The committee, headed by DC (South) of Khulna Metropolitan Police Mazharul Hoque, will look into the matters relating to all murder cases filed against Ershad Shikdar.

The committee will also verify confessional statement of Noor-e Alam who has again been taken on a three-day remand for further interrogation.

Noor-e Alam, bodyguard of Ershad Shikdar and witness of 23 murders was arrested recently.

**AL public meet**

Demra Thana Awami League will hold a public meeting on Postogola, Alam Market premises at 3 pm tomorrow and Dhamondi Thana Al. Kalabagan Kira Chakra ground at 3 pm on September 10, a Dhaka city AL press release said yesterday, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the meetings as the chief guest.

**Inside Today**

### Article

Israeli-Palestinian agreement

**What Does Each Party Get in the Deal?**

by Harun ur Rashid Page 4

### Supplement

One page supplement on 'International Literacy Day '99' on Page 9

### Prayer Timings

September 8

Fajr 4:20 4:25

John 12:45 1:15

Asr 4:45 5:00

Magrib 6:25 6:30

Esha 8:00 8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Dr Brundtland speaks to The Daily Star

## Pro-poor healthcare holds the key

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The poor in poor countries suffer not so much because of resource constraints but for their governments' failure to fashion pro-poor healthcare systems, says Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, the celebrated head of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"It's not true that poor countries have poor health indicators because they are poor," said Dr Brundtland, now in the city to attend a WHO regional conference. "A lot depends on how these countries fashion their healthcare system."

A former Norwegian prime minister who headed the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) that produced the famous *Our Common Future* in 1987, the WHO chief spoke to The Daily Star in an

exclusive interview yesterday. She spoke of deep socio-economic disparity among people in this region, where causes of concern included high military spending while a vast majority of the people were denied basic healthcare.

"There is a need to greatly reduce the burden of excess mortality and preventable disability suffered by the poor."

Dr Brundtland, who has vowed to become a "moral voice" in improving health of the people of the world since taking over in July last year, said she linked health targets to broader issues of development such as governance, democracy, accountability, resource allocation and free press.

The goal of halving the number of people living in ab-

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### Commentary

## Press freedom under threat?

By Mahfuz Anam

Two issues agitate our minds today. First, the attack on our higher judiciary, literally terming it accessory to crime; and second, the threat to free press which appears to have been shelved for the moment.

Never before have we witnessed such a venomous attack on our higher judiciary. To literally say that our High Court judges are patronising terrorists is the most insulting - not to mention unfortunate, unnecessary and inappropriate - remark that one could have made against our High Court. What makes the remark tragically significant is that it came from no less a person than the home minister himself. What makes the whole episode more reprehensible is that the home minister directed his attack at the office and the person of the

chief justice of the Supreme Court himself. Implication of his statement is that our High Court and Supreme Court judges, including the chief justice himself, are in collusion with the terrorists - the latter committing the crime and the former permitting them to do so by granting them bail indiscriminately.

What is the cause for this totally uncalled for insulting remark? The reason is the courts' granting bail to a huge number of people nabbed by police on various criminal charges. According to government claims, a large number of people arrested so far under the home ministry's drive against terrorists and criminals have been set free on bail. Let us assume for the sake of argument that all those arrested were real crimi-

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**PM on BNP propaganda**  
**Those now shedding tears will flee to India**

By Staff Correspondent

Prim Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday came down heavily on the BNP-led opposition parties for their persistent propaganda that the country's sovereignty was at stake and it was being turned into a vassal state of India because of her government's policy of subservience.

Hasina said Awami League fought the Liberation War and won independence and if necessary, leaders and workers of the party will lay down their lives along with people to protect the country's sovereignty".

"Those who are now shedding crocodile tears for the

country will flee to India cowdly in such a situation", the Awami League chief said during the PM's Question Time in the Jatiya Sangsad.

"They were the people who made Indian flags for hoisting those in Bangladesh," she said, referring to a clandestine plan allegedly made by some Opposition activists to hoist Indian flags in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on the eve of the CHT peace accord.

The PM was visibly angry as she replied to a supplementary question from Jatiya Party lawmaker Golam Faruk Obhi

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old City, the Leader of the Opposition advised the government against introducing such 'black laws'.

The former prime minister observed that there were BKSAL-type provisions in the proposed anti-terrorism law.

She warned that this "autocratic and puppet" government would not be allowed to introduce any black law in the country.

In her 20-minute speech, she criticised the government for

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Japanese captain Takaiyoshi Amma holds aloft the Bangabandhu Cup. —Star photo

AL activist murdered in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 7: An activist of Awami League was gunned down by some unidentified assailants at Boyra under Sonadanga thana last night.

The victim, Hatem Ali Shaikh, 60, came under attack while he was returning home from Boyra Bazar at around 9 pm.

He was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to bullet injuries soon after admission.

Police said the murder was a sequel to intra-party rivalry.

Hatem Ali was laid to rest at his family graveyard today. No murder case was filed till filing of this report at around 7 pm today.

Police today arrested Kabiruzzaman, 25, former general secretary of Chhatra

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**Heroin worth Tk 2.5cr seized: 5 arrested**

By Staff Correspondent

About 2.5 kg of heroin worth Tk 2.5 crore was recovered yesterday from the city's Rampura and Mirpur areas. Five persons including an Indian national and two women were also arrested.

The arrested are Rabibor Sarkar, a resident of Chabibh Pargana district of West Bengal.

**CID interrogates Akhtaruzzaman**

By Staff Correspondent

CID investigators yesterday interrogated Akteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu at his Motijheel office in the city in connection with the August 26 incident at the UCBL head office.

Babu, a former chairman of

Bank, allegedly led a group

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**Bus strike in Rajshahi**

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 7: Road communication between Rajshahi and rest of the country remained suspended from this morning following a wildcat strike by the Rajshahi and Natore Bus Owners Association.

The strike has been called to protest assault on a bus driver and ransacking of some motor vehicles at Dighapatia in Natore, sources said.

A group of students of Dighapatia MK College this morning assaulted a driver of a Rajshahi-Bogra bus service on Natore-Bogra road due to 'misbehaviour of the bus driver and the helper', witnesses said. During the incident, the helpers and conductors drove away with two students and assaulted them before dropping them on the road.

Hearing the news, hundreds of students of Dighapatia Col-

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Prospectus published on 29th August, 1999 in *The Financial Express* and *The Daily Janakantha*

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