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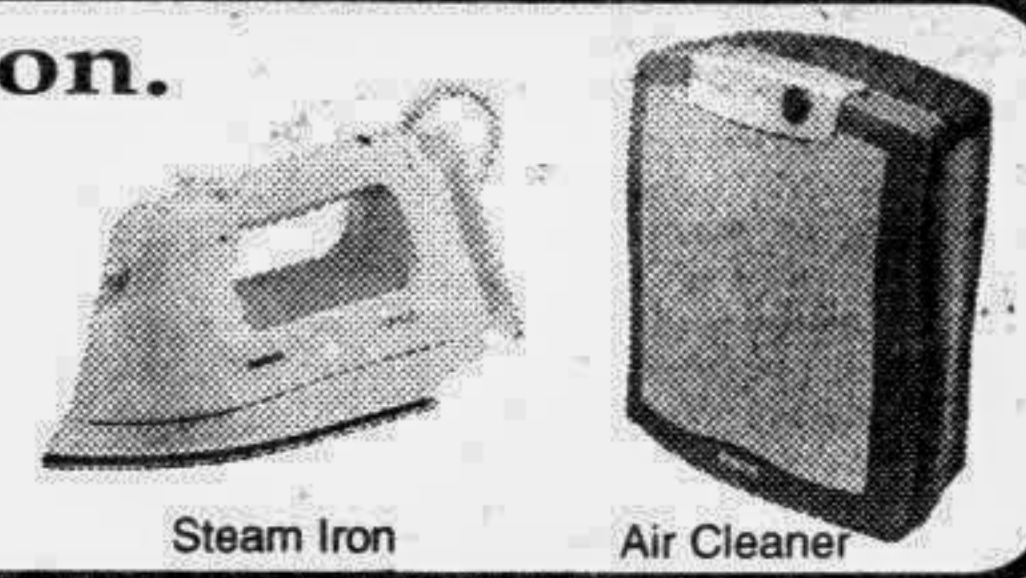
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Recommendation to upgrade pay scale of 321 posts resented

By Special Correspondent
The BCS Coordination Committee (26 cadres) yesterday expressed deep resentment against a recommendation made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the establishment ministry for upgrading the pay scales of 321 posts of the BCS (Admin) cadres and urged the committee to reconsider its decision.

It, however, welcomed another recommendation by the committee to provide selection grade to 50 per cent posts of all cadres through open competition, considering talent and efficiency to fill the positions of deputy secretary and above.

The steering committee of the co-ordination body of the 26 cadres said after a meeting yesterday that if the 321 posts were upgraded for one cadre, without upgrading other equivalent posts of 28 cadres, it could have adverse reaction in the public administration, which, in turn, could have negative impact on the national development.

It pointed out that on December 21, 1997 the establishment ministry had ordered upgrading the posts of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Deputy Commissioner and other equivalent ones. The decision there had triggered off protests and representation from different cadres including the Prokrihi-BCS cadre and BCS Co-ordination committee. The Prime Minister had directed the establishment ministry to suspend the order, and it was then sent for review by the standing committee, it added.

The meeting was chaired by Abul Hashem. Among others, secretary general of the co-ordination committee Choudhury Khalequzzaman, Engineer Nurul Huda, Alauddin Choudhury spoke at the meeting, says a press release.

Condition of poet Shamsur Rahman deteriorates

Condition of poet Shamsur Rahman, now under treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICD), has deteriorated again, hospital sources said last night, reports BSS.

Meanwhile, the authorities have formed a nine-member medical team for the treatment of the poet.

The sources said the poet has been shifted to Coronary Care Unit (CCU) yesterday as his condition deteriorated. The attending doctors told BSS that the poet is not out of danger.

He was admitted to the NICD after a severe heart attack in the early hours of Sunday. When the doctors on duty at the Emergency Section confirmed that the poet was suffering from Acute Myocardial Infarction, he was immediately shifted to CCU, family sources said.

The doctors have advised the well-wishers not to visit him at the hospital as the poet needs complete rest.

JU students confine syndicate members

From JU Correspondent
SAVAR, Sept 19: A group of agitated students today prevented the Syndicate members from coming out of a meeting demanding withdrawal of enhanced admission fees.

About 300 students kept four Syndicate members confined in an office room from 3-30 pm to about 10-30 at night.

Classes were not held for the second day today as part of the students' strike protesting decision to increase admission fees.

The JU Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Treasurer, Proctor and other officials were holding a closed door meeting to discuss the situation.

The students however lifted the 'siege' following assurance by the VC that Syndicate decision to enhance fees will remain suspended and the matter will be discussed with students at 11 am today.

Case against Mirpur OC, 4 others

By Court Correspondent
A complaint case was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday accusing five persons including the OC of Mirpur thana on charge of killing one person-Shahjahan-- while in custody at the thana.

A police team led by Sub Inspector Matur Rahman picked up Shahjahan from his residence at Mirpur on September 12 without showing any charge against him and beat him severely.

Fatally injured due to beating, Shahjahan was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition on September 13. He succumbed to his injuries the same day.

The victim's younger brother Abdul Motaleb filed the complaint case.



Wreckage of the train that crashed in Pakistan Saturday night. At least 23 passenger were killed when the train collided with a runaway engine 30 kilometers off Islamabad. — AFP photo

Train hits runaway engine in Pakistan: 23 killed

TAXILA (Pakistan), Sept 19: A passenger train slammed into a runaway engine Saturday night killing 23 people and injuring at least 70 others, said witnesses and railway officials, reports AP.

The Chenab Express passenger train was heading toward the southern Arabian Sea port city of Karachi when it hit a lone engine outside Taxila, some 35 kilometers from the federal capital of Islamabad, they said.

The first railway car of the six-car passenger train was a mangled mass of steel and the second one was badly damaged, they said.

Nearby residents were awakened by the sound of a loud crash. They ran from their homes to the crash site, removing the dead and wounded, flagging down cars, trucks and

horse-drawn carts to take the wounded to nearby hospitals. "I heard a loud crashing noise," said Obaid Ullah, a resident of Taxila. "I ran out of my house...there was smoke. It was dark I couldn't see immediately what had happened."

The train hit the runaway engine at about 11:15 pm local time, railway officials said. They expected the death toll to rise because many of the wounded were in serious condition.

Mohammed Aurengzeb cradled his wife's head in his hands at the Wah Military Hospital where many of the wounded were taken.

Aurengzeb said his wife, who was unconscious, was in the first railway car that was badly damaged and he was asleep in another car.

"I woke up with the crash and I began to look for my wife," he said. "I didn't know what had happened. I yelled her name."

Rescue workers arrived on the scene with blow torches to try to remove the dead from the twisted wreckage of the first car, four hours after the crash and they still were struggling to free bodies, witnesses said.

An investigation into the crash was being conducted. Railway officials who didn't want to be quoted blamed a complete shut down of the system at the Taxila railway station where the engine accidentally left the station. It rolled down the tracks colliding with the Chenab Express passenger train, they said.

They couldn't explain how the engine was able to leave the Taxila station.

Functional democracy

From page 1
port continued to perform poorly and quality of education and health services was poor, he maintained.

He stressed the need for reducing corruption, checking violence and political unrest and ensuring accountability and transparency. He also emphasised the need for a national consensus for poverty alleviation and reforms.

The British High Commissioner said there were many things including expertise and adequate manpower in Bangladesh for bringing changes.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said that "politics of agitation and confrontation" was the most severe bottleneck to Bangladesh's development efforts.

However, with economic liberalisation and increased reliance on private investment and export, the Bangladesh economy was now more vulnerable to a climate of political uncertainty and unrest. The democratic system must find a mechanism for limiting political conflict, he added.

He said effective institutional arrangements for ensuring accountability and transparency of government's economic management was also lacking. The public accounts committee of the parliament hardly functioned "with any degree of effectiveness", he added.

If there is rent-seeking in the political system, economic policy reforms alone can hardly be the remedy. That is why economic reforms need to

be accompanied by complementary improvements in the political environment," he added.

Among those who took part in the discussion were: Pakistani High Commissioner Iqbal Ahmed Khan, BNP MPs Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Abu Hena, Colnel (Retd) Akbar Hossain and Mohammad Khalequzzaman, Awami League MP Ashiqur Rahman, Faruq Khan, Mujahidul Islam Selim Monaim Sarker, Prof Rehman Sobhan, AZM Obaidullah Khan, Prof Nazrul Islam, Prof Mahbubullah, Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, JSD General Secretary Hasanul Haq Inu, Dr Shahnaz Huda, Misbahul Kadir Fahim, Rezauddin Ahmed, Waliur Rahman, Dr Dalim Chandra Barman, Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, CIRDAP DG ABS Reddy, Taleya Rehman, Dr Tasneen Arefa Siddique and Executive Director of Khan Foundation Advocate Rokhsana Khondaker.

8 Marine Academy officials sued

CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: The Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed a case against 8 officials of Bangladesh Marine Academy including its commandant, today accusing them of misappropriation of Tk 2.75 lakh in the purchase deal of a pick-up van, reports UNB.

Supervisor of BAC Nurul Haq referred the matter to the Anti-Corruption after getting clearance from the Prime Minister's Office on Saturday.

Massive blasts in Thai fruit factory kills 23

SAN PA THONG (Thailand), Sept 19: Two massive explosions leveled a fruit processing factory in Thailand today, killing at least 23 people and injuring more than 120, police said, reports AP.

TV reports said about 10 tons of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used as fertiliser and in some explosives, may have exploded. How the chemical was ignited was not known.

Police had speculated that gas used in drying and preserving fruit at the Hong Thai Factory near the northern city of Chiang Mai may have caused the blast.

People as far as two kilometers away were injured by flying debris, which also damaged scores of houses.

Police feared that all 30 employees working in the factory at the time were killed but only 23 mostly mangled bodies were found and identified by sunset. Body parts strewn around the site were collected in bags as relatives waited nearby to identify the dead.

An ITV TV report said 104 people had been admitted to hospitals and 129 had filed injury reports.

Police arrested the factory owner, Chankaew Panyoyai, on charges of importing the am-

monium nitrate without a permit from the Ministry of Defense.

"It couldn't happen to my son. I still don't believe it," said a grieving Buakhom Boonma, who lost her only son, Deaw Boonma, in the accident.

Buakhom, 42, said her 22-year-old son went to work today since he was to be paid double the normal wage, and thus put 240 baht on the kitchen table.

A deep crater about 15 meters in diameter was seen near the centre of the factory, which the explosion reduced to chunks of metal, brick and concrete scattered around a 1.6-hectare (four-acre) area.

A large number of structures, including a Buddhist temple and a hospital, were badly damaged and vehicles were destroyed. The roof of the temple was torn off by the blast and houses as far away as three kilometers were damaged.

ITV reported that a Taiwanese identified as Lee Hong Tien was in police custody being questioned about the cause of the explosion.

The station identified Lee as the factory owner, but police said the owner was Chankaew, a Thai citizen, and Lee was an investor in the factory.



Miss America

ATLANTIC CITY, Sept 19: Miss Kentucky Heather Renee French was crowned Miss America 2000 on Saturday night, becoming the first woman from that state ever to wear the crown, reports AP.

French, 24, of Maysville, Kentucky, covered her face with her hands when co-host Marie Osmond announced her as the winner. She hugged the first runnerup and outgoing Miss America Nicole Johnson before lowering her head to receive the crown.

She then took the traditional walk down the runway, smiling and waving. The first runnerup was Miss Illinois Jade Smalls. The second runnerup was Miss Pennsylvania Susan Spafford. Miss Maryland Keri Schrader and Miss Texas Yancy Yarbrough rounded out the top five.

BNP's ward level procession in city today

As part of the planned countrywide demonstration by four-party alliance, BNP will hold a rally at Paltan Maidan at 3 pm on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Party Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the rally to be followed by a procession.

Meanwhile, a joint meeting of the city BNP and its front organisations chaired by Sadek Hossain Khoka MP yesterday decided to bring out processions at ward levels today while at thana levels on Tuesday to drum up support for Wednesday's demonstration.

Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a rally in front of the North Gate of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque on Wednesday at 4 pm while Islami Oikyo Jote near Purnala Paltan Mosque in the afternoon.

Peacekeepers due in Dili just after dawn today

DILI (East Timor), Sept 19: A powerful multinational peace-keeping force is set to arrive in devastated East Timor tomorrow after their commander held successful talks on deployment with the Indonesian military (TNI), reports Reuters.

Indonesia's military commander in East Timor said late today he expected to hand over control of the territory within a few days, but not before Saturday.

Major-General Kiki Syahnakri also said the first members of the UN force were due at 6:30 tomorrow morning.

More than 2,000 troops, most of them Australian, are expected to arrive on Monday by air and sea.

"The TNI has been given the task to rehabilitate and the takeover will take place a few days later," said Syahnakri, Indonesia's martial law commander for the territory.

Australian Major-General Peter Cosgrove, leading a 13-member advance mission, flew to the capital Dili and held two hours of talks with Syahnakri in the city's main military compound. He commended Indonesia's military for "first-class" help.

"I want to reassure that the international force in East Timor will behave with sensitivity and discretion and observe the dignity of all people in East Timor," he said.

The troops and the nine warships that left northern Australian port of Drawing for Dili on Saturday, are one of the largest deployments in Asia

since the Vietnam War. The mission is expected to total 8,000 personnel from more than 20 countries.

Australia, expected to eventually have more than 4,000 troops in the territory, is leading the UN mission.

East Timor, which has seen decades of violence, has been plunged into chaos and ruin in recent weeks.

Thousands are thought to have died and huge numbers been displaced after pro-Jakarta militias led a terror campaign following last month's overwhelming vote for independence.

Cosgrove warned the militia today that their UN mandate meant soldiers would respond "robustly" to any attack. Pro-Jakarta militias have issued a number of threats against the foreign troops with one anti-independence group vowing it would eat the hearts of anyone included in a UN force.

"We are anticipating some disquiet at our arrival," Cosgrove said before leaving for Dili today. "That is why we are attempting to gain some high-level transparency with the TNI."

Struggling to hold back tears, Prime Minister John Howard bade troops farewell at an army base in Queensland state.

"I think we all hope that the operation can be accomplished quickly and smoothly, but it could be longer and more protracted," he added. "It could take

some time." Several hundred troops from Australia's Rapid Development Force based in Townsville are expected to land first in Dili tomorrow to secure the airport ahead of the arrival of the main contingent from Darwin.

BCL leader shot dead

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: A leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was gunned down by unidentified assailants at village Durungkul under Fatikchhari thana here last night, police and party sources said.

Rashedul Anwar Tipu, 28, came under attack of the armed assailants on a bridge at the village at about 8 pm while he was returning home from Nazirhat, police said. Police recovered the bullet-ridden body of Tipu at about midnight last night.

Two others, including Habibullah, a friend of the victim, and Abul Kashem Chowdhury, chairman of Kanchannagar union parishad under Fatikchhari thana, who accompanied Tipu, remained missing till 4 pm today. Later they were traced out, police added.

Police suspected that intra-party rivalry was responsible for the killing. Tipu was vice president of Fatikchhari thana BCL.

Tension is prevailing in the area following the killing.

NAM conference

600 apartments, flats to be built for guests

The government will construct 600 apartments and flats, to accommodate guests who will come to attend the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference to be held here in 2001, reports UNB.

It was decided at a meeting of the sub-committee on accommodation of the NAM Conference with Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain in the chair yesterday.

One hundred luxurious apartments each having three rooms will be built in the city's posh areas to accommodate the guests.

Besides, 500 flats will be constructed in Lalmatia, Asadgate, Mohammadpur and Shyamoli areas to accommodate private staff of the VIPs, journalists, TV crew and other professionals who will arrive to cover the conference.

On conclusion of the conference, these apartments will be allotted to the senior govern-

ment officials.

The meeting also decided to expand Hotel Sonargaon by another 250 rooms and Sheraton Hotel by 150 rooms at their own costs.

The meeting was told that the government has approved a proposal for construction of a "Five Star" hotel at 24 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, on the lands of "Fairlie House," owned by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation.

Construction of the hotel will begin in November.

RAJUK officials told the meeting that plan for setting up five "Five Star" hotels in the capital has already been passed. The meeting also decided to examine some other proposals for setting up more residential hotels in the city.

For development of land, RAJUK has handed over Tk 68 crore to the Dhaka district administration for acquiring land behind Sonargaon Hotel, RAJUK sources said.

Advani vows to crush Laden's Jihad plans

BHUBANESWAR, Sept 19: Government today said the Saudi-born Osama Bin Laden's threat to launch Jihad and promote religious terrorism in India will be crushed with the same firmness as the country drove back Pakistani aggressors from Kargil, reports PTI.

Laden's threat was yet another instance of religious terrorism and an attempt to disturb the democratic process in India as also communal peace in the country, Union Home Minister L K Advani told reporters here.

"Terrorist organisations and their foreign patrons are mistaken if they think that India is a soft state that will be deterred by their violent threats and acts," he said referring to international terrorism mastermind Laden's reported declaration of 'Jihad' against India and the United States.

"Laden's call also contained a threat to disrupt elections in Jammu and Kashmir," the Home Minister said.

"This has come in the wake of stepped-up attacks by ISI-backed terrorist organisations on Indian Security Forces and citizens after Pakistan's humiliating defeat in Kargil," he said adding "the war in Kargil is over but Pakistan's proxy war against India is continuing."

Ctg BCL factions clash inside custody : 8 hurt

From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Sept 19: Two factions of local BCL clashed inside custody of Chittagong Court Building today leaving at least eight people injured.

The two groups, one led by Alo and another by Litu Das Babul, locked in a clash when they came face to face inside the court custody this afternoon.

Both the groups used lethal weapons. Hannan, Noor Alam, Sabuj, Basher, Mustafa, Anwar and Binol of Alo group and Alam of Litu Das Babul group were seriously injured during the clash and were admitted to Chittagong Jail Hospital.

10 hurt as BCL, JCS activists clash at Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 19: At least 10 people were injured, 4 of them seriously, during a fierce clash between the supporters of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiya Chhatra Samaj (JCS) at Rashik Chandra College at Patbarhat under Mehendiganj thana of the district this morning.

According to police and witnesses, the trouble began when a BCL activist tried to enter a meeting of Jatiya Chhatra Samaj in the college.

Indiscriminate bombs were exploded, gunshots fired while the activists of both the student fronts chased each other with lethal weapons.

Seriously injured Kabir, 23, Ibrahim, 26, and Hanif, 22, were admitted to Barisal Medical College Hospital (SBMH) and Kader, 27, was taken to Mehendiganj Thana Health Complex.

Accomplice of Ershad Shikder held in Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Sept 19: An accomplice of Ershad Shikder was arrested from village Parnanduli under Magura Sadar thana in the early hours today.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of DB police of Magura led by Sub-Inspector Sagor Ahmed raided the house of one Nawab Ali and arrested Delwar Hossain Babu, son of late Mofizuddin of village Sreepur in Bhandaria thana under Pirojpur district.

Babu is one of the listed accomplices of Ershad Shikder, police said.

Local people suspected that Babu was trying to convince Jyotsna and her sons at village Parnanduli not to file any case against Ershad Shikder in connection with the killing of her husband Teko Aziz.

Intra-AL rivalry? Gunman opens fire on a crowd hurting 5

NARSINGDI, Sept 19: A gunman shot into a crowd in front of the municipal office here today, injuring five people, three critically, reports UNB.

Witnesses and police said Mostafa, 20, Litu, 26, Tarunichandra Das, 35, Nure Alam, 18, and Abdul Hye Bhuiyan, 50, were hit by bullets in the shootout following altercations between two groups at about 1 pm.

Local sources believe the attack was a sequel to rivalries between two district unit vice-presidents—Abdul Matin Bhuiyan and Abdul Matin Sarker—of the ruling Awami League.

Matin Sarker, also chairman of Narsingdi paurasava, claimed the attackers targeted him but he escaped as he was inside the office during the gun attack.

The bullet-struck five were rushed to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital from where Mostafa, Litu and Tarunichandra Das were shifted to Dhaka. The injured habili from Duttapara and Madhabdi areas.

The desperate gunman fled under cover of gunfire scaring off the bystanders.

Satkhira

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Babar Ali, Kulsum Begum, Mokbul, Akbar, Mahfuz, Akiron and Moslem were injured. The gang also poured hot water on 6-year-old baby and its mother, they said.

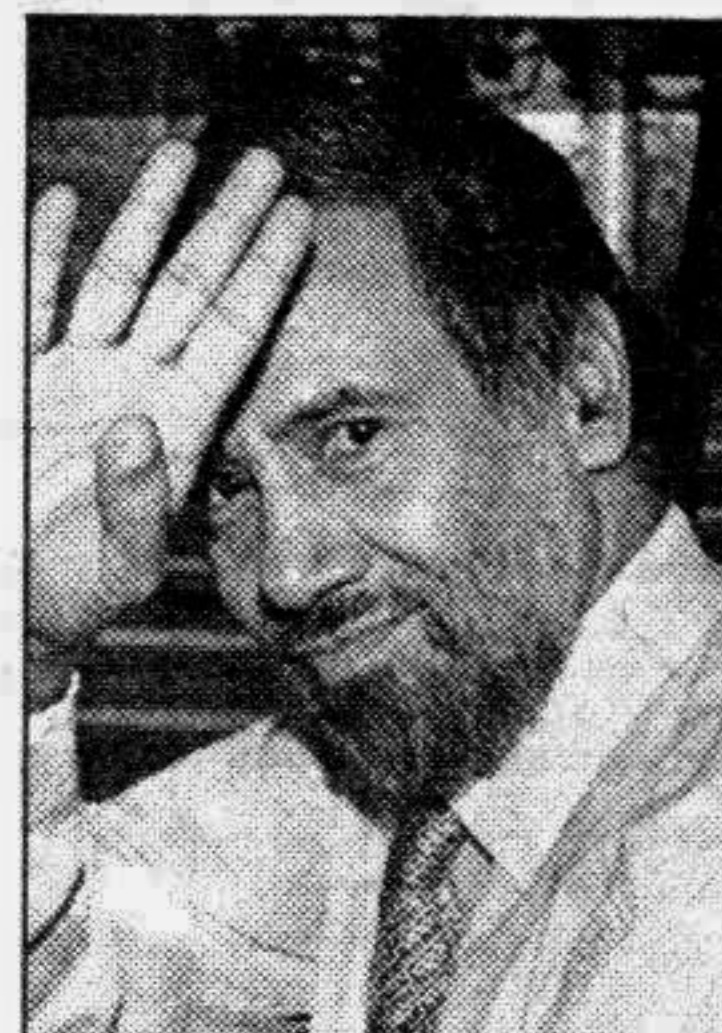
Lutfur Rahman, correspondent of the Daily Runner of Jessore, who was beaten up by the gang members was treated at a local clinic.

Angry mob threw human stool, cowdung and brickbat at the two leaders to express their hatred, witnesses said.

Victims said they were shelterless and starving. No case was lodged till filing of this report tonight.

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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Gusmao flees to Australia, plans govt in exile

DARWIN, Sept 19: East Timorese independence leader Jose Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmao is making plans for a transitional government and sending a delegation to the World Bank later this month, a spokesman said today, reports AP.

Voters in East Timor approved independence in an Aug 30 referendum, after a quarter-century of brutal Indonesian rule. Gusmao fled from Jakarta on Saturday night, to set up the headquarters of his CNRT resistance movement in Darwin, Australia, after receiving death threats. He arrived here today.

The main purpose of his trip is to discuss plans for the development of East Timor, spokesman Jose Carrascalao told The Associated Press. He said that included the formation of the government of the future nation.

Jyoti Basu says

Cong a better alternative to BJP

BAGNAN (West Bengal), Sept 19: West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu yesterday reiterated that the Congress was a better alternative to BJP as it was not communal, reports PTI.

Congress has several weaknesses and has sometimes succumbed to foreign pressure on the country's economic policies. But still it is preferable to BJP for not being communal, the veteran Marxist leader said.

He said the 13-month-old BJP government at the centre had fallen on its own and was not pulled down by Congress and other opposition as claimed by the party.

Continuing a scathing attack on the BJP, he described it as an uncivilised and barbaric party posing a