

# Mugabe to go ahead with land seizure

**HARARE, Apr 29** : President Robert Mugabe will use special powers within the next 10 days to clear legal obstacles to the seizure of white-owned farms without payment, the government said today, reports AFP.

"Within 10 days the legal framework to take land and re-distribute it to the people will be in place and we will immediately proceed to take and give it to the people," Justice Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa told the state news agency Zina.

He said that with parliament having already been dissolved ahead of elections, Mugabe would use special presidential powers to repeal the Land Acquisition Act which requires compensation to be paid for seized farms.

Mnangagwa said the presidential powers would remain in force for six months, within which time a new parliament would be elected and asked to ratify the law.

Mugabe has already changed

the constitution to allow the seizure of land without compensation but needs to repeal the old law before he can do so.

Mnangagwa told Zina the government was not concerned about the reaction of Britain, the former colonial power, which has promised to fund land reforms only if they are fair, free of corruption and carried out legally.

"Britain's stance is not our problem. It does not matter what they think or say. We are going ahead with our plans whether they like it or not," said Mnangagwa.

The land reform issue in Zimbabwe has recently turned violent, with the invasion of hundreds of white-owned farms by thousands of squatters led by veterans of the country's independence war.

Mugabe has backed the invasion, in which two white farmers and at least two black labourers have been killed, saying the squatters are simply reclaiming land stolen by colonialists.

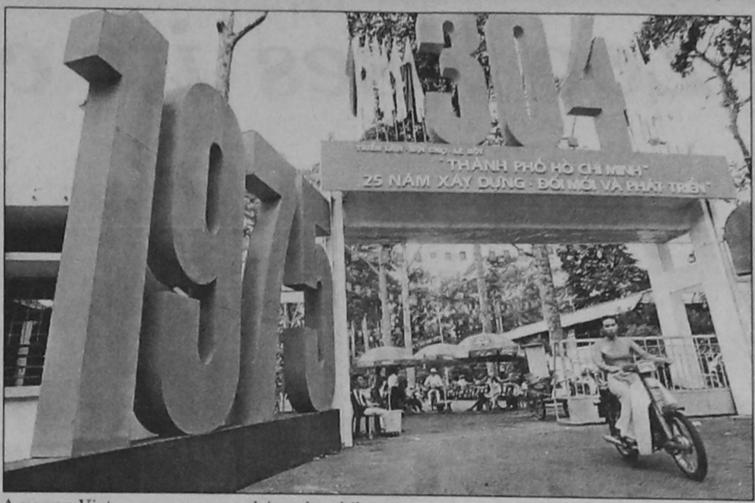
Meanwhile, after days of diplomatic pressure, police Saturday released South African photographer Obed Zilwa, who works for the Associated Press (AP) news agency.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's white farmers and the war veterans who have invaded their land continued working together Saturday as the main opposition party staged rallies in defiance of a police curb on political meetings.

A delegation from the 4,000-member Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) and leaders of the Liberation War Veterans' Association met for "an informal chat" on sowing the wheat crop from the effects of recent farm violence, said David Hasluck, CFU executive director.

The UN Food and Agriculture Authority warned Friday that Zimbabwe's food supply was jeopardised by farm seizures and disruption of production.

Meanwhile, after days of diplomatic pressure, police Saturday released South African photographer Obed Zilwa, who works for the Associated Press (AP) news agency.



A young Vietnamese woman drives her bike past a giant sign stating the date of the end of the Vietnam War yesterday, outside a public park in the former Southern Vietnamese capital, Ho Chi Minh City residents started a weekend of events to mark the 25th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, with every avenue of the city draped in red flags and propaganda posters one-day ahead of the official parade which will mark the anniversary of the fall of the city formerly known as Saigon today and the end of the Vietnam War. — AFP photo

# Anwar loses appeal against jail term

**KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 29** : Malaysia's former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim today lost his appeal against a six-year jail sentence for abuse of power but angrily denounced what he called "political persecution using the courts," reports AFP.

Anwar, once the heir apparent to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, vowed to challenge the decision in the country's highest court.

In a 58-page written judgement, the appeal court said there was "no doubt whatsoever" that Anwar abused his official powers by ordering police in 1997 to intimidate two people into withdrawing sexual allegations against him.

The three judges said they were "inclined to think that there is a high degree of probability" that the claims of heterosexual and homosexual misconduct were true.

"(Anwar) resorted to such improper and unlawful measures merely for the purpose of saving himself from embarrassment and protecting himself from criminal action, thereby at the same time pre-

serving his public image and position," they added.

High court judge Augustine Paul jailed Anwar in April 1999 on four counts of corruption -- abusing his official powers to cover up the allegations.

Anwar says he is the victim of a political conspiracy because he was seen as a threat to Mahathir.

Appeal court president Lamin Yunus said the decision to reject the appeal against the conviction and sentence was unanimous. He did not read out his judgement.

Anwar sprang to his feet in the dock as the judges walked out of the court and demanded they give reasons for their ruling. The judges ignored him.

"Let the court not be a tool of the executive to legitimise political persecution. I'm appalled by that," Anwar shouted as he hugged his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and two of his daughters.

"They don't even have the guts to say it (their decision) out," he added. "They dismiss in one sentence without any reason.

# Lanka vows to push offensive as Tigers shun Oslo peace bid

**COLOMBO, Apr 29** : Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers have rejected all peace overtures, leaving the government no option but to try to defeat them in battle despite recent humiliating losses, President Chandrika Kumaratunga was quoted as saying today, reports AFP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have rebuffed all attempts in the past 13 months to negotiate via the Norwegian government, the state-run Daily News quoted Kumaratunga as saying.

"The LTTE has rejected our proposal," Kumaratunga said in address to the nation televised Friday night and published here Saturday. "Despite all these requests, the LTTE attacked the Jaffna peninsula.

"Under the circumstances, I wish to state on this occasion that the government has unequivocally decided to protractedly and relentlessly pursue with the military operations."

Kumaratunga's remarks came six days after government forces pulled out of a highly strategic military base at Ele-

phant Pass, guarding the northern peninsula of Jaffna, in the face of intense rebel fire.

The month-long battle killed at least 370 government soldiers and wounded nearly 2,000 others. The defence ministry has claimed over 1,000 rebel fatalities. On Friday, the United Nations announced it was withdrawing most of its staff from Jaffna.

The president, also the commander in chief of the armed forces, underlined that the government's military campaign was not against minority ethnic Tamils but against Tiger guerrillas.

"I also wish to reiterate that this is not a war against Tamils and other minorities of this country," she said. This war is against the threat to the security of the entire nation posed by LTTE terrorism."

At the same time, Kumaratunga left the door open for the Tigers to re-enter peace talks. "We invite the LTTE to join the peace process by renouncing violence and mayhem, by laying down arms and

ammunition.

"If they are unwilling to lay down their arms, as a strong government committed to safeguard human freedom and human life, we are not willing to compromise the safety of all citizens of this country."

The Sri Lankan army's setback last week was seen as a blow to the prospect of the Norway-backed peace talks getting off the ground soon.

"The Tigers are now eyeing Jaffna and it is difficult to imagine they want to sit down and talk just yet," said Tamil legislator Dharmalingam Siddharthan of the anti-LTTE Democratic People's Liberation Front.

Siddharthan said the LTTE appeared to be concentrating on wresting control of Jaffna, north of Elephant Pass, to win back prestige and work towards establishing an independent homeland there.

"I don't think the Tigers are interested in collecting bargaining chips by taking camps before going for talks," Siddharthan said.

# Vietnam celebrates Silver Jubilee of its liberation

**HO CHI MINH CITY, Apr 29** : This former capital of South Vietnam sprouted hundreds of red banners today, the eve of mass ceremonies marking the 25th anniversary of its "liberation" by northern Communist troops and the reunification of the country after decades of war, reports AFP.

A huge smiling portrait of Ho Chi Minh, the revolutionary who first took on the French and then the might of the Americans, dominated the front of the old presidential palace, the focus of Sunday's ceremonies.

In the tree-shaded gardens of the palace the North Vietnamese tank that crashed through the gates of the palace on the morning of April 30, had a fresh coat of olive-green paint.

Red hammer and sickle and gold-star banners proclaiming "Victory. Unification. 25.4.2000" festooned every lamppost and were strung across streets and side alleys in the area.

Officials, however, were tight-lipped on the details of

Sunday's proceedings, apparently for security reasons. Taxi drivers said police had told them all access roads to the center of the city would be closed from 3:00 am to at least midday.

A sole uniformed guard at the palace gates said yes, there would be a military march past, and yes, cyclists who had pedaled from the national capital of Hanoi in the north would ride into the square facing the palace late morning.

A brief outline of the ceremony, in the little information made available to the several hundred foreign journalists and TV teams here for the occasion, said it would start at 6:30 am with speeches, and be followed by mass parades.

"Maintaining order will be a priority for crowds expected to gather," The Vietnam News quoted the deputy chairman of the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, Le Thanh Hai, as saying.

But the authorities did not envisage the need for any extra security forces on the streets, he added, though one street

hawker commented to an AFP journalist that there were "plainclothes men everywhere" in the city center.

Conspicuous by their absence -- as they were in most other ceremonies throughout the old South in the past 50 days marking the fall of the city after the city in the north's lightning push south in 1975 -- were the blue and white flags of the Viet Cong.

The only visible nod to the "V.C." as the southern guerrilla fighters were known to the American troops who fought here, was their flag painted on two or three billboards, drowned by a sea of red.

Also expected Sunday is the release from prisons nationwide of more than 12,000 prisoners, including four American citizens, in an anniversary amnesty.

"A total of 12,264 prisoners," will benefit from an amnesty authorised by a decree signed by President Tran Duc Luong on Thursday, Nguyen Nganh Dinh, the head of the presidential office, said in Hanoi Friday.

# Japanese, Russian leaders hold landmark talks

**SAINT PETERSBURG, Apr 29** : Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin and Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshio Mori today concluded over two hours of talks at the beginning of a landmark summit here, ITAR-TASS reported, says AFP.

Putin and Mori began talks shortly before 11:00 a.m. (13:00 BST) at the Russian Museum near the Neva River in the nation's second city, the hometown of the Russian leader.

The discussions lasted more than half an hour over schedule.

The two leaders were due to have lunch together before giving a joint press conference at around 2:00 p.m. (15:00 BST).

Mori arrived in Saint Petersburg late Friday on the first leg of his nine-day tour to meet world leaders before he hosts the annual meeting of the Group of Eight (G8) major powers in July.

The Japanese premier said his priority here was to establish a personal contact with Putin in their first meeting since Mori took office April 5 after his predecessor Keizo Obuchi suffered a stroke.

But his real mission here is to push negotiations to resolve a territorial dispute before the 2000 deadline set in 1997 by then Japanese and Russian leaders Ryutaro Hashimoto and Boris Yeltsin.

Japan is pressing for the return of the Kurile Islands, four tiny islands occupied by troops from the former Soviet Union in the final days of World War II, to allow both countries to sign a peace treaty.

"This shows that you consider Russia important," Putin added.

"I am honored to be invited," Mori replied.

The discussions were scheduled to last about an hour and 30 minutes, a Japanese foreign ministry official said.

Mori arrived in Saint Petersburg late Friday on the first leg of his nine-day tour to meet world leaders before he hosts the annual meeting of the Group of Eight (G8) major powers in July.

Mori, 62, took office April 5 after his predecessor Keizo Obuchi suffered a stroke.

"I am glad that you chose Russia as your first foreign visiting place," Putin was quoted by a Japanese official as telling Mori after they shook hands with each other.

# Putin to visit South Korea

**LONDON, Apr 29** : Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin has talked on the phone with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and agreed to visit Seoul, officials in Seoul said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

"During a 15-minute phone conversation with President Kim Friday, President-elect Putin accepted an invitation to visit Seoul and expressed thanks," Presidential spokesman Park Jun-Young said. Officials here said Putin may visit Seoul this year to mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

**Howard to consider Wahid's offer:** Prime Minister John Howard on Saturday said he would consider Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid's offer to hold a fence-mending summit, AP reports from Sydney.

Howard told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Radio he was interested in Wahid's proposal for a meeting of the leaders of Indonesia, Australia and East Timor. "I will explore it. I don't reject it," he said. "I want to know more about it. I want to know whether it is something that has been thought through."

**Quake rocks S Taiwan:** An earthquake measuring 4.2 on the Richter scale jolted southern Taiwan Saturday but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, seismologists said, AFP reports from Taipei.

The quake hit at 03:22 a.m. (1:22 BST Friday), with the epicenter 9.2 km north of Chiayi city. The tremor originated 15.9 kilometers below the earth's surface. Minor tremors and aftershocks have been a daily occurrence in Taiwan since a devastating quake last September 21 which left 2,400 people dead, 11,000 injured and more than 100,000 homeless.

# Musharraf wants to meet Vajpayee

**LONDON, Apr 29** : Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said today he wanted to meet Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to discuss the dispute over Kashmir, reports Reuters.

"It would certainly like to talk to the Indian prime minister... the person who is in charge and who is going to decide," Musharraf told CNN in an interview.

CNN said Musharraf offered to meet Vajpayee in a neutral Middle Eastern country.

**Cambodia, UN strike deal on Khmers' trial**

**PHNOM PENH, Apr 29** : The Cambodian government and the United Nations have agreed to a formula on setting up a Khmer Rouge trial in a deal ending months of deadlock. US Senator John Kerry and government officials announced today, reports AFP.

Following overnight telephone consultations with UN headquarters in New York and marathon talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Kerry said a final written agreement on a joint "killing fields" tribunal could be struck by mid-June.

This would pave the way for surviving leaders of Pol Pot's ultra-Maoist rebels -- blamed for the deaths of close to two million Cambodians from 1975-1979 -- to stand trial for the first time.

# Villagers blame drought on Indian nuclear tests

**POKHRAN, India, Apr 29** : Villagers living close to India's nuclear test site are blaming the atomic blasts of two years ago for the drought now crippling the northern desert state of Rajasthan, reports AFP.

Some 220,000 people living in villages surrounding the Pokhran site -- 530 km west of New Delhi -- are in one of the areas worst affected by the most severe drought to strike the state in 40 years.

"The atom bombs have burned our skies," said Muhammad Salim who lives in Phoolsund, a small village some 70 kilometres from the test site.

His shopkeeper neighbour,

Ghanashyam Sharma, nodded solemnly in agreement.

"The rain stopped falling on Pokhran two years ago, after the bombs went off, and dried up underground water sources," Sharma said.

"Now we receive water from the government once a month, and it is terrible for us," he said.

"My family has no money, because nobody around here has enough money to buy from our shop."

The test site area has been hard hit by the drought.

"Pokhran has been very badly affected," said Kalpana Aggarwal, the civilian administrator of 215 villages that form

the county where the nuclear test site is based.

Aggarwal said the villagers' concerns were understandable, but misguided.

"Obviously this heat and the lack of rain have nothing to do with the nuclear tests," she said.

"But the drought is very serious and the people who are suffering need to find a reason or a cause to focus on."

Some 20 million people in Rajasthan have been hit by the drought, and another 30 million are suffering in neighbouring Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh states, as well as the eastern state of Orissa and southern Andhra aadesh.

# 5 killed in latest US racial shooting rampage

**PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania, Apr 29** : Five people were shot dead when an immigration lawyer went on the rampage targeting racial and religious minorities, police said, reports AFP.

It was the second mass shooting in the United States this week.

Friday's killings began when Richard Scott Bauhammers, 34, a resident of the upper-middle class Pittsburgh suburb of Mount Lebanon, allegedly killed his Jewish next-door

neighbor and set her house on fire, police said.

Police said Bauhammers then left in his Jeep on a shooting spree that targeted people of Chinese, Indian and African-American descent. He fired bullets through the windows of two synagogues and painted a swastika on one of them, they added.

He was finally caught by police after a 20-mile chase. He was charged with one count of homicide in court Friday.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Food Directorate**  
 Movement, Storage and Silo Division  
 16, Abdul Ghani Road, Dhaka  
 Memo No-328/MSS/49/95, Part-2 Dated: 26/4/2000

# Re-Tender Notice for Purchasing New Car

Sealed re-tenders are invited from bonafide distributors of cars for purchasing 2 (two) new cars mentioned below for Food Directorate from the budget allocation for 1999-2000 fiscal year.

**Microbus 2 (two):** 3-door, petrol-fueled; 2000/2500cc.

Interested tenderers are requested to procure tender schedule containing detailed description of each of the item of the purchasable cars and terms and conditions and rules and regulations by depositing Taka 750.00 (Taka seven hundred fifty) in cash (non-refundable) for each set on item rate basis from the Cashier of the Office of Director, Accounts & Finance Division (4th floor), Khaddya Bhaban, 16, Abdul Ghani Road, Dhaka till 07/5/2000 during office hours. No schedule will be sold on the day of receiving tender.

Tenders will be received in the tender box kept in front of Room No. 101 on first floor, Khaddya Bhaban, 16, Abdul Ghani Road, Dhaka till 2:00 PM on 08/5/2000 and the tenders received will be opened on the same day at 2:30 PM before the tenderers present (if any one remains present). Tenders submitted violating the specification as mentioned in the schedule will not be brought under consideration. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason and is not obliged to accept the lowest rate.

**Md Abul Quasem**  
 Director  
 Movement, Storage and Silo Division  
 Food Directorate, Dhaka.

DFP-10202-27/4  
 G-793

# Jakarta, Aceh rebels to sign peace accord next week

**JAKARTA, Apr 29** : The Indonesian government and separatist rebels in Aceh will sign a peace accord next week in Geneva, a newspaper today quoted Human Rights Minister Hasballah Saad as saying, reports AFP.

"God willing, the agreement will be signed next week before May 7 in Geneva," said Saad in a report in the English-language Jakarta Post.

**Corruption taints voting in rerun of Thai senate polls**

**BANGKOK, Apr 29** : As Thais went to the polls today, allegations of widespread corruption tainted voting in a re-run of a senate election called after the first round was marred by vote buying, according to television reports today, says AFP.

The election commission had received many complaints of irregularities such as vote buying and illegal canvassing, commission member Gothom Arya told local television.

# Rebel group in Assam offers peace talks with Delhi

**GUWAHATI, India, Apr 29** : A separatist tribal guerrilla group in India's far eastern state of Assam has approached the military with an offer of peace talks to end a 20-year armed insurgency, an army official said.

Lieutenant General D.B. Shekatkar told AFP the outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), a rebel group fighting for an independent tribal homeland, had expressed its willingness to hold negotiations with the government.

"Some of the NDFB leaders met our unit commanders at the ground level and expressed their desire to hold peace talks," said Shekatkar who heads counter-insurgency operations in Assam.

"Very shortly, we shall be

having the first one-to-one meeting to prepare grounds for formal negotiations."

The NDFB is the second militant outfit in Assam to propose peace talks. The Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Indian government last month.

The army authorities said they would provide safe passage to NDFB leaders wanting to attend any meeting with government representatives.

"The army's role will be to facilitate the talks by finding out what they want and then conveying the same to the state and central governments," Shekatkar said.

The NDFB, one of the state's three main rebel outfits, has an estimated 1,500 hardcore armed cadres, most of them

holed up in camps inside neighbouring Bhutan and Myanmar.

Assam's largest militant group, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), has so far given no indication of joining the trend towards negotiations, although reports from ULFA camps inside Bhutan have indicated factions within the group are arguing for talks.

"Sooner or later they will join the peace process and we are getting indications to that effect," Shekatkar said.

While the door for peace talks has been kept open, army operations have been further intensified to put pressure on the rebels.

More than 10,000 people have lost their lives to insurgency in Assam during the past 20 years.

# Manila rejects kidnappers' demand

**JOLO, Philippines, Apr 29** : The Philippine government today rejected a demand by Muslim extremists holding 21 people hostage that it replace its lead negotiator despite a threat from the kidnappers to start beheading the foreigners among the captives, reports AFP.

A spokesman for the Abu Sayyaf demanded Friday that the negotiator, former Muslim rebel leader Nur Misuari, be replaced by representatives of the foreign hostages' countries -- Malaysia, Germany, France, Finland, South Africa and Lebanon.

"No, we'll not replace chairman Misuari just because of that demand of the Abu Sayyaf," National Security Adviser Alexander Aguirre said in a state television interview.

"In the first place, they cannot demand any more. They are under attack," Aguirre said, referring to a major military assault on the Abu Sayyaf camp in Basilan island in the south of the country where the extremists are holding another 27 all-Filipino hostages.

Philippine Defence Secretary Orlando Mercado said the Abu Sayyaf could not dictate to the government what it wanted as negotiator, adding: "We cannot follow the whims of the rebels all the time."

The 21 hostages, being held in Jolo island south of Basilan, were abducted from the Malaysian resort of Sipadan off Borneo on Sunday and brought to Jolo by speedboat.

The threat to behead the foreign hostages if Misuari was not

replaced was made by Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Ahmad in Basilan to local radio station DXRZ.

The rebels then put on air a man identifying himself as South African hostage Karel Strydom, who repeated the rebel spokesman's threat.

But Misuari said Saturday that Abu Sayyaf emissaries in the Sulu region, which encompasses Jolo, had told him to ignore the threat.

Meanwhile, Filipino Muslim extremists who have threatened to behead the foreigners among 21 people they are holding hostage in the southern Philippines want the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to intervene in the crisis.

**Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Fourth Fisheries Project, Department of Fisheries  
 Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock  
 Matshya Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka  
 Bangladesh  
**Credit No IDA 3276-BD**  
 Invitation for Bids (IFB)

IFB No DoF/FFP/G3/967 Dated: 20 April, 2000

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association in various currencies towards the cost of Fourth Fisheries Project. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this credit will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for procurement of Motor Cycles.
- The Project Coordinating Director now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of 400 Motor Cycles.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the office of Project Coordinating Director, Fourth Fisheries Project, Department of Fisheries, Matshya Bhaban, I, Shaheed Capt Munsur Ali Sharani, Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. Telephone: (880-2) 9569934, Fax (880-2) 9568393, Email: ffp@fmsbd.org.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application to the undersigned and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tk 2000 or US\$40 either in cash or in Cashier's Cheque or in Certified Cheque or in Pay Order or Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh.
- The provisions in the instructions to bidders and in the general conditions of contract are the provisions of the World Bank Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Goods (SBD) (including Corrigendum No. 1 dated October 6, 1996 and Corrigendum No. 2 dated January 1, 1999). The sample forms (except price schedules) of the SBD are also unchanged.
- Bids must be delivered to the office of the undersigned on or before 12:01 PM on 20 June, 2000 and must be accompanied by a security of 2% (two per cent) of bid amount in the form and manner detailed in the instruction to bidders.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 12:05 hrs date 20 June, 2000 at the offices of Project Coordinating Director, Fourth Fisheries Project, Department of Fisheries, Matshya Bhaban, I, Shaheed Capt Munsur Ali Sharani, Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

**Md Nasir Uddin Ahmed**  
 Project Coordinating Director  
 Fourth Fisheries Project  
 Matshya Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.

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