

Tamil Tigers take key bridge, close in on Jaffna town

LONDON, May 10: Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas captured a highly strategic bridge today just three kilometres from the northern town of Jaffna, the rebels said in a statement here, reports AFP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said they took the Navatkuli bridge after intense fighting with government troops defending Jaffna, the main town on the northern Jaffna peninsula. "Fierce fighting flared up in the vicinity of Jaffna town when the combat formations of the Tamil Tigers launched a massive offensive assault on three fronts in the early hours of the morning today," the statement said.

In Colombo, the government said Tamil Tiger guerrillas unleashed waves of suicide bombers to breach army defences in the strategically vital northern Jaffna peninsula today, triggering intense battles.

Suicide cadres of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) mounted simultaneous assaults on military lines at Thanankillappu and Ariyalai, just five kilometres from Jaffna town.

Although there were a large number of casualties among the attackers, LTTE human waves continued to assault without any respect for the lives of junior LTTE cadres, the government statement said.

It admitted the guerrillas had breached "a few gaps in the army defences" at Ariyalai.

"At present intense fighting continues in Ariyalai sector," the statement said, adding exact details of casualties on either side were not known.

Troops rushed in reinforcements after a large number of Tigers mounted the pre-dawn assaults, the statement said.

Ground troops were supported "effectively by the artillery and air" while the guer-

illas were using artillery and mortar bombs on army positions guarding Jaffna, the statement said.

The attack came a day after parliament was told that the drive against the LTTE could be completed soon if each of the 225 legislators sent 100 able-bodied men from each constituency, officials said.

They quoted Energy Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte as saying they needed over 20,000 men to strengthen the security forces defending Jaffna.

"I only ask each MP to send 100 young men to the army," Ratwatte was quoted as saying.

The Sri Lankan military strength is currently estimated at 120,000, while estimates put the number of hardcore Tamil Tiger fighters between 5,000 and 10,000.

The government also responded to the raging battles in the north by raising taxes on liquor and cigarettes, ordering

price increase between five and 10 percent.

The finance ministry said it hoped to raise an additional 1,500 million rupees (20 million dollars) from the new taxes that will go directly to finance the government's war effort against the Tiger rebels.

The government has already assumed extra ordinary powers under emergency laws and imposed censorship, banned public meetings and given sweeping powers to police and troops to arrest and detain suspects.

Ratwatte told parliament Tuesday that 358 government soldiers were killed and another 349 were missing in two key battles on the Jaffna peninsula from the Elephant Pass army camp, which fell to the LTTE guerrillas on April 22.

The minister said another 2,368 soldiers were wounded in the clashes.

3 military chiefs resign in Ecuador

QUITO, Ecuador, May 10: The heads of Ecuador's Navy, Air Force and Joint Chiefs of Staff all resigned on Tuesday and government sources cited their opposition to a plan to free soldiers behind a January coup, reports Reuters.

The resignations came during a military trial of the former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Carlos Mendoza, and 117 mid-ranking officers for their parts in a brief, bloodless coup that overthrew democratically elected President Jamil Mahuad in January.

The government of President Gustavo Noboa has asked Congress to approve a pardon for the men in a debate beginning today — a plan that the three officers who have resigned were known to oppose.

Government sources, who asked not to be identified, confirmed to Reuters that the three left because of their opposition to the amnesty.

"This decision by the three generals is an act of dignity, really a personal sacrifice," said Defence Minister Hugo Unda, without giving more details on the reason for the move.

The three who resigned were Telmo Sandoval, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Enrique Monteverde, head of the Navy, and Air Force chief Ricardo Irigoyen, the government said in a news release.



British soldiers set up position in Freetown on Tuesday. British troops evacuating foreign nationals from Sierra Leone could stay in Freetown to help the United Nations bring in reinforcements, but will not formally join the UN force as combat troops, British foreign Secretary Robin Cook said yesterday. — AFP photo

Troops recapture town in Sierra Leone, kill 20 rebels

FREETOWN, May 10: Sierra Leonean pro-government troops have recaptured the strategic town of Masiaka, killing 20 rebels of the Revolutionary United Front, military chief Johnny Paul Koroma said today, reports AFP.

Koroma, a former junta chief who has rallied to President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, announced on a private radio station that the Sierra Leonean Army and ex-junta soldiers had seized back Masiaka, 65 kilometres east of the capital.

The government troops also seized a vehicle and a large quantity of ammunition, Koroma said.

UN peacekeeping troops had to withdraw from Masiaka on Monday after running out of ammunition in a fight with unidentified assailants, a UN spokesman acknowledged here late Tuesday.

Koroma said pro-government forces were now advancing north to Lunsar, on the road to the rebel stronghold town of Makeni.

Koroma led the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council that took power in May 1997 before being ousted by the Nigerian-led west African ECOMOG force, which has handed over to the UN peacekeeping mission UNAMSIL.

The AFRC is now allied with what is left of Sierra Leone's regular army.

It was previously allied with Foday Sankoh's RUF, but they fell out, particularly after Sankoh sidelined Koroma when he signed a peace pact with Kabbah in July last year and later took responsibility for the country's rich mineral sector.

Sankoh himself went missing Monday following bloodshed outside his Freetown house during a peace march against RUF members who have taken hundreds of UN soldiers hostage.

Uric acid linked to heart disease death: US study

CHICAGO, May 10: Increased levels of uric acid in the bloodstream signal an increased risk of death from heart disease, according to a study published on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The association is stronger among women than men, and among blacks than whites, but why the link exists is not known, said the report from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

The study, published in this week's journal of the American Medical Association, was based on a study involving 5,926 people whose uric acid levels were measured initially from 1971 to 1975. Over an average follow-up period of 16 years there were 1,593 deaths in the group, of which nearly half were from heart disease.

The researchers found an association between uric acid levels in the blood and the later heart disease deaths.

"We believe that these data add to the large body of literature supporting a strong, significant, specific and independent association of serum uric acid to cardiovascular mortality," the report said.

"This association is stronger among women than men and among blacks than whites, and it is independent of diuretic use, cardiovascular risk status or menopausal status. The mechanisms by which (high uric acid levels) might be linked to heart disease are unknown," it added.

"Nevertheless, we believe the available data, when considered in total, favors the view that serum uric acid is a useful contributor to the determination of cardiovascular risk," it said.

Uric acid is a waste product resulting from the breakdown of nucleic acid in the body. Most of it passes through the kidneys where it is removed from the bloodstream.

Abnormally high levels of uric acid can cause gout and kidney stones. Uric acid levels are also linked to high blood pressure and obesity, both of which are risk factors for heart disease.

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Uric acid is a waste product



"Nature morte aux tulipes", a portrait by Pablo Picasso of his mistress Marie-Therese Walter, sold for 26 million US dollar at Christie's Spring 20th Century Art Sale on Tuesday. — AFP photo

La Nina on the wane

WASHINGTON, May 10: US government space and ocean monitors indicate the end is near for La Nina, the weather pattern that has dominated the globe for the past two years and is blamed for increased hurricanes and drought in the United States, NASA said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

La Nina, an area of cold water in the Pacific Ocean, "appears to be on its last legs" and will have a difficult time sustaining itself much longer, national Aeronautics and Space Administration climate researchers said.

"As expected, the La Nina reached a maximum in intensity during January 2000 and has been waning ever since," said David Adamec, research oceanographer at Goddard Space Flight Centre in Greenbelt, Maryland.

La Nina is Spanish for "the girl child" and refers to extensive cooling of the central and eastern Pacific ocean, having the opposite effect of El Nino, or "the boy child."

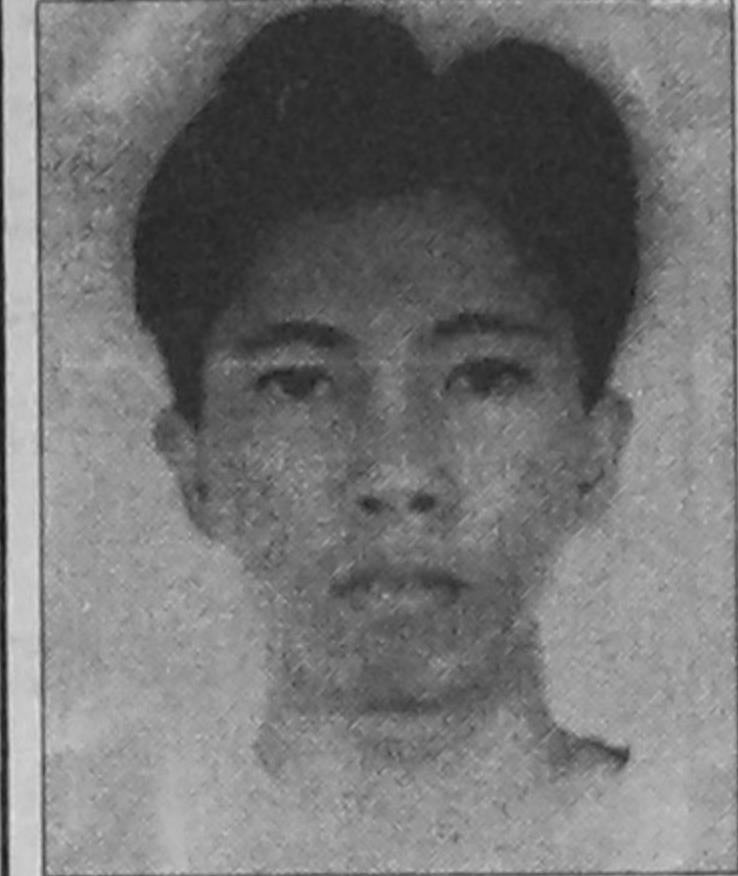
Last month, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said La

Nina would linger to at least August, leaving the United States with warmer than normal temperatures this spring and summer, and some Midwestern and Great Plains states with continued extremely dry conditions.

Temperatures soared to their highest levels recorded by NOAA for the January to March period this year.

NASA said its spacecraft had also shown that since March, La Nina's cold surface water was being replaced by water that was 4 degrees F (2 degrees C) warmer than normal off the coast of South America. The current length of time for the warm water patch was beginning to affect the atmosphere by weakening the trade winds off South America, NASA said.

"Should the current trends continue and the winds continue to weaken, there is potential for processes to be set in motion that will allow the warm water in the western Pacific to enhance and expand the surface warming that has already taken place in the eastern Pacific Ocean," the agency said.



A copy of computer school identification photo shows Onel de Guzman, a possible suspect in the creation of the "ILOVEYOU" virus that infected computers worldwide. De Guzman had submitted a thesis to the AMA Computer College in Manila for a program that would help steal other people's computer passwords and it is believed that the thesis may have been used in the creation of the virus, according to a report yesterday. The school disapproved de Guzman's thesis because it was illegal and the student failed to graduate. — AFP photo

Afghan rivals agree to ceasefire

RIYADH, May 10: The two warring sides in Afghanistan's civil war agreed on Tuesday to a ceasefire and prisoner exchange, paving the way for a possible settlement between the ruling Taliban and its opponents, reports AP.

The agreement was ironed out in talks being held under the auspices of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port city of Jiddah, where the OIC's headquarters is located.

The deal would immediately put into force a ceasefire and allow the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross to carry out its humanitarian work under OIC supervision, said a source from the organisation.

Tuesday's agreement represents a step toward a comprehensive settlement to the Afghan problem, according to the OIC source.

The announcement of a deal comes just days after the United Nations warned of heavy fighting in the coming weeks in Afghanistan. On Thursday, the UN Security Council expressed fears that the warring groups were preparing for new offensives.

But the Taliban dismissed the warning, saying they were committed to achieving peace and would not initiate any fighting. The hard-line Islamic regime accused the opposition of wanting to destabilise the government and continue the war.

The United Nations still recognises the ousted government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, who controls barely 10 per cent of the country.

Artiste of peace

PARIS, May 10: UNESCO late Tuesday named Chinese actress Gong Li an "artiste of peace" at a ceremony held at the organisation's headquarters here, reports AFP.

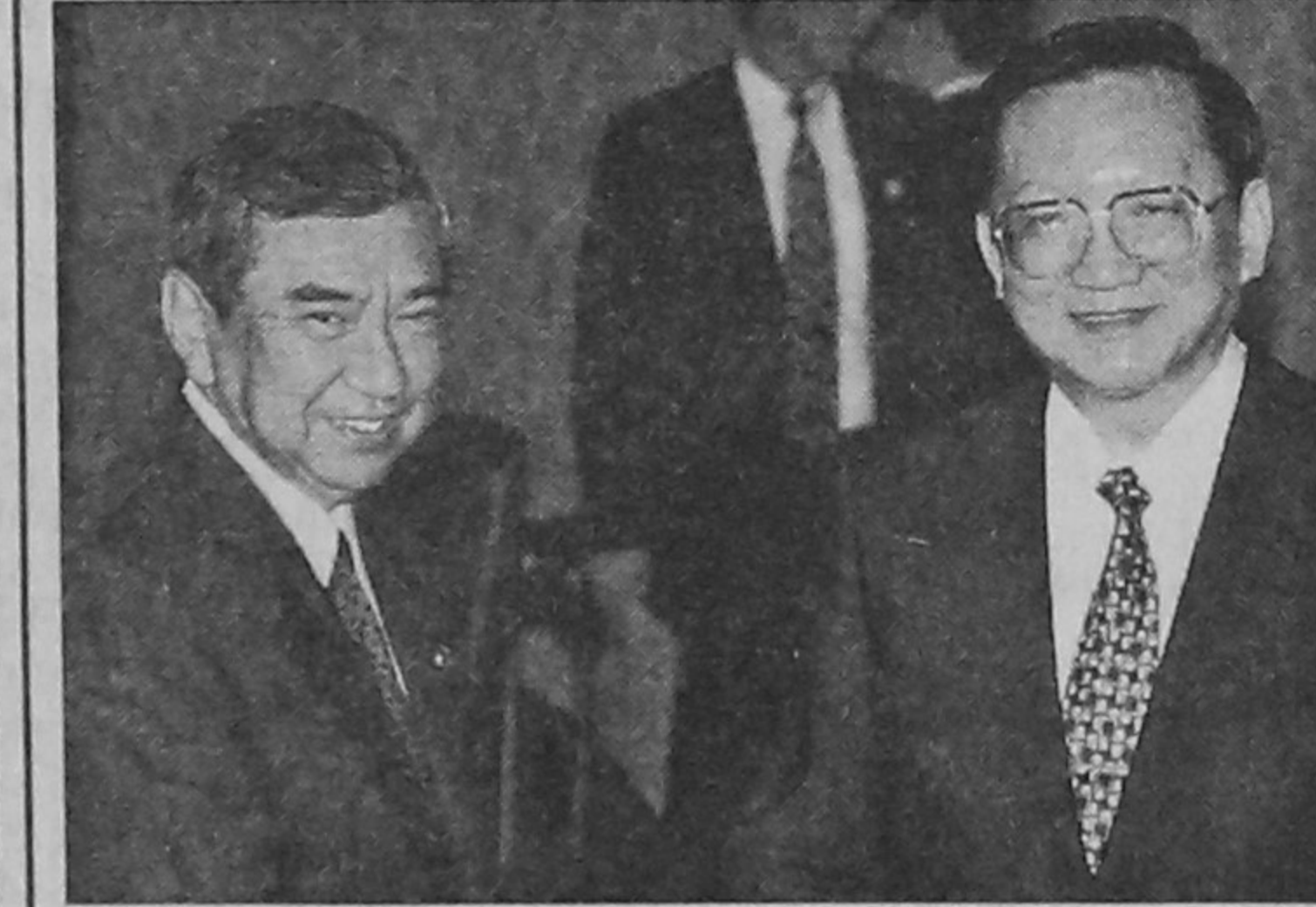
The 34-year-old actress, who chaired the jury at the recent 50th Berlin Film Festival, was honoured "for her contribution to cultural diversity and to harmony among peoples."

In a speech, UNESCO director-general Koichiro Matsuura praised Gong Li for helping to "build a bridge between cultures, languages and generations" and expressed pleasure that the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation could "call on her service."

In Berlin, Gong Li presented her latest film, Sun Zhou's "Piao Liang ma ma" (Breaking the Silence) in which she plays a "mother courage" confronted with her child's deafness.

Elected one of the world's most beautiful women by the US magazine People, Gong Li is cosmetic company Oreal's star model.

BRIEFLY



Visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan (R) is greeted by his Japanese counterpart Yohei Kono before their meeting at the Iikura guesthouse in Tokyo yesterday. Tang arrived in Tokyo on a four-day official visit. — AFP photo

Chinese FM begins Japan visit: Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan began a four-day official visit to Japan on Wednesday that Tokyo hopes would help to improve often prickly ties, Reuters reports from Tokyo.

Topping the agenda are talks aimed at setting a date for a visit to Japan later this year by Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji. Tokyo had wanted Zhu to come before the Group of Eight summit meeting to be held in Okinawa, southern Japan, in July. In February, China rejected Japan's informal suggestion that it take part in the G8 summit.

Turkish troops kill 9 Afghans: Turkish soldiers killed nine Afghans and wounded five when they opened fire on a group trying to cross into Turkish territory from Iran, the Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

The incident occurred late Tuesday near the northern tip of the Turkish-Iranian border close to the eastern town of Dogubeyazit, said the agency. Turkish troops opened fire on a group of 153 Afghan immigrants when they refused to obey verbal warnings to stop, it added. The remaining 139 immigrants were detained.

7 drown as ferry sinks in Vietnam: Seven people, including an eight-year-old child, were killed when an overloaded ferry sank on a river close to the northern port city of Hanoi, police said Wednesday, AFP reports from Hanoi.

The captain, who survived, is still being held for questioning over Sunday's sinking, they said.

Ruling party begins poll assembly in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10: Malaysia's ruling party today opened its triennial election assembly with a warning that the party was losing its influence among the majority ethnic Malays, reports Reuters.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, addressing the United Malays National Organisation's (UMNO) women and youth wings, urged members to change their ways to stop the slide.

The voting pattern among Malays is a warning bell that UMNO's influence is being threatened, Abdullah said, referring to the November 1999 general elections where sizeable Malay votes went to the opposition.

"The reality demands that we think seriously and identify the source of this weakness, as our own community, especially the younger generation, has less faith in the party," he said.

UMNO is the main party in the multi-ethnic Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition, which has governed Malaysia since independence from Britain in 1957.

Political analysts say the UMNO polls are more significant than general elections, which Barisan Nasional has always won easily.

Four troops killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, May 10: Suspected Islamic militants blew up an army vehicle with a land mine in troubled Kashmir Wednesday, killing at least four soldiers and critically wounding three others, police said, reports AP.

The guerrillas triggered the land mine as the vehicle reached Nihalpora Pattan, a village 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state, police said.

Two civilian passersby were wounded by the shrapnel.

No militant group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. The army immediately cordoned off the village and began a house-to-house search for the attackers.

More than a dozen militant groups have been fighting to secede from India since 1989.

India accuses Pakistan of training and arming the militants. Pakistan denies the charge and says it only provides moral and diplomatic support to the rebels.

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over control of Kashmir. A showdown in May last year in icy peaks of Kargil took them to the brink of another war.

Bangladesh Power Development Board

রাত ১১টা থেকে ভোর ৬টা
মধ্যে সেচ পাশপ চালান

Invitation of Local Tender

Sealed local tenders are invited from the eligible bidders for High Speed Internet Access to the offices of Bangladesh Power Development Board according to the following schedule:

Scope of work: Proposals are wanted from bonafide VSAT Operator (Provider) for turnkey solution in dedicated High-Speed Internet Access to Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) headquarters in Dhaka.

Eligibility of provider: Provider must be a licenced VSAT Operator from Bangladesh Ministry of Post and Telecommunications.

PDB requires dedicated 24 hours 7 days Internet Access to its headquarters at a bandwidth of 64 kbps and 128 kbps full circuit. The Internet Access will be connected to PDB's existing internal LAN without any dial-up process using phone line. The contract will be initially for the duration of 1 year for the first phase and could be extended up to 5 years. Proposal should be submitted for both 64 kbps and 128 kbps independent of each other with detailed company profile.

A complete set of tender document may be purchased from the office of the Director of Purchase, Power Development Board, 9th floor, WAPDA Building, Motiheel up to 23rd May (in the office hour) on payment of Taka 1,000/- (Taka one thousand only) in the shape of Pay Order in favour of Director, Purchase, PDB, Dhaka.

A bid bond equivalent to 2.5% of the offered price shall be submitted with tender. Proposal must be submitted to Director of Purchase, 9th floor, WAPDA Building, Dhaka.

Tender will be received up to 11.00 AM and will be opened at 11.30 AM on 24th May 2000 in presence of the intending bidders or their representatives if any.

Tender shall neither be sent by post nor it will be sold on the opening day. Offer sent by Post/Telex/DHL/FAX will neither be received nor it will be accepted.

Biddut/Jana-2038(5)/99-2000
GD-428

Director, Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিত্তিক শিক্ষা সহায়ক দ্রব্য, যন্ত্রপাতি, রাসায়নিক দ্রব্য ক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রকৃত লাইসেন্সধারী ইনভেন্টার এর নিকট থেকে দেশী/বৈদেশিক মূল্য ক্রয়ের জন্য সীলমোহরকৃত টেন্ডার আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। টেন্ডারের শর্তাবলী সম্বলিত সিডিউল অত্র বিভাগ থেকে ৮/৫/২০০০ইং থেকে ২৪/৫/২০০০ইং পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে পাওয়া যাবে। দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার শেষ তারিখ ২৫/৫/২০০০ইং বেলা ১০-০০টা পর্যন্ত এবং একই দিন বেলা ১১-৩০ মিঃ সময় দরপত্র খোলা হবে। দরপত্র কোষাধ্যক্ষ, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অফিসে জমা দিতে হবে।

নং ০০১৬৮/২০০০/বিজ্ঞা/জনসংযোগ
(৬/৫/২০০০)
জিডি-৪২৫

প্রফেসর মুশফিক আহমদ

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Custom House, Chittagong

Ref No. S-4/157/Admin/2000

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from interested/experienced firms for servicing including 'auto start' of manual generator (50 KVA) of Asaikuda Speed Project of Chittagong Custom House. Tenders should be dropped in tender box kept at the office chamber of the undersigned at or before 12-00 Noon of 24-5-2000, which will be opened on the same day at 12-30 PM in presence (if any) of the attending tenders. Earnest money refundable at the rate 2.5% (two & half per cent) of the total quoted amount should be submitted with the tender in the form of DD/Pay Order from any scheduled bank in favour of Commissioner of Customs, Custom House, Chittagong.

Schedule consisting rules & regulations/terms & conditions of tender will be available from the Administration Section of this office on payment of Tk 400/- (four hundred) only (non-refundable) through Treasury Challan to Sonali Bank, Custom House Branch, Chittagong. If, under any circumstance the office remains closed on the date of submitting tender, then tender can be submitted on the next working day. The Commissioner of Customs reserves the right to accept or reject any tender and the authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender. It may be noted that paper cutting (original copy) of the respective newspaper should be produced before receiving the schedule.

Md. Nasir Uddin
Joint Commissioner of Customs
for Commissioner of Customs
Custom House, Chittagong.

DFP-10620-4/5
G-859

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

Bangladesh Power Development Board

রাত ১১টা থেকে ভোর ৬টা
মধ্যে সেচ পাশপ চালান

INVITATION OF LOCAL TENDER

1. Local sealed tenders are invited by Bangladesh Power Development Board from renowned Manufacturers for the Procurement of the following materials for 16-Town Power Distribution Project, Phase-II as detailed below:

Sl No	Tender Enquiry No & Date	Description of Equipment/ Materials	Quantity	Cost of Tender Document	Tender Receiving and Opening Date
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Pur-15/16-T/2000 dated 25.04.2000	Self supporting duplex service drop cable (4mm ²)	200 km.	Tk. 1000.00	22.05.2000

2. A complete set of tender documents may be purchased from the office of the Project Director, 16-Town Power Distribution Project by the interested bidders on submission of written application and upon payment of non-refundable fee of taka as mentioned in column-5 above against the tender in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of Project Director, 16-Town Power Distribution Project, BPDB, Dhaka.

3. A bid bond equivalent to 2.5% of the offered price shall be submitted with tender.

4. Tender will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 11.00 AM and will be opened at 11.15 AM in the prescribed date as mentioned in column-6 above in presence of the intending bidders or their representatives, if any. Tender shall neither be sent by post nor it will be sold on the opening day. Offer sent by Post/Telex/DHL/Fax will neither be received nor it will be accepted.

Biddut/Jana-1957(4)/99-2000
DFP-10914-7/5
G-860

Project Director
16-Town Power Dist. Project
BPDB, Dhaka