

Assam govt forms high-powered committee on autonomy

GUWAHATI, Aug 9: Assam government has constituted a high-power committee on autonomy by a notification in order to pursue vigorously the state's demand for more autonomy, reports PTI.

The first meeting of the 14-member committee, headed by state Education Minister was held here yesterday in which Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta also took part, official sources said.

The committee will broadly base itself upon the report of the Sarkaria Commission on centre-state relations but it may also go beyond these parameters in the wake of the major socio-political changes that have subsequently taken place in the country as a whole, the source said.

The committee would examine the provisions of Government of India Act, 1935 in respect of the powers of the state and their relevance in the present context and would also give adequate consideration to the Assam Accord of 1985.

The committee will examine the degree and kind of autonomy and the additional power required to promote all-round economic development of Assam.

Laxman new chief of BJP

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist party has appointed a Dalit, a member of the lowest level of India's influential caste hierarchy, as its next president, reports AP.

Bangaru Laxman, 61, will succeed Kushabhau Thakre as the Bharatiya Janata Party President on August 26 for a three-year term, the party said. Laxman at present is the junior railway minister in Vajpayee's coalition government, a position he will resign to take up the top party post. He had earlier served as the BJP's vice president.

A law graduate, Laxman was a prominent trade union leader in 1970s.

Dalits historically have been left out of India's power structure. But political parties are now wooing the lower castes to win their votes in an era of coalition politics.

India's President K.R. Narayanan is a Dalit. So is Gauri Mohan Chandra Baidya, the speaker of the lower house of Parliament.

Brahmins are at the top of a Hindu hierarchy that divides society into four castes and a fifth, lowest group outside caste once known as untouchable but now commonly called Dalits, or the oppressed.

Security forces move into south Lebanon

KFAR TIBNIT, Aug 9: Lebanese security forces moved into the former Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon early Wednesday morning, restoring a semblance of state authority for the first time in 24 years to a region torn by conflict, reports AP.

A force of soldiers and police officers before dawn headed down the coastal highway from the capital Beirut in central Lebanon to the south and the border areas Israel vacated in May. The troops moved in trucks, jeeps and at least former armoured vehicles.

The first units led by a Military Police vehicle followed by four armoured vehicles carried on two trailer trucks crossed the former front line outside this village between what was the occupied zone and government-controlled territory at 6:10 am (0310 GMT).

The units moved through narrow mountain roads from Kfar Tibnit, 10 kilometers (six

miles) north of the Israeli border, toward the main town of Marjayoun in the east. Other units were headed toward Bint Jbeil, a major town in the west.

Interior Minister Michel Murr had said the force comprises 500 soldiers from the Military Police and Anti-terrorism units of the Lebanese army as well as 500 policemen.

The deployment, albeit token in a region that makes up 10 per cent of Lebanese territory where tension has continued after the end of occupation, will help fill a vacuum in state authority in the zone that has been controlled by guerrillas since Israel withdrew its troops on May 24.

UN peacekeepers moved into the former occupied zone Saturday -- a step that Lebanon insisted on before its own deployment. But tension in the area continues to simmer.

Four people were wounded in the zone Sunday and Monday when Israeli soldiers fired at

stone-throwers and youths preparing to hurl a firebomb over the border fence near Fatima Gate.

It was unclear whether Lebanon would deploy its security forces near Fatima Gate -- the main flash point on the border.

Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss said Tuesday night the deployment of UN peacekeepers and Lebanese forces at the sealed gate was "an operational matter and is up to army officers to decide."

Murr, the Interior Minister, has said Lebanese security forces will not deploy along the border itself as that is the job of the UN peacekeepers. Lebanon has refused to patrol its southern frontier, saying it does not want to serve as Israel's border guard in the absence of a peace treaty between the two countries and between Israel and Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon.

Philippine Muslim rebels want \$25m for hostages

JOLO, Philippines, Aug 9: Muslim extremists holding more than a dozen hostages in the southern Philippines are demanding 25 million dollars ransom for their release, according to government intelligence sources today, reports AFP.

The five leaders of the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf agreed to the ransom although it is not clear whether they expect the whole amount to be paid at once or in stages.

The group is now discussing how the money will be delivered to them, the sources said.

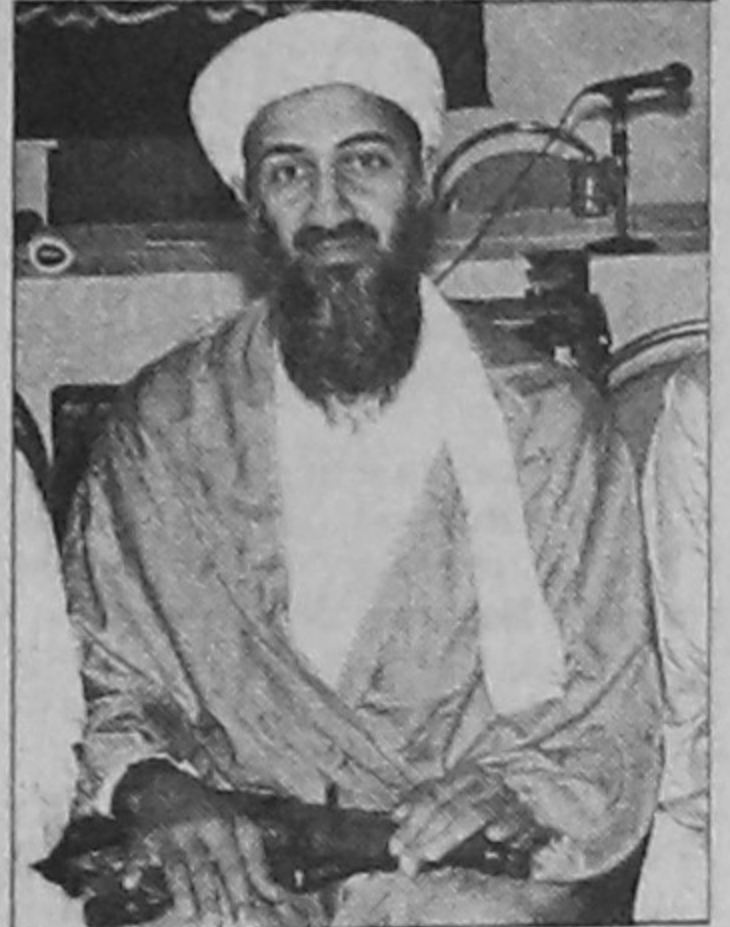
The proposed 25 million dollar ransom will cover two Germans, two French, two South Africans, two Finns, two Filipinos, three Malaysians and a Franco-Lebanese woman seized from a Malaysian resort and taken across the sea border to Jolo island on April 23.

It will also cover three French television reporters who were seized by the Abu Sayyaf when they went to interview the hostages.

In addition, the ransom will also cover 12 Filipino evangelists of the Jesus Miracle Crusade who have been in the Abu Sayyaf jungle hideout for more than a month, the sources said.

Thirteen evangelists went to

the Abu Sayyaf camp on July 1 supposedly to pray over the other hostages. The Abu Sayyaf later said the 13 were hostages.



An undated file picture shows Osama Bin Laden attending a meeting with a Kalashnikov on his lap in an undisclosed place inside Afghanistan. Bin Laden is reported to have been funding the Abu Sayyaf, who are currently holding over a dozen hostages in the southern Philippine island of Jolo.

— AFP photo

but on July 27, one of the evangelists emerged from the Abu Sayyaf camp to say his fellows were there on their own free will.

Top government negotiator Roberto Avenajado also said the evangelists would not be considered hostages as the Abu Sayyaf had told him they were in their hideout to pray for hostages.

However three Christian Filipino labourers, seized by an Abu Sayyaf faction last week are not covered by the 25 million dollar ransom demand, the sources said.

On Monday, Philippine military chief General Angelo Reyes confirmed reports that 245 million pesos (\$5.5 million dollars) had been paid to the Abu Sayyaf in exchange for six Malaysians, five Filipinos and a German woman earlier freed despite Manila's policy against ransom payments.

The agreement on a total ransom for almost all hostages came as an aide of Libyan mediator Rajab Azarouq arrived in Jolo island secretly on Tuesday.

The aide, Mohamed Ismail, was fetched from a ferry by unknown armed men and escorted out of town, an AFP correspondent witnessed.



Relatives of victims of the Pinochet regime and members of human rights groups celebrate in Santiago on Tuesday. The demonstrators celebrated the Supreme Court's decision to uphold a ruling to strip former dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet of his immunity from prosecution. The sign reads, "truth and justice." — AFP photo

LTTE kills 7 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Aug 9: Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels attacked an army patrol and a bus carrying sailors heading home on leave, killing seven people and wounding 40 on Wednesday, the navy and army said, reports AP.

An explosion that may have been caused by a Claymore mine hit the bus in Trincomalee, about 230 kilometers (140 miles) northeast of Colombo, the capital, said naval commander, on the condition of anonymity. Most military officials are barred from talking to the media.

A child of one of the sailors in the bus was killed, while 27 naval personnel and five civilians were wounded, he said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the blast. The nature of damage suggested that a Claymore mine was used.

Claymore and anti-personnel mines are frequently used by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels against military vehicles. The rebels are fighting to establish a Tamil homeland in the north and east.

At Periyathampalai, in northern Vavuniya, six soldiers were killed and eight were wounded when rebels attacked a road patrol with grenades and mortars, said a senior army official.

The rebels are banned in Sri Lanka. There was no immediate comment on their web site.

India to pursue Kashmir peace talks: Advani

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: India said today it was still willing to hold peace talks with militant groups in Kashmir, while hammering home charges that Pakistan sabotaged a fragile ceasefire in the region, reports AFP.

"India will not deviate from its chosen course of talks with all those in Kashmir who eschew the path of terror and violence and our simultaneous battle against all those who continue to stick to that path," Home Minister L.K. Advani said in parliament.

Advani's statement came a day after the dominant Kashmiri militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, called off a 15-day ceasefire.

The home minister said the fact that Hizbul supreme commander Syed Salahuddin made the announcement in Islamabad could "leave no doubt in anybody's mind that it is Pakistan which has sabotaged the prospects of peace."

Advani said it was obvious the ceasefire talks did not fit in with "Pakistan's plans in Jammu and Kashmir."

"The words that made the announcement were spoken by Salahuddin, but they came from the ruling establishment in Islamabad," he said.

He accused the Kashmiri umbrella political outfit, the All Party Hurriyat Conference,

of also playing a negative role and criticised it for calling the ceasefire dialogue a hasty move.

"Perhaps they forgot that Jammu and Kashmir have been in a bloody turmoil for more than a decade. It seems that the Hurriyat group was acting under pressure from Pakistan," said Advani.

The minister said India was prepared to meet an intensification of the "proxy war" that he said was initiated by Pakistan in Kashmir.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training militant groups fighting Indian rule in Kashmir.

Islamabad denies the charge and says it extends only moral and diplomatic support to the insurgency which has claimed more than 25,000 lives since 1989.

A resumption of hostilities following the ceasefire withdrawal would be a serious setback after one of the most significant moves towards peace in Kashmir since the armed rebellion erupted in the Muslim-majority state.

New bomb found in Moscow train station

MOSCOW, Aug 9: Police today found a bag containing four kilograms (8.8 pounds) of TNT explosive in a major Moscow train station, one day after a blast here killed seven people, ITAR-TASS reported, says AFP.

The bag also contained 12 detonators, railways spokesman Konstantin Pashkov told the news agency.

The bag was discovered in a luggage storage office in the Kazanskaya train station, which is the main departure point in Moscow for trains heading for the North Caucasus.

On Tuesday, a rush-hour blast in a central Moscow underpass killed at least seven people and injured nearly 100.

Police said they had arrested two suspects in connection with the blast, both from the North Caucasus region where Russia is waging a 10-month campaign in Chechnya.

US efforts to continue for Indo-pak talks

WASHINGTON, Aug 9: The United States, which has worked hard to revive talks between India and Pakistan in recent months, expressed regret at the end of a brief ceasefire in the Kashmir conflict yesterday, reports Reuters.

US officials said President Bill Clinton would continue to press the nuclear-armed neighbours to end the bloody conflict in the disputed territory, including during a US visit by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee next month.

Pro-Avian Hizbul Mujahideen guerrillas called off a truce with Indian troops in the bloody conflict in the disputed territory, accusing India of scuttling the process by refusing to accept three-way peace talks with Pakistan.

"We have seen the report today and would regret if such a promising opportunity were to be lost. We are encouraging all sides to keep the dialogue going," White House National Security Council spokesman PJ Crowley said.

Washington would like to bring Vajpayee and Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf together when both attend a Millennium Summit at the United Nations in New York next month.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Supply and Inspection
48, Motijheel Commercial Area
Dhaka-1000

Notice for Registration

Applications are invited from business establishments for new registration/renewal of registration for supply of products to government organisations in the Department of Supply and Inspection during 2000-2001 fiscal year. If the establishments registered for 1999-2000 fiscal year fail to submit applications for renewal of registration by 30-9-2000, then their registration will be treated as cancelled. Detailed information regarding registration can be known from the registration section of this office.

Application form and rules and regulations for new registration and renewal of registration will be available on payment of Tk 200/- (two hundred) (non-refundable) from the head office of the department at 48, Motijheel Commercial Area in Dhaka, Deputy Director (Shipping), BGO Building No 1, Agrabad, Chittagong and Assistant Director (Shipping), Department of Supply and Inspection, 59/A, Farazipara Road, Khulna, during office hours. Application will have to be submitted in the head office at 48, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka.

on behalf of Director
Md Liaquat Hossain
Assistant Director (Registration)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Environment
Paribesh Bhaban, E/16 Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

No. Environment/Tech(Ozone-2000)-330/2000 Date: 17/04/1407 Bang
01/08/2000 Eng

Poster Design

Ozone Cell, Department of Environment has invited design of poster on competitive basis on the occasion of International Ozone Day, September 16, 2000. The theme of the poster is: (Save O₃ur Sky: Protect Yourself; Protect the Ozone Layer).

Students of Institute of Fine Arts, artist and the advertising firms are requested to send their respective prepared design on the prescribed theme alongwith an application mentioning their names, addresses, phone no (if any) in the office of the undersigned by 27-8-2000 during office hours.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|---|
| (a) | Size of the poster | : 26 inches X 17 inches. |
| (b) | Colour of the poster | : Not more than four colours. |
| (c) | Prize | : Taka 10,000/- (ten thousand) for the selected design. |

The subjects to be written in the poster will be available to Senior Officer, Ozone Cell during office hours. The authority reserves the power to accept or reject any or all designs submitted without assigning any reason. Designs submitted will not be returned under any circumstances. Selected artist/advertising firm will be informed through letter.

Md Abdus Sobhan
National Project Director
ODS Phase Out Project
(Phase-2)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Chief Engineer

Construction and Maintenance Management Unit (CMMU)
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
105-106, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

Memo No MHFW/CMMU/Enlistment-81/97/1769 Dated: 03/08/2000

Notice for Depositing Renewal Fee

- This is for information of all contractors' establishments enlisted temporarily general/without category for implementation of construction, repair, renovation and extension work of various health and family planning installations through Construction and Maintenance Management Unit (CMMU) that the last date for depositing renewal fee for enlistment for 2000-2001 fiscal year (without fine) 30-09-2000. Contract firm are requested to deposit Tk 750.00 (seven hundred fifty) in the form of Pay Order in favour of Chief Engineer, CMMU in the Accounts Section as the renewal fees. If any establishment fails to deposit the renewal fee within the stipulated period then it can be deposited till 30-06-2001 with the fine for Tk 200.00 (two hundred) per month. No renewal fee will be accepted after the expiry of that period. But if it is the category-based enlistment the rest of the additional fee will have to be deposited at the applicable rate.
- The contract-establishment which have failed to deposit renewal fees for the fiscal year 1999-2000 (with fine) upto 30-06-2000, their enlistment is hereby cancelled.
- Attested copy of trade licence up to date (2000-2001 year) will have to be submitted at the time of depositing renewal fee.

DFP-19122-6/8
G-1427

Colonel Syed Anwar Hossain
Chief Engineer



Bangladesh Power Development Board Tender Notice

স্বাধীনতার কাব্যনায়ে বিদ্যুতের পাওয়ার ফ্যাক্টর কি কয়?
সঠিক কাপাসিটির ব্যাকব ব্যবহার করুন এবং স্বরচ বাঁচান

Sealed tenders are invited through PDB Form No T-2 as per Memo No BBB-3/3.03/2000/109 dated 29/7/2000 of the office from enlisted bonafide contractors of PDB and bonafide liveries manufacturing establishments for supplying winter and summer liveries for the employees of Sale & Distribution-3, PDB, Khulna. The actual expenditure is 69,472/- (sixty-nine thousand four hundred seventy-two) only. Detailed schedule/tender documents can be purchased from the office of the (1) Chief Engineer, Distribution, Western Zone, PDB, Khulna, (2) Superintending Engineer, Operation & Maintenance Circle, Khulna Electric Supply, PDB, Khulna, (3) Manager, Pubali Bank, Khalishpur Branch, Khulna and apart from head of above-mentioned offices with the permission from the undersigned. Tender can be purchased till 03/09/2000 during office hours on payment of Tk 100/- (one hundred) (non-refundable) Bank Draft/Pay-Order in favour of Deputy Director (Accounts), Regional Accounts Office, PDB, Khulna. The tender will be received on 04/9/2000 till 12-00 Noon and tender box will be opened the same day at 12-30 PM.

Biddut/Jana 197(3)/2000-2001-
DFP-19155-6/8
G-1426

Executive Engineer
Sale & Distribution Division-3
PDB, Khulna.

New treatment for heart attack patients

UNDATED, Aug 9: Doctors can save more of a heart attack patient's heart by putting a small mesh tube in the artery and giving the patient "super aspirin" than by the clot-buster now used as the standard treatment, a study indicates, reports AP.

But the technique, tested at a Munich hospital which treats only heart patients, may not be feasible at many US hospitals. Doctors at the Deutsches Herzzentrum (German Heart Center) found that, after six months, 8.5 per cent of the patients given the two-part treatment had died or had stroke or another heart attack.

But 23.2 per cent of those who got the clot-buster ATP had died or had a stroke or another heart attack. Dr Albert Schoemig wrote in Thursday's edition of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The difference is due to less damage in the heart, the he wrote. The new treatment limited damage to an average of 14.3 per cent of the left ventricle, the muscular chamber which pumps blood out to the body, compared to 19.4 per cent damage in ATP-treated hearts.

With only 140 patients, the study is a small one. But the differences were impressive and it was the first trial ever to compare the two treatments, said Dr Eric Topol of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

Students demand trial of Suharto

JAKARTA, Aug 9: Some 150 Indonesian students rallied today near the home of former president Suharto to demand that he be immediately put on trial for massive corruption and abuse of power, reports AP.

The protesters, grouped under the City Alliance, marched through the plush Menteng area in central Jakarta before they were stopped by dozens of police in full riot gear about 75 metres from Suharto's sprawling bungalow.

"Jail Suharto and seize his assets," said one large sign waved by the students.

They also demanded during the 30-minute peaceful protest that all state institutions be cleared of Suharto loyalists.

Prosecutors on Tuesday formally filed corruption charges against Suharto to the South Jakarta district court.

The head of the panel of judges on the case said the trial of the former dictator could open before the end of this month.

Suharto, now 79 and in failing health, is charged with stealing \$7.1 million dollars from the state during his troubled 32-year rule.

Lankan govt presses on for constitutional reforms

COLOMBO, Aug 9: The government said today it will again present the draft of a new constitution to the Parliament for approval, a day after it was forced to postpone a vote indefinitely, reports AP.

"What options are there before a government but to go for the reforms," Media Minister Mangala Samawawera told The Associated Press.

The government postponed the vote after coming under pressure from Sinhalese nationalists and Buddhist monks.

The new constitution was seen as a first definite step since the Tamil separatist war broke out in 1983. It aimed at ending the insurrection, which has left more than 62,000 people killed on both sides.

The alliance headed by Pres-

ident Chandrika Kumaratunga was 12 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass the constitution on Tuesday.

The government and the main opposition traded charges about who was at fault for the sudden departure from the country of 10 opposition Parliament members, causing the vote to be postponed.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who have fought to have the Tamil-dominated north and east become independent, have already opposed the draft document.

But Kumaratunga, blinded in one eye last December in what is believed to have been a Tamil Tiger suicide bombing, had hoped to win over moderates among the 3.2 million Tamils,

some of it with sympathy for the injury.

Samaratunga did not say when the reform bill will be submitted, or how it hopes to get the required two-thirds majority.

"We will make one more appeal to those members who feel that this war should end and that we should grant more powers to our region."

Someday, historians will look back and say that this government did try."

The main opposition United National Party, with the second largest number of lawmakers in the 225-member Parliament, has rejected the constitution, saying it would give Kumaratunga too much power and that the bill had not been offered to public debate.

Wahid agrees to extend Aceh truce

JAKARTA, Aug 9: President Abdurrahman Wahid has agreed to extend the current cease-fire with separatist rebels in Aceh province for a further three months, a Cabinet minister said today, reports AP.

"The president has agreed to extend the humanitarian pause in Aceh and we hope that the Free Aceh Movement will agree with this too," said Human Rights Minister Hasballah Soed.

The government hopes the rebels will respond by Aug. 15. Soed added.

The two sides have been holding talks in Switzerland about extending the June 2 truce that was due to expire in September.

On Monday, they said they were "strongly inclined" to extend the cease-fire.

The truce has been marred by sporadic violence, and some 44 people have lost their lives in clashes. But it has at least ended the widespread bloodshed earlier in the year which left more than 300 people dead.

The Free Aceh Movement has been waging a 25-year battle to separate the oil and natural gas-rich region from the rest of Indonesia. The province, located on the northern tip of Sumatra island, is roughly the size of the Netherlands and has 4.1 million inhabitants.

The fighting has claimed at least 5,000 lives in the past 10 years.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian military denied Wednesday it was responsible for the disappearance of Acehnese human rights activist Jafar Siddiq Hamzah.



US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore (R) and US Senator Joseph Lieberman (L), appear at a rally where Gore formally announced Lieberman as his vice presidential running mate in Nashville, Tennessee, on Tuesday.

— AFP photo

Arafat to visit Tehran today: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will arrive in Tehran Thursday for talks with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, the foreign ministry announced here Wednesday, AFP reports from Tehran.

According to the official IRNA news agency, Arafat will make "a brief visit for talks with Iran's head of state Mohammad Khatami who heads the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)," the ministry said in a statement. The visit comes at Arafat's request, it added.

Nigerian Senate chief impeached: Nigeria's upper house removed its president, Chuba Okadigbo, on Tuesday after an impeachment vote climaxing a parliamentary inquiry into contract awards, witnesses said, Reuters reports from Abuja.

The 109-member senate voted 81 to 14 in favour of removing Okadigbo after he refused to comply with an earlier resolution of the house asking him to resign, lawmakers said.