

Rebels free 3 Malaysian hostages

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Aug 18 : Muslim extremists today freed three Malaysians among 31 hostages held in the southern island of Jolo, negotiator Lee Peng Wee told AFP.

Lee said the hostages were handed to his special emissary Jamil Hassan who led them down from the guerrillas' mountain jungle hideout where the other 28 captives are being held.

"Our emissary has informed us that he has the three Malaysians and that they are on their way to Zamboanga city by boat," Lee said, after receiving a satellite phone call from Hassan.

"(Malaysian) Prime Minister Mahathir requested us to help secure the release of the Malaysians ... and we are glad its finally over."

"There was no ransom paid," he said.

Hizbul offers fresh talks

6 Hindus slain in Kashmir

AFP

SRINAGAR, India, Aug 18 : The Hizbul Mujahideen militant group, which recently called off its unilateral ceasefire in Indian-administered Kashmir, has proposed fresh talks with New Delhi, a media report said.

Fazal Haq Qureshi, who acted as official mediator in

talks between the Hizbul and Indian government officials before the collapse of the ceasefire two weeks ago, said the proposal had been made in a telephone conversation he had with Hizbul's Pakistan-based supreme commander Syed Salahudin.

"Hizbul has offered a comprehensive ceasefire, provided the government of India comes out with a statement that

Pakistan will be included in any final resolution of the Kashmir dispute," Qureshi told

India accuses Pakistan of fomenting the Muslim militancy in the Indian zone of the divided Kashmir region which has claimed more than 25,000 lives in the past decade.

Islamabad denies the charge but extends open moral and diplomatic support to the militants.

The two countries have fought two wars over Kashmir since independence in 1947.

In a related development, Kashmir's main separatist alliance, the All Party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, said it was willing to split its seven member executive to facilitate a dialogue between Pakistan and India.

"The split offer is an effort to get both sides to the negotiating table," said Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat, adding that three members of the executive would talk with the Pakistani

side and four with the Indian government.

In this way, India will be able to meet its stated objective of not involving itself in tripartite talks, while Pakistan will satisfy its stated objective that there can be no peace in Kashmir without its involvement," Bhat said.

India had indicated earlier this year that it was willing to hold a dialogue with the Hurriyat leadership.

Meanwhile, six Hindus were killed and six injured by suspected Muslim militants overnight in a village in the troubled northern Indian state of Kashmir, a senior police official said today.

The attack occurred Thursday evening in Koddara village in the southern Kashmir district of Rajouri, some 160 kilometers (100 miles) west of here. Rajouri police said.



Deposed Fijian prime minister and former coup hostage Mahendra Chaudhry (L) is greeted by Indian President K.R. Narayanan during a courtesy call at the presidential palace yesterday. Chaudhry is on a ten-day visit to India, as part of a tour of Commonwealth countries, seeking support for his reinstatement as premier following his ouster by ethnic Fijian rebels.

- AFP photo

Barak urges Bashar to forge 'honourable peace'

TEL AVIV, Aug 18 : Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has publicly called on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to forge an "honourable peace" with Israel, which would serve the interests of both nations, reports AFP.

"If there exists in Syria a wish to reach an honourable peace, it will find Israel responds in kind," said Barak, during an awards-giving ceremony here Thursday.

"We are aware of the fact that Syria, under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad, considers peace as a strategic objective," Barak said.

He said that a real peace must adequately reflect the aspirations of the two countries both "in terms of security and honour".

Water-borne diseases claim 20 in Assam

GUWAHATI, India, Aug 18 : At least 20 people have died of water-borne diseases in India's flood-hit northeastern state of Assam in the past week, fuelling fears of a possible epidemic, officials said today, reports AFP.

A government health official said gastro-enteritis had become a major problem in the western Assam districts of Kokrajhar and Nalbari after tens of thousands of people returned to their ravaged homes when flood waters started receding.

"At least 15 deaths were reported from two areas in the district and more than 50 are down with gastro-enteritis during the past week," Kokrajhar district magistrate John Ingli told AFP by telephone.

"We are finding it hard to cope with no doctors available to treat the villagers."



North Korean woman Choi Bong-Jo (L), who came from the North for a reunion with her family members, cries in a bus as she leaves Seoul after she met her long separated sister Choi-Bong-Nam (R), living in the South yesterday. Both Koreas exchanged 100 people each for four-day family reunions in their capitals in a rare event since the 1950-53 Korean conflict.

- AFP photo

Gore spells out plans for his presidency

LOS ANGELES, Aug 18 : Al Gore provided the American people with a long litany of what he would do as the next president on Thursday - from upgrading schools and expanding health care to strengthening Social Security, raising the minimum wage and keeping the economy on a roll, reports Reuters.

In accepting the 2000 Democratic presidential nomination, the vice president got specific and effectively challenged Republican rival George W. Bush to do the same.

"I believe people deserve to know specifically what a candidate proposes to do," Gore told the Democratic National Convention. "You ought to be able to know and judge for yourself."

Polls show the public agrees

Lankan Parliament dissolved

Elections on Oct 10

COLOMBO, Aug 18 : Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga today dissolved Parliament and announced a general election for October 10, effectively cancelling earlier plans to reform the electoral system, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga used her executive powers to dissolve the 225-member National Legislature with effect from midnight Friday, six days before it was due to end its six-year term, the government said in a statement.

It added nominations for the parliamentary election would be accepted between August 28 and September 4.

The dissolution of parliament effectively ended a campaign by the ruling party to change the country's electoral system.

The government on August 8

shelved an electoral reform bill when the ruling party failed to muster the required two thirds majority in parliament to expand the number of seats in the assembly by 73 to 298.

The English-language Island newspaper said legislators who defected from the main opposition to the People's Alliance were keen to press ahead with the bill.

But political sources said support still remained insufficient.

Last week the president's mother Sirima Bandaranaike, 84, resigned as prime minister allowing her daughter to appoint a younger figure to lead the party's election campaign.

Despite resigning the president, Bandaranaike is still holding onto the leadership of Kumaratunga's People's Alliance party.

The paper previously published several exposés on the existence of a torture chamber and eventually prompted the authorities to appoint a Presidential Commission.

'Killing fields' probe takes dramatic turn

Meanwhile, a Sri Lankan government campaign to link the main opposition leader to vigilante killings 12 years ago has taken a dramatic turn with ruling party figures also being implicated, a press report said today.

The Rayava, or Echo weekly, in its Sunday edition made available Friday, said the arrest of a newspaper columnist

in connection with murders that took place in the late 1980s could also reveal the involvement of several government members.

The paper previously published several exposés on the existence of a torture chamber and eventually prompted the authorities to appoint a Presidential Commission.

Barak's conditional offer of state to Palestinians

JERUSALEM, Aug 18 : In Prime Minister Ehud Barak's clearest statement yet about Palestinian statehood, he offered the Palestinians an independent state if they formally end their conflict with Israel, reports AP.

The remarks came as US State Department negotiator Dennis Ross was to begin talks today to see if the two sides were ready to move toward a peace accord.

Ross was set to see Israel's figurehead president and to meet Barak and Palestinian officials, but not Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who is abroad. This is the envoy's first trip to the region since a Barak-Arafat summit last month at the Camp David presidential re-

treat failed to produce an agreement.

Most here assume that a peace accord would include a Palestinian state, and some of Barak's Cabinet ministers have said so in public. Up to now, Barak has preferred ambiguity on the matter.

Speaking at a military college graduation ceremony Thursday, Barak left little room for doubt. "If the Palesti-

nian leadership is prepared to confront the challenge of setting up a Palestinian state and solving the hardships of its people," he said, "it must understand that a condition for that is ending the conflict with Israel."

At the same time, Barak

warned the Palestinians not to declare a state unilaterally. Arafat has said often that he has the right to make such a declaration after September 13, a target date the two sides set for completing a peace treaty.

Barak warned that a unilateral declaration would lead to Israeli countermeasures and violence. "This kind of deterioration would hurt, first and foremost, the Palestinians themselves," he said. He also said Israel could also suffer, as violence would strain its ties with Egypt, Jordan and other Arab states.

The Palestinians want to set up a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with the traditionally Arab eastern section of Jerusalem as its capital.

Russian sub rescue efforts continue without success

No fresh contact with crew

MOSCOW, Aug 18 : Russian efforts to rescue 118 submariners aboard the stranded Kursk continued overnight but without success, news agencies reported today, says AFP.

Four rescue capsules were diving in turn, trying to dock with the beleaguered nuclear submarine, with time running out for the Kursk's crew.

Commander of Russia's northern fleet, Vyacheslav Popov, was quoted on RTR television as saying there had been no fresh contact with the crew, amid growing fears as oxygen levels drop in the stranded submarine.

The unmanned vessels, untested previously in emergency situations, took turns

diving into the icy waters, but the navy said strong currents -- some 108 meters (355 feet) under the Barents Sea, where the Kursk is grounded on its side -- and atrocious poor visibility have stymied all rescue efforts.

Hopes were switching to British and Norwegian rescue efforts.

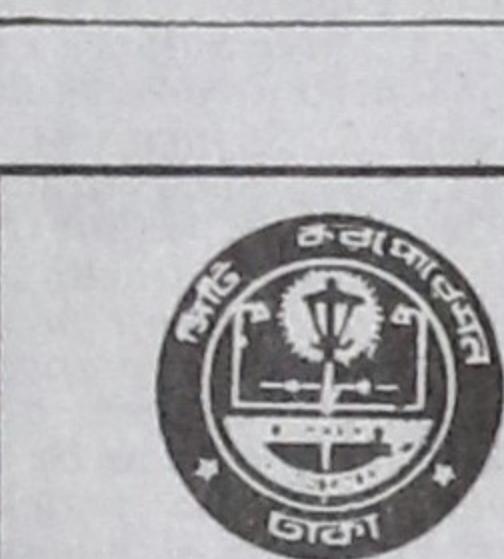
In one of the few pieces of good news, a member of the British rescue team said late Thursday that the hatches on the stricken Russian submarine were compatible with the hi-tech British submersible vessel racing to mount a rescue mission.

Commander Alan Hoskins told the BBC that Russia had assured the international rescue

mission, steaming north to try and help save the submarine's crew, that their LR5 mini-sub would be able to dock with the crippled vessel.

The LR5, described as a kind of "underwater helicopter", is being transported to the scene of the submarine disaster by a Norwegian supply ship, the Normand Pioneer. Hoskins said they were making good progress and were on track to arrive at the scene around lunchtime on Saturday.

However a British defence report based on video footage of Kursk's damage concluded that one of its two rescue hatches was unusable.



Dhaka SEC to recruit 100 new staff

Ref. SEC/Adm/20/01/93 (Part V)/377

Vacancy Announcement

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Jibon Bima Tower (15 & 16 Floor), 10 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000
PABX: 9568101, 9568102, 9561525 FAX: (88) 02-9563721
E-mail: secbd@bdmail.net Website: http://www.secbd.org

17 August 2000

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), a statutory body discharging the responsibilities of the country's Capital Market Regulator, invites applications from Bangladeshi nationals for appointment in the following position:

Position: Private Secretary to Chairman

Number of post: 01 (One)

Educational Qualification: At least Second Class Master degree in Business Administration/Finance/Economics/Management/Law or Statistics from any recognized university.

Pay scale: Tk. 4300-185x7-5595-EB-195x11-7740 and other admissible benefits under 1997 National Pay Scale.

Age: Not exceeding 30 (thirty) years on 30 August 2000.

Preference: Candidates having good Computer Literacy and proficiency in English will be given preference. Experience at appropriate level will also be an added advantage.

Interested candidates may apply with detailed C. V., two recent passport-size photographs and attested copies of all certificates of academic qualification and experience. Applications having deficient papers will not be considered. Envelope containing the application and other relevant papers should be marked with the post applied for and should reach Deputy Director (Admin. & Finance), Securities and Exchange Commission, Jibon Bima Tower (15 & 16 floors), 10 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000 within 30 August 2000.

SEC strongly discourages persuasion or canvassing in any form and will treat them as disqualification of the candidate.

GD-776

Sajjad Hassan Saleh
Deputy Director (Admin. & Finance)

Dhaka WASA Tender Notice

(পানি ব্যবহারে মিতব্যী হোন)

Tenders are invited from Class I enlisted civil contractors of Dhaka WASA for the undermentioned work

Name of work	Amount of earnest money	Date and time of receiving tender
1. Construction work of Officers' Quarter on land of Dhaka WASA at Road No 24 at Dhanmondi, Building No-1	Tk 47,99,770/-	4/9/2000 till 12 Noon
2. Do- work Building No-2	Tk 78,05,761/-	Do
3. Do - work Building No-3	Tk 44,11,312/-	Do

Tenders will be opened on the same day of receiving them at 2:00 PM before the tenderers or their representatives (if anyone remains present). Schedule of tender will be available in the office of the Chief Accounts Officer of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhaban, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka and all MODS Zone offices of Dhaka WASA. Other details will be available in the office of the undersigned.

Address: WASA Bhaban
98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka
WASA-PI-260/2000
DFF-19594-13/8
G-1468

Mohammad Shahjahan
Executive Engineer
Construction (Civil) Division
Dhaka WASA

Li Peng to visit US:

head Li Peng is to make a rare visit to the United States to attend a United Nations-sponsored conference, officials said Friday, AFP reports from Beijing.

The trip by Li at the end of this month will be only his second to America since the 1989 bloody crackdown on student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, for which Li was widely blamed as the instigator. The last time Li visited the United States was in 1992 when he attended a summit at the United Nations.

Canadian FM to resign:

Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy will resign next month to take a teaching position at the University of British Columbia, a Canadian television network reported. AP says from Toronto.

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