

40 missing as river sweeps away Indian bus

BHOPAL, India, Aug 19: At least 40 people were missing in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh yesterday after a flooded river swept away a bus, police said, reports Reuters. They said 10 people had been rescued after the bus carrying 50 passengers was washed away when the driver tried to take it over a flooded bridge.

Earlier, Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said 50 people were feared drowned in the bus carrying 60 passengers.

The accident took place around 100 km (60 miles) from Shahdol town, which is about 370 km east of the state capital, Bhopal.

PTI said incessant rain was hampering rescue efforts.

Drowning accidents in remote rural parts of India are common during the monsoon rainy season, when swollen rivers disrupt transport and cause flooding.



An Indian model displays an ethnic outfit by Indian designer Ritu Kumar during a show as part of Indian Fashion Week in New Delhi on Friday. Leading Indian and foreign designers are participating in the fashion event billed as one of the biggest ever in India.

— AFP photo

Colombian army suspends 41 troops for killing 6 children

BOGOTA, Aug 19: Colombian Defence Minister Luis Fernando Ramirez has admitted that the shooting deaths of six children, and the wounding of four others may have been the result of human error by army personnel, reports AFP. Ramirez made the statement Friday after the Colombian army announced it had suspended 41 soldiers and officers over the shootings at the village of Pueblo Rico, northwest of Bogota.

"I want to reiterate that it is not a case of human rights violations, but one of human error," he said at a press conference Friday.

Lockerbie trial to resume on Tuesday

BRUSSELS, Aug 19: The marathon trial of two Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing resumes Tuesday in Camp Zeist, the Netherlands after a mid-summer break, with the verdicts still months away and no clear indication of how the judges might rule, reports AFP.

Since it opened May 3, the trial -- being conducted under Scottish law -- has heard in excruciating detail how Pan Am Flight 103 was blown out of the night sky over the sleepy Scottish market town of Lockerbie on December 21, 1988.

All 259 people on the New York-bound Boeing 747 flight from London were killed, along with another 11 people on the ground, in the most notorious mid-air bombing in civil aviation history.

Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, 48, and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah, 44, have both pleaded not guilty to charges of murder, conspiracy to murder, and intentionally destroying an aircraft.

Blair's son in trouble again

LONDON, Aug 19: The teenage son of British Prime Minister Tony Blair was in trouble again today after some high-spirited antics in an Italian hotel in the small hours of the morning were splashed across the British press, reports AFP.

Just weeks after hitting the headlines for being arrested while drunk and incapable in central London, Euan Blair, 16, was reprimanded by hotel staff for horsing around at 5 a.m. in a hotel on the island of Ponza off the coast of Naples.

Blair junior and two friends were reportedly riding around in the hotel lift and running through corridors after a night at a disco. They disturbed guests and the hotel owner had to cut the power to the lift to get them to go to bed, newspapers reported here, citing hotel officials.

"He and the others were just having a good time, but people couldn't sleep and someone intervened and that was that," a spokesman for the Bellavista hotel was quoted as saying by The Daily Telegraph.

Pakistan pins high hope on Mori's visit

ISLAMABAD, Aug 19: Pakistan will roll out the red carpet Sunday for Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, hoping he will loosen economic sanctions imposed after the country's 1998 nuclear tests, reports AFP.

Mori will be the first Japanese leader to visit Pakistan since Toshiki Kaifu came in 1990, and many here are excited over reports in the Japanese media that he will mark the occasion by easing the sanctions.

But Japanese officials here and in Tokyo have made it clear that the resumption of non-humanitarian aid will depend on Pakistan's willingness to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

"Prime Minister Mori is to again urge India and Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as soon as possible," Kazuhiko Koshikawa, Mori's deputy press secretary, told AFP in Tokyo during the week.

"And Prime Minister Mori is to call on the two leaders to hold dialogue and make an effort to ease tensions which are threatening peace and stability in the whole of Asia."

Mori, who is also visiting India, Nepal and Bangladesh, will ask India and Pakistan to cool down tensions along the unofficial border in divided Kashmir and show their commitment to peace by inking the CTBT.

But with shelling and skirmishes in the divided Himalayan territory a daily occurrence, and with a sharp rise in militant attacks since the breakdown of a ceasefire by a guerrilla group this month, Mori may be asking too much.

Military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, who toppled prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a coup in October, has said he intends to sign the nuclear test ban pact only when he has achieved "national consensus" in its favour, which is unlikely

any time soon. Pakistan is an insecure country. Economically vulnerable, dwarfed by a hostile neighbour on one side and volatile, war-torn Afghanistan on the other, its nuclear tests are still seen here as a great achievement.

And it firmly believes the sanctions are unfair. India was the first to test its bombs during the 1998 tensions and Pakistan has made a commitment not to resume testing unless India does so first.

"We feel they are unfair because we only responded (to India's tests) and that was very necessary to establish a deterrence and restore a strategic balance in the region," foreign office spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan told AFP Friday.

"We stated in 1998 that if the sanctions are removed it will enable us to adhere to the treaty. It will be easier to explain to our people."

Votes for US polls on sale on Internet

NEW YORK, Aug 19: Some individuals have put their votes for the November US presidential election up for sale on the Internet, a spokesman for an Internet auction site said Friday, reports AFP.

Kevin Pursglove, a spokesman for eBay said several cases had surfaced in the last few days.

"It happened with about four or five isolated cases over the past days. When we notice them, we stop them immediately," Pursglove said.

He did not state whether the offers were serious or a joke.

"Most started at one buck (dollar) or two," he said, adding: "It's against the federal law to sell or buy a vote."

Ebay has already had to withdraw a number of illegal Internet auction objects from its listings, including an offer from someone for his seat as a witness to an execution.

Yahoo's auction site has also seen similar offers.

According to Yahoo spokeswoman Nancy Gallinghouse, the company was alerted by the Justice Department Thursday that a voter was trying to sell a vote on the site.

US churches battle in court to use Mother Teresa's name

ATLANTA, Aug 19: Two churches -- one big, one small -- wound up in court here in a legal battle over the right to use Mother Teresa's name, reports AFP.

The ugly fight broke out between Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, which was founded by Mother Teresa herself and has congregations all over the world, and the tiny Mother Teresa Parish in the town of Woodstock, Georgia.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta filed a lawsuit in July for the Missionaries of Charity, claiming the small Woodstock church used Mother Teresa's name to raise money and build a congregation.

Strike in Nepal protesting Indian occupation

KATHMANDU, Aug 19: Nine left-wing groups called for a nation-wide general strike on September 18 to protest against Indian occupation of Nepalese territory and the construction of a dam, party sources said today, reports AFP.

The groups demand the withdrawal of Indian troops in northwest Nepal and the dismantling of the Laxmanpur dam, built by India in Uttar Pradesh in 1998 on the Rapti river which has submerged nine Nepalese villages and left 10,000 people homeless, they said in a joint statement.

India has stationed troops in Nepal's Kalapani areas, 415 km northwest of here since the 1962 Indo-China border war.

The communists met on Friday for discussions chaired by United Peoples' Front (UPF)

leader Anik Shreehan, a joint party statement said Saturday.

The groups include the UPF, the Nepal Communist Party-Marxist and Leninist (NCP-ML), Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party, the NCP (United) and others.

They say Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's recent visit to India failed to resolve the dam and Kalapani issues and plan to organise a month-long programme of protests.

The left-wing factions held a one-day general strike on August 3 in the three cities of the Kathmandu valley to demand the demolition of the Laxmanpur 340 kilometre (212 miles) southwest of Kathmandu.

The group also plan to stage anti-India and anti-Koirala demonstrations on September 4.

'Barak either unwilling or unable to make peace'

DOHA, Aug 19: Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara said Friday that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was either unwilling or unable to make peace with Damascus, reports AFP.

The Israeli-Syrian negotiations in the United States at the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000 and the US-Syrian summit in March in Geneva "confirmed that Barak isn't serious, or that he isn't in a position to make peace," Shara told the Qatari satellite television station Al-Jazeera.

The main disagreement is over the extent of an Israeli pullback from the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Shara reiterated Damascus's main demand for the resump-

tion of peace talks with Israel, which were suspended in January. "We want Israel to recognise it should withdraw to the June 4, 1967 line."

However, Israel says it prefers to pull back to the 1923 border rather than the ceasefire line in place June 4, 1967.

Shara also charged that "the US administration is aligned with Israel" and that Barak tried to obtain Syrian concessions "through the US administration." He was referring to the summit of US President Bill Clinton and the late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad in Geneva.

"Since the Geneva summit, we obtained confirmation that the (US) alignment with Israel was total."



US President Bill Clinton (L), First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (C) and their daughter Chelsea attend the Franklin, Essex, Clinton County Democratic Picnic where both the president and first lady delivered an address on Friday in Saranac Lake, New York. The Clintons are spending a few days of vacation in Saranac Lake. — AFP photo

Situation on sunken sub 'more than critical'

British rescuers last hope for trapped Kursk sailors

MOSCOW, Aug 19: The situation onboard the stricken submarine Kursk is "more than critical," a Russian navy spokesman said today, warning that a British rescue mission racing to the scene will encounter the same problems as Russian teams already at the scene, reports AFP.

Damage to an escape hatch on the submarine was preventing underwater rescue vessels from latching onto it to get out survivors among the 118 crew, the top navy spokesman Igor Dygalo told NTV television.

The situation is "more than critical because for the several past few days our rescue vessels have not been able to dock (with the submarine)," he said.

"It is not because we have out of date technology. We are using underwater rescue craft that are more modern than the British mini-submarine. The situation is more than critical because there have been no results."

Apart from sweeping underwater currents that have buffeted rescue craft, the damage sustained by the escape hatch when the doomed submarine crashed into the seabed a week ago was proving an insur-

mountable obstacle, he said. "Many times underwater rescue tried to latch onto (the escape hatch) but they can't seal it properly," said Dygalo.

In an earlier interview late Friday, the spokesman stressed: "We should not look upon the arrival of the British rescuers as a panacea, as they will encounter the same problems."

Rescuers came closer to entering the Kursk on Friday than in any previous attempts.

They succeeded, for the first time, in latching onto an escape hatch on the submarine before losing grip because the hatch was damaged.

It was not immediately clear whether the Russian team linked up to the front escape hatch -- which is known to be damaged -- or the rear one, which had been presumed to be in working order.

Meanwhile, trapped for a week in the dark and cold, the hopes of any survivors among the 118 crew of the ill-fated Kursk submarine rested Saturday on a British rescue mission that could be at the scene by afternoon.

Overnight attempts by Rus-

sian naval rescue teams to dock a mini-submersible with the stricken submarine at the bottom of the Arctic Barents Sea failed, despite improved weather conditions, navy officials said.

President Vladimir Putin rushed back to Moscow amid mounting anger over the failure to end the week-long Russian submarine crisis that has gripped the nation.

But he warned that the chances were slim for a successful rescue of the 118 crew members who have been trapped aboard with dwindling oxygen supplies since August 12 when the Kursk plunged to the bottom of the sea.

All four Russian underwater rescue vessels took turns diving down to the crippled submarine during the entire night, but failed to latch onto the Kursk. ITAR-TASS cited the Northern Fleet headquarters as saying:

Despite more clement conditions, with a moderate swell and north-easterly wind and good surface visibility, sweeping underwater currents buffeted the rescue craft, the ORT public television channel reported.



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ENLISTMENT NOTICE

SUB: ENLISTMENT OF LOCAL & FOREIGN ADVERTISING FIRMS/AGENCIES

Biman Bangladesh Airlines inviting sealed applications on applicant's letterhead pad from the local & foreign advertising firms/agencies for enlistment with Biman (for 3 years at a time) for collection of advertisement to be printed in Biman's stationeries like International & Domestic Tickets and Ticket Folders (Back cover), Boarding Passes, Time Tables, Baggage Declaration forms etc as per following terms & conditions:

TERMS & CONDITIONS

A. For Local Advertising Firms/Agencies:

- Applicants must have their own offices with Telephone, Fax, E-mail etc. Attested photocopies of ownership documents of telephones, office space or rental agreements, (if it is a rented space) must be submitted along with application.
- Attested photocopies of following documents must be attached with applications:
 - Valid trade licence of current fiscal year.
 - Certificate from the competent tax authority stating that current Income Tax Return has been submitted quoting TIN number.
 - Valid VAT registration certificate.
 - Proprietorship/partnership deed/memorandum of association/certificate of incorporation.
 - Bank solvency certificate issued not more than one month before from the last date of submission of the application.
 - Documents of related work experience of last 5 years.
- An entry fee of Tk 2,000.00 (two thousand) only (non-refundable) in the shape of PO/DD favouring 'Bangladesh Biman Corporation' issued from any scheduled bank shall have to be submitted along with the application.

B. FOR FOREIGN ADVERTISING FIRMS/AGENCIES:

- Foreign advertisement firms/agencies may apply directly by paying an entry fee US \$100.00 (US \$ one hundred) only (non-refundable) through Demand Draft, to be issued from a scheduled bank, favouring 'Bangladesh Biman Corporation' or shall pay equivalent amount in cash at any foreign station/office of Biman and original yellow carbon copy of cash receipt need to be submitted along with the application.
- Foreign advertisement firms/agencies may apply through their Bangladeshi agents. In that case, Bangladeshi agents shall fulfil all the terms and conditions mentioned against local advertisement firms/agencies in clause-A 01 to 03 and also following extra documents need to be submitted with their applications.
 - Attested photocopies of valid agency certificate/indenting registration certificate from CCI&E.
 - An authority letter from their foreign principal for such dealing with Biman, mentioning the rate of local agents commission, to be paid in local currency to the local agents by deducting the amount from the total commission bill of their principal.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

- After receipt of applications, a committee will visit the establishment of valid applicants. On satisfactory inspection report a firm will be considered for enlistment.
- This enlistment will be valid for a 3 years term which may be extended on mutual agreement.
- Successful local applicant(s) will have to deposit a security money for Tk 1,00,000.00 (Take one lac) only in 'Bangladesh Biman Corporation' within 15 days from receipt of offer letter.
- Successful foreign applicant(s) also shall deposit a security money for US \$2,000.00 (US \$ two thousand) only in 'Bangladesh Biman Corporation' within 15 days from receipt of offer letter.
- Applications must reach the undersigned on or before 25th September, 2000.
- Biman Bangladesh Airlines reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications without assigning any reason whatsoever.
- For any query or information related to the above enlistment notice, the undersigned may be contacted during office hours on telephone No 00-88-02-9116703 or 9119992.

Mohammed Ali

Manager Printing & Publications

Biman Press Building, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.

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BRIEFLY



Residents clean ashes on a street of Miyakejima Island, south of Tokyo yesterday. A volcano on the Miyakejima Island erupted a new on Friday, sending a mountain of smoke eight km high and forcing over 1,000 residents to find safety.

— AFP photo

Elephant kills Nepali woman:

A wild elephant has trampled a 60-year-old woman to death in southeast Morang district, police said Saturday. AFP reports from Kathmandu.

The woman, whom police identified as Narmaya Rai, and three other women from nearby Pathari village, were foraging in the jungle for firewood and dried leaves when they were attacked by a wild elephant on Friday, police said. The other women managed to escape, but the elephant lifted Rai up with its trunk, slamming her to the ground before trampling her to death, police said.