

India, Pakistan must sign CTBT: Japanese PM

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 : India and Pakistan must sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and resume talks aimed at bringing stability to South Asia, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori said in an interview published today, reports AFP.

"It is extremely important that both India and Pakistan sign the CTBT towards preventing nuclear proliferation," Mori told the Times of India in an interview conducted before he left August 19 on his ongoing South Asian tour.

"I hope to see progress during my visit," Mori, who arrived in India Monday night following a two-day visit to Pakistan.

Japan has cited the signing of the CTBT as a prerequisite for lifting sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan following their tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May 1998.

The sanctions included freezing developmental assistance and halting fresh yen loans.

Regarding any easing or lifting of sanctions, Mori said Japan would continue to carefully watch progress made regarding nuclear non-proliferation, including the signing of the CTBT.

Mori, who will hold talks in New Delhi with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and other Indian leaders Wednesday, said it was also essential for India and Pakistan to resume talks, frozen since a two-month border conflict in Kashmir last year.

"The relationship between India and Pakistan is important to establish peace and stability in the region," Mori said. "I strongly hope that both India and Pakistan will overcome their difficulties and resume dialogue."

Earlier, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori unveiled a series of initiatives for promoting IT cooperation as he

kicked off a three-day India visit today in the southern city of Bangalore.

After touring the headquarters of India's flagship infotech firms, Infosys and Wipro, Mori told a lunch meeting of software executives that Japan would take concrete measures to promote IT exchanges and dialogue, especially in the private sector.

His talks with Vajpayee and other Indian leaders are likely to be dominated by questions of nuclear non-proliferation, with both sides keen to smooth over the rift caused by India's nuclear tests in May 1998.

Tokyo, which was India's largest aid donor, responded to the tests by freezing developmental assistance and halting fresh yen loans. The same sanctions were imposed on Pakistan which followed India's tests with underground blasts of its own.

Japan has cited the signing

of the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a prerequisite for a lifting of the sanctions against both countries.

Regarding the lifting of sanctions, Mori said in the interview conducted before he left on his South Asian tour last weekend, that Japan would continue to carefully watch progress made regarding nuclear non-proliferation, including the signing of the CTBT.

New Delhi is unlikely to give any ground on the CTBT, which it says it will sign only after building a national consensus.

Prior to Mori's arrival, Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh made it clear that India had no intention of appealing for a lifting of the Japanese sanctions.

Despite their differences, both countries hope the non-proliferation issue can be placed on the backburner in order to allow economic relations to prosper.

Moscow seems more concerned with saving face than lives

Russia handled sub disaster the way they did during Soviet era

By Kim Gamel

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Aug 22: World leaders expressed grief over the deaths of 118 sailors aboard a Russian nuclear submarine, and many observers criticised Moscow for seeming more concerned with saving face than saving lives.

Russian rescue teams worked in vain to reach the Kursk, which sank to the bottom of the Barents Sea after an explosion on August 12.

Moscow didn't announce the accident until two days after it happened, then issued conflicting statements and refused foreign aid until Wednesday. By then, confidence that there could be survivors was waning.

"They handled it the way they did in Soviet times, with secrecy and not asking for Western help," said Camilla Crona, a 31-year-old teacher in Stockholm. "They sacrificed (the crew's) lives, and if I were a relative I would have been very mad."

In about a day, a team of four Norwegian and eight British divers managed what Russia's Northern Fleet had failed to do in a week. They reached the Kursk on Monday, 108 meters (350 feet) down in the Arctic Sea, opened its hatch and confirmed that it was completely flooded with water and all aboard were dead.

Russian officials said most of the crew probably died in the explosion. But Europeans harshly denounced the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin for seeming too proud and secretive to ask for help.

The children of the Kursk — children because these young seamen weren't even 20 years



File picture shows the last crew of the submarine 'Kursk' and their sponsors from the Kursk region posing for a picture after their return from a several month-long duty trip in the Northern Atlantic in October 1999.

— AFP photo

HR group slams civilian killings in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, Aug 22 : Human Rights Watch, the US-based rights watchdog, condemned today the series of militant attacks over the weekend on Hindu residents in Indian-administered Kashmir which left 10 people dead, reports AFP.

"The recent attacks on Hindus in Kashmir are a reminder of the continued failure by all parties to protect civilian non-combatants," Sidney Jones, executive director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement released here.

"Just as we have condemned abuses against civilians at the hands of the Indian security forces, we oppose violations of international humanitarian law by militant groups," said Jones.

She said the Geneva Convention "prohibited acts of violence" against civilians who were not taking an active part in hostilities in internal armed conflicts.

Meanwhile, London-based Amnesty International Tuesday also urged the Kashmir government to order "an independent and impartial" enquiry into the massacre of nearly 100 civilians in Kashmir on the night of August 1.

"Under international human rights law, everyone has the right to legal redress for abuses suffered. The state government is obliged to set up an independent and impartial inquiry into the killings," the group said in a letter to Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah.

"The failure to bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice results in a climate in which more and more human rights violations are committed," the rights group added.



An Indian paramilitary soldier guards a street in Srinagar yesterday as two Muslim women with their children walk past. Tensions remained high in the disputed territory as an Indian army brigadier and a lieutenant colonel were killed along with four others when their patrol vehicle was blown up by a landmine on Monday.

— AFP photo

'Arafat still committed to peace with Israel'

RAMALLAH, West Bank, Aug 22 : Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat told US peace envoy Dennis Ross late Monday that he will exert every effort to reach a peace deal with Israel so long as it does not sidestep or delay solutions to any of the key issues in their conflict, including Jerusalem, reports AFP.

"We are fully committed to carrying out, President Arafat told Ambassador Ross, every possible effort to ensure the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement," senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat told reporters after the one-hour Arafat-Ross meeting in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"We stressed our commitment to exerting maximum efforts to ensure a successful conclusion on all issues of the permanent status negotiations without delays or leaving out (anything) or any exceptions

whatsoever," Erakat added.

Erakat said that Arafat and Ross would meet again in "the coming days," but did not provide further details.

An Israeli-Palestinian peace summit broke down last month at the US presidential retreat of Camp David after the two sides were unable reach a deal on the status of Israeli-occupied east Jerusalem, one of the most troublesome of the so-called permanent status issues, which also include the fate of the some 3.7 million Palestinian refugees and the borders of a future Palestinian state.

Ross, who has been in the region since Thursday in a bid to test the temperature of the negotiations held in the wake of the Camp David breakdown, has already met Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

The US troubleshooter said both Israel and the Palestinians were committed to the peace process.

"There is a clear determination to reach an agreement so we will see in fact, in the time ahead, if we can find ways to overcome the differences," Ross said.

Israel and the Palestinians face a looming September 13 deadline for a full peace accord and both sides fear violence could erupt if none is reached.

Arafat is due to meet Jordan's King Abdullah II on Tuesday, following a visit to Egypt earlier Monday.

Egypt and Jordan are the only two countries to have signed peace accords with Israel and both nations contribute to the peace negotiations.

Meanwhile, the United States will not host a second Camp David Middle East peace summit until both Israel and the Palestinians are ready to make the tough decisions necessary for peace, the State Department said Monday.

Threat to kidnap Dilip Kumar

BOMBAY, Aug 22 : The ongoing kidnap drama involving Indian movie star Rajkumar is spawning copycats, with a Muslim party threatening today to kidnap film icon Dilip Kumar to obtain the release of detained activists.

Mohammad Azam, Bombay president of the Muslim League, told AFP that Kumar would be under threat as long as a group of 34 Muslims — detained seven years ago under a tough anti-terrorist law — were kept in jail.

"We want them to be either discharged or at least let out on bail," Azam said.

"If either of these does not happen within two weeks from now, our activists will kidnap Dilip Kumar. We have prepared a hideout for him."

Azam said his party was resorting to abduction threats "out of sheer desperation at the injustices meted out to Muslims" under the lapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act.

Lanka's ruling party suffers humiliating defeat

COLOMBO, Aug 22 : Sri Lanka's ruling party today suffered a humiliating defeat in the country's most important local government body when its chairman was defeated in a no-confidence motion, reports AFP.

The chairman of Western Provincial Council, Sadatissa Sakalasuriya from President Kumaratunga's People's Alliance, lost by 10 votes in the 105-member council which covers the territory of the capital Colombo.

The staff member, who identified himself only as Ari, said the three dead had all suffered bullet wounds, while some of the injured had wounds inflicted by blunt objects as well as arrows.

Leonard Daseem of the Sorong Protestant church earlier said he had received no report of any casualties in the clash at the church.

Child sex tourism in Asia rising sharply

BANGKOK, Aug 22 : The number of foreigners coming to Asia for child sex is rising sharply, due to the economic crisis and poor law enforcement, child sex tourism experts said today, reports AFP.

"We thought the economic crisis would decrease child sex tourism to Asia. But reality is made things worse," said Amihan Abueva, director of nongovernmental organisation End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT)'s office in the Philippines.

As a result of the economic crisis, prices for children have gone down, more children are living on the margins of society, and more foreign paedophiles are streaming into the region, she said at a UN-sponsored regional conference here on child sex tourism.

Despite anti-sex tourism efforts, "thousands of children are exploited and abused in tourism destinations every year," said Christine Beddoe, program director at ECPAT's Australia office.

Police clash with mob in Irian Jaya: 3 killed

JAKARTA, Aug 22 : Three people were killed and seven others injured on Tuesday when police clashed with a mob defending a separatist flag hoisted in front of a church in Sorong city in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, residents said, reports AFP.

The three people from the Emanuel church incident this morning are now in the morgue, while seven others, including several policemen, are being treated at the emergency ward, a staff member at Sorong's state hospital told AFP by telephone.

The staff member, who identified himself only as Ari, said the three dead had all suffered bullet wounds, while some of the injured had wounds inflicted by blunt objects as well as arrows.

Leonard Daseem of the Sorong Protestant church earlier said he had received no report of any casualties in the clash at the church.

Tribal strike paralyses Assam

GUWAHATI, India, Aug 22 : A dawn-to-dusk general strike to protest against a spate of tribal killings paralysed normal life in India's northeastern state of Assam today, reports AFP.

Most shops and businesses, financial and educational institutions remained closed in the state capital Guwahati and across the rest of the region.

"Normal life has come to a standstill with no trains or vehicles plying the roads," said John Ingti Kathar, district magistrate of Kokrajhar district in

western Assam. The strike was called by the influential Bodo Sahitya Sabha (Bodo Literary Association) to protest against the murder of its president, Bineswar Brahma, by separatist militants on Saturday.

"We have called the strike as a mark of protest against the perpetrators of violence. We want to demonstrate that the common people are opposed to all forms of killings and bloodshed," said association official N.R. Boro.

A railway spokesman said

several long distance trains had been either cancelled or rescheduled due to the strike.

Police and paramilitary soldiers stepped up patrols in areas of western Assam dominated by Bodo tribals, in a bid to prevent further violence.

Brahma's murder was one of a series of killings in an ongoing dispute between Bodo factions.

Mohini Basumatary, a Bodo legislator in the Assam state assembly, was shot dead Monday at his residence in Bijnr, 210 km west of Guwahati.

Appointment Notice

Applications are invited from bonafide Bangladesh nationals for appointment to the undermentioned posts at a company under autonomous organisation:

Sl No	Name of Post	Age	Pay scale	Educational qualification & experience
1.	Assistant Geo-Physicist	Maximum 30 years	4300-7740/=	First class post-graduate or 2nd class post-graduate with 2nd class Honours in Geo-Physics/Physics/ Applied Physics/Geology Degree holders in Physics/ Applied Physics/Geology should have Geo-Physics as a subject at graduate or post-graduate level.
2.	Assistant Engineer (Petroleum/Chemical/ Electrical)	-Do-	-Do-	BSc Engineering Degree in related subject or Diploma Engineering in related subject with 5 years experience in related field.
3.	Assistant Manager (Electronics)	-Do-	-Do-	First class post-graduate or 2nd class post-graduate with 2nd class Honours in Applied Physics & Electronics.
4.	Assistant Manager (Statistician)	-Do-	-Do-	First class post-graduate or 2nd class post-graduate with 2nd class Honours in related subject.
5.	Assistant Manager (Economist)	-Do-	-Do-	First class post-graduate or 2nd class post-graduate with 2nd class Honours in related subject.
6.	Trainee Driller	-Do-	During training period consolidated monthly allowance of Tk 5,500/= (five thousand five hundred) will be paid	Diploma in Engineering (Power/Mechanical) on completion of 3-year theoretical & practical training competence will be evaluated through examination and the successful candidates will be given appointment to the post of Assistant Manager (Drilling) at pay scale of Tk 4300-7740/=
7.	Sub-Assistant Engineer/Asst Technical Officer	-Do-	3400-6625/=	Diploma in Engineering (Chemical/Mechanical)
8.	Cataloguer	-Do-	2100-4315/=	Second class Diploma certificate course with 2 years experience in Library & Information Science.

- Application should be submitted stating name of applicant, father's name, permanent & present address, date of birth/age, educational qualification with attested certificate (stating board of education/university, year & division/class) & nationality with 2(two) copies recent passport size attested photo & non-refundable postal order for Tk 100/= (one hundred) only in favour of the advertiser. Such applicants for the post of Assistant Geo-Physicist as have Geo-Physics as a subject at graduate/post-graduate level should apply with certificate from the Departmental Head of the subject.
- Age of applicant should be within 18 to 30 years as on 31-8-2000. However, age limit is relaxable up to 35 years in case of departmental candidates serving in the company & candidates with practical experience in the subject.
- Applicants in service at govt/semi-govt/autonomous organisation must apply through proper channel. Applicant should distinctly subscribe the name post prayed for on the envelope. Application without the requisite information will not be considered.
- As per existing government rules, quota, age limit & other terms & conditions will be followed in matters of appointment. After scrutiny of the applications received, written test of the candidates so considered and viva voce of those successful in the written test will be held and in this case, the date & centre of examination will be informed to the candidates concerned by post.
- In case of sons/daughters of freedom fighters/martyred freedom fighters, maximum age limit is 32 years.
- In case of educational qualification, third division/class will not be acceptable and there should be 1st division in any one examination.
- Last date of submitting application is 30-9-2000. Application should be addressed to "The Advertiser, GPO Box No 2092, Dhaka-1000."

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Coup in Fiji in May Elite soldiers face court martial, treason charge

SUVA, Aug 22: Soldiers from Fiji's elite counter revolution warfare unit could face court martial and ultimately treason charges for their role in the South Pacific country's coup in May, a spokesman said Tuesday, reports AP.

A military board of inquiry sat for the first time Monday to collect evidence about the involvement of troops from the unit in the armed raid on Parliament and the 8-week hostage standoff which led to the ouster of the elected government.

"Once the board has gathered the evidence the military would be able to court martial these soldiers," said military spokesman Maj Howard Polittini. No date for a ruling was given.

The evidence against any soldiers found guilty by the board may then be passed to the Supreme Court, where treason charges could be laid, Polittini said.

Failed businessman George Speight led an armed group into Parliament on May 19, taking dozens of lawmakers hostage. He claimed to be acting on behalf of indigenous Fijians and demanded they be given political supremacy over the ethnic Indian community, which makes up 44 per cent of Fiji's 814,000 population.

Members of the counter revolutionary unit formed the core group of gunmen during the raid.

The two-month standoff ended when Speight agreed to

release his hostages. The military, which imposed martial law after the coup, scrapped the constitution agreed to depose ethnic Indian prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry's government and installed a new government stacked with nationalists.

The military promised Speight and his supporters an amnesty for political crimes associated with the raid in exchange for the hostages' release, but did not uphold the agreement, arresting Speight and hundreds of supporters weeks after the standoff ended.

Speight and a group of advisers are awaiting a treason trial on a prison island off Suva, the capital. Most supporters were charged with unlawful assembly and released on bail.

Scientist finds a watery, un-frozen North Pole

WASHINGTON, Aug 22 : Oceanographer James McCarthy made startling discovery during a recent cruise of the Arctic Ocean: There was no ice at the North Pole, just open water, reports AFP.

Not to worry, says the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA): The polar ice cap cracks and drifts around during the summer.

Still, for Harvard University oceanographer McCarthy, seeing an expanse of water 1.5 kilometers wide (close to one mile) where the pole once firmly stood at the North Pole was disconcerting.

"It was totally unexpected," he told The New York Times on the weekend.

It also came as a surprise for the veteran captain of the Russian ice-breaker that for 10 summers has ventured over the ice pack with passengers like McCarthy.

The ship had to search 10 kilometers (6.5 miles) for an ice pack thick enough for the passengers to walk on.

But despite its unusual and, up to now, undocumented phenomenon has a simple explanation, a NASA scientist said.

"Summer is the melt season. There are cracks in the ice that you would see at the North Pole. So it's interesting but not remarkable that there is open waters there," said Ronald Kwok, a scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

"The reason why one might see open water is because ice is on constant motion and so sometimes ice is thin somewhere and thick elsewhere. We see cracks like that in other parts of the Arctic in the summer," Kwok added.

"When sea ice moves around, some years when the wind pattern is right, you can get very thin ice at the NP," he said.