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## Mori visits India's IT hub

BANGALORE, Aug 22: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited India's information technology hub today and proposed an ambitious initiative for greater collaboration between the two nations, a domestic news agency reported, reports AP.

"I can find good reasons here for the two countries to cooperate in this field," Press Trust of India quoted Mori as saying in an address to information technology executives from across the country.

Mori, who is in India on a three-day visit, proposed the Japan-India IT Promotion and Cooperation Initiative, which he said he would discuss with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi tomorrow. Tokyo would also issue more multiple-entry visas for business visitors for Indian travelers, Mori said.

Japan is India's fourth-largest investor. Trade between the two countries exceeded \$14.5 billion in 1999.

Mori is the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit India in 10 years.

Japan will expand its training programmes to include 1,000 Indian engineers over three years. They'll be taught Japanese business practices and the language, Mori said. A team of Japanese business executives will travel to India in January, he said. On Thursday, software industry conglomerates from both countries were expected to sign an agreement to increase cooperation between private information technology companies.

## Another armed cadre of Shikdar arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 22: Police today arrested another armed cadre of Ershad Shikdar from Skid Ghat.

He was identified as Abdul Aziz. He was wanted in connection with a murder case filed with Khulna Thana in 1996.

Police arrested Aziz in the morning while he along with some of his accomplices were trying to loot a fishing trawler, police said.

## Shahid

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sioner, Shahid is so powerful that no body dares to give his name in FIR with police, a number of people in Banagram area in the city alleged.

They talk about his alleged involvement in murders, terrorism and grabbing land and property.

Some local people circulated a leaflet following the killing of Babbar Rahman Mondal. The leaflet alleged that Shahid is involved in various murders including that of Mondal.

Ironically, there is not a single case against Shahid with any of the thanas in the city.

The leaflet claimed that that Shahid runs a big gang of goons to 'control' Shyanbazar area. He leaves the country while his men kill his 'target', some local people alleged.

Shahid started doing politics during Ershad's rule and earned crores of taka by illegal means including occupying others' property in Old Dhaka. It is said that he was a vegetable vendor prior to his political career.

Shahid is allegedly involved in the killing of a dozen people, whom he considered as his political rivals or harming his interest.

A rickshawpuller was beaten to death in his presence at Shambazar on July 30 for not paying toll to one of his goons, according to earlier press reports.

He was a suspect in the killing of Suman (23) on February 8, in which some DB police personnel were also allegedly involved.

Another person, Michel, was killed allegedly by his armed cadres last year.

Mohammad Hossain, sardar of a CSD godown, was shot dead and money was snatched from him allegedly by Shahid's gunmen. Badal, the main witness in this case, was also asked to death allegedly by his accomplices.

After every murder, he claims that he was not in the country when it took place, some local people said.

He grabbed several plots of land. If any one goes against him, he has to give plenty for this, they alleged.

The lands he grabbed include the land for a proposed graveyard at Jurain for children. He also grabbed 100 kathas of Railway land, several residential plots and lands of temples.

**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**

Published by the Editor of Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 on behalf of Mediaword Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News &amp; Commercial Offices: 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Telephone Numbers: 8124944, 8124955, 8124966, 8125155, GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net

**Intosys**


Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori playing golf at India's premier IT company Infosys during his visit to the IT capital Bangalore yesterday. Mori is in India for a three-day official visit. He will hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today. — AFP photo

## Ctg customs assoc faces split over transfer issue

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Aug 22: The Customs Preventive Service Association (CPSA), a body of officials at Chittagong Customs House, faces a split over a government move for inter-departmental transfer, sources said.

The government has already started the process of inter-departmental transfer of officials of Customs House, excise and vat division, sea customs and land customs. About 20 officials at the Customs House got transfer orders recently and another list is expected soon from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), the sources said.

Earlier, officials at Chittagong Customs House usually got in-house posting.

One faction of the CPSA, led by its president Mohiuddin Ahmed and general secretary Abdul Mannan, support inter-departmental transfer.

But another faction led by its former president Mujibur Rahman and general secretary Md Moniruzzaman oppose the move and want to launch a movement against it.

The faction opposing inter-departmental transfer recently held a requisition meeting of CPSA and announced the name of Mujibur Rahman and Md Moniruzzaman as its president and general secretary respectively. Its leaders also met a minister here on Saturday and sought his intervention to stop the move.

Initiatives by authorities for reconciliation between the groups failed, the sources said.

"But the situation has not yet affected work at Chittagong Customs House", a senior official said.

However, such a large scale transfer has triggered a scare among custom officials.

## Include expatriates in voter list within 10 days: Sylhet Parishad

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 22: The Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad urged the Election Commission and the government for necessary measures to include the Non-resident Bangladeshis in the voter list within 10 days.

The Parishad also threatened to lay siege to the Election Commission Secretariat if its demand was not met.

Advocate Abed Raja president of the Parishad at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club this afternoon also demanded rearranging of the constituencies in the division.

The number of constituencies was reduced to 19 from 21 though the population went up during the last few years, he said.

The organisation would hold rallies and bring out processions to press its 7-point demand including observance of the 82nd birth anniversary of Late General MAG Osmani on September 1 with state honour.

## Russians mourn death of crew Wave of public anger against Putin's govt

MOSCOW, Aug 22: Stunned Russians mourned today for the 118 sailors who died on a submarine as distraught relatives demanded to be taken to the spot in the Barents Sea where the bodies of the crew were still trapped in the wreck, reports AP.

Prayers were offered at Russian churches for the dead and money poured into a special fund set up for the survivors as plans were announced for a national day of mourning.

Television stations repeatedly displayed the names of the dead crewmen and showed old footage of the Kursk sailing out of port, its crew at attention on the deck. Film was accompanied by classical music and mournful folk ballads.

The Russian media today voiced the outrage of many people that their government left it to Norway to announce that all of the sailors aboard the Kursk were dead. President Vladimir Putin's administration has been hit by a wave of public anger over its slow, often bungled handling of the rescue effort.

"No one from the leadership of the country had the bravery to announce the death of the sailors," the Nezavisimaya Gazeta said in a banner headline.

"It's time for questions," the daily Izvestia wrote in a lead editorial. "What if? What if they hadn't lied to us? What if they'd invited foreigners without waiting for five days? What if we'd had the proper technology? It's too late."

Putin said a day of national mourning would be held tomorrow to honour the crew, when flags would be lowered to half mast. He asked all television and radio stations to cancel entertainment programmes Wednesday out of respect for the dead crew. He promised the government would help the families.

## Demolition drive in Uttara

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk demolished part of an unauthorized building owned by mother of film star Moushumi at sector six in Uttara model town in the city yesterday afternoon.

Rajuk officials also demolished two other structures in the same locality.

The Rajuk officials along with police went to Moushumi's residence at Plot No 1, Road 12 in Sector 6 and demolished the sixth floor of the seven-storied building.

The documents of the land reveals that it belonged to Moushumi's mother Shamima Akther.

Rajuk had earlier served a notice to its owner to clarify about the structure of the building on the sixth floor.

Rajuk later demolished boundary walls and some portion of a two-story building at plot 46 Road 13 of Sector 4. Rajuk officials claimed that the building was built without an approved plan but the family members claimed that they have the plan.

Rajuk demolished another unauthorised sixth floor of a building at plot 44 of Sonargaon Janapath Road in sector 9 in Uttara.

## Hannan's son sent to jail

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 22: Son of Awami League leader late M A Hannan arrested last night in connection with an extortion case, was sent to jail today. Earlier he was produced in the court.

Mahfuz was arrested by Panchlaish police at 9 last night from a nursery near his residence on charge of demanding Tk 20 lakh as toll from a businessman.

Police sources said Mahfuz called Md Iqbal to his residence on the pretext of holding business talks with him on August 20.

Upon arrival, Iqbal, also the chairman of Chikandandi union under Hathazari thana, was kept hostage at gunpoint. Mahfuz was aided by six others, police said.

Mahfuz demanded Tk 20 lakh from Iqbal. Iqbal gave a cheque for Tk two lakh promising the rest of the amount later and got released.

Iqbal informed the police and filed a case against Mahfuz and others under PSA with Panchlaish thana yesterday.

Panchlaish police raided the nursery last night and arrested Mahfuz.

## WHO: Dengue

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die, according to a WHO report.

Every year, around 50 million people are infected with dengue virus and 2500 million -- two fifths of the world's population -- are at risk of infection. Not only the number of cases are increasing as the disease is spreading to new areas, but explosive outbreaks are also occurring, said the report on "Dengue and Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever".

Before 1970, only nine countries had experienced dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) epidemic, a number which had increased four fold by 1995.

In 1998, there were more than 616,000 cases of dengue infection, mostly children under 15. In the Americas, Of the total, 11,000 were cases of DHF.

In Brazil, about 475,000 cases of dengue infection were reported in 1998, more than the total number of cases in the continent in the previous year.

The WHO report said, dengue infection is most serious in south-east and western Pacific regions.

## Two transmission lines trip Power supply in western region, Dhaka disrupted

By Staff Correspondent

Power supply in the western part of the country and greater Dhaka was disrupted for several hours as two high voltage 230 KV transmission lines tripped one after another yesterday.

The East-West (EW) Interconnector that links Dhaka-Chittagong-Sylhet power system with Barisal-Dinajpur system tripped at around 12-30 pm due to technical problems. As a result, power supply to the western region was disrupted.

When the Power Development Board (PDB) technicians attempted to restore the interconnector at around 1 pm, the 230 KV distribution system at Ghorashal suddenly tripped causing major power disruption.

"All major supply lines from Ghorashal (to the western part

of the country) tripped due to multiple technical faults," said an official of the National Load Dispatch Centre.

Consequently some power plants including two 210 MW Ghorashal units (3 and 6) tripped.

"We faced some difficulties in restoring the supply lines due to lack of gas pressure in one of the compressors at Ghorashal. But we were able to restore the system one by one after nearly two hours," he added.

The incident, however, did not affect the eastern part of the country including Comilla, Chandra and Chittagong.

In Dhaka, some small scale power distribution lines remained active during the trouble hours in the sultry afternoon. Power supply was not disrupted in Baily Road,

Secretariat, Dhanmondi, Old Dhaka and some other areas.

In the western region some small power plants continued to operate independently following the accident. However, they later tripped.

Typically, it takes less than an hour to resume power supply following such a trip. But the compressor of a circuit breaker in Ghorashal developed a leakage yesterday, taking some time to repair and resume the supply.

Both the Ghorashal sixth and third units resumed operation last night," said a PDB source.

Yesterday's projected demand for power was around 2650 MW, about 200 MW less than on normal working day. Since yesterday was a hot day, the demand might have had shot up a bit.

## Three more die in Habiganj cylinder blast

HABIGANJ, Aug 22: Three more people who were injured in Monday's gas cylinder blast died today. With this the death toll rose to seven, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said the three men who died at Sylhet Medical College Hospital today are: Shilpi, 7, of Sultans village and Kismat Ali, 40, and Shamim, 10, of Auspara village.

Four people were killed and some 50 injured in the explosion while ballooning fancy balloons from a gas cylinder at an Urs Mahfil at Sultans village in the Sadar upazila Monday afternoon.

Officials of the district administration visited the spot today. Deputy Commissioner Abdul Jalil assured financial assistance to the families of the victims -- killed and injured.

## 3 crew of barge arrested

BAGERHAT, Aug 22: Police Monday arrested three crewmembers of a barge from Mongla in connection with a mishap, reports UNB.

Police said a sea coaster, Al-Samit, capsized in a river in Jessore Monday morning while barge Al-Masha hit it while unloading clinkers. Later, the crewmembers of Al-Masha fled the scene with their vessel.

Upon a complaint filed by the coaster owner, police arrested Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammad Baten and Adiruzzaman.

## Edn minister to hold talks with striking teachers today

By Staff Correspondent

Education Minister A S H K Sadik will have a meeting today with the striking teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions.

Sources concerned said leaders of all the three bodies teachers and employees would join the meeting aimed at ending their strike for over 40 days.

Teachers belonging to Bangladesh Federation of Teachers Association (BFTA), the major body, started the strike on July 10 demanding payment of 100 per cent salaries from the public exchequer, scope of promotion and service rules for them.

Bangladesh Shikshak Samity, following a discussion with the education minister on Monday, requested him to convene a meeting.

"The meeting today would not fully resolve the teachers' problems as the government is willing to solve those as per its formula," a leader of the striking teachers said, preferring anonymity.

The authorities on Monday agreed to give 100 per cent salaries of the teachers from the public exchequer on two conditions.

Bangladesh Teachers Action Coordination Committee (BTACC), a forum of five bodies of teachers, is however willing

to continue the agitation programme as the government would not meet all the demands of the teachers at today's meeting, one of its leaders said.

"We can't accept the government proposals as it is conditional," he said.

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## Cinema shooting spot torched at Rajendrapur

GAZIPUR, Aug 22: Local people torched a cinema shooting spot in Monipur area at Rajendrapur under Sadar upazila today after clash with the cinema workers, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said local youths became angry and clashed with the cinema workers at about 3:30pm as they were prevented from witnessing the shooting.

Later, the youths along with local people set the shooting spot on fire as cinema workers allegedly assaulted a teacher of Monipur High School, who went there to resolve the conflict.

At least seven people were injured when they chased each other.

Firefighters from the district headquarters went to the spot and extinguished fire.



Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Dal (BNP) brought out a torch procession in the city yesterday in support of today's half-day hartal. The opposition alliance has called the countrywide shutdown protesting murder of BNP city unit leader Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal on Sunday. — Star photo

## Hezbul hopes to resume ceasefire, peace talks

SRINAGAR, Aug 22: The Kashmiri militant group Hezbul Mujahideen hopes it can resume its ceasefire within two months and expects peace talks with the Indian government to start again, a local news service said today, reports Reuters.

"I hope that the ceasefire will take place in the next two months because of the efforts at an international level to break the deadlock," Hezbul Commander-in-Chief Abdul Majid Dar told Current News Service in an interview.

"To end the deadlock, people at the international level are active and the talks between Hezbul Mujahideen and the

Indian authorities will start again," he added.

Hezbul Mujahideen, a pro-Pakistan outfit whose cadres account for half of roughly 3,000 militants active in Indian-administered Kashmir, declared a ceasefire on July 24 and sought talks with the Indian government.

The group called off its first-ever truce 15 days later after a single round of talks with Indian government officials, citing New Delhi's refusal to engage with arch-rival Pakistan on the future of the bitterly disputed Himalayan territory.

Dar said only tripartite dialogue could resolve the Kashmir

problem, and added that Hezbul Mujahideen would accept any solution emerging from talks on such a basis, whether it is in favour of India or Pakistan.

"He said that without the participation of Pakistan there is no solution possible for the Kashmir problem because India is occupying one part and another part is occupied by Pakistan," the news service said.

India controls about 45 per cent of the territory comprising the regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Pakistan holds just over a third of the territory and China controls the remainder.

## Uma Bharati resigns from BJP, Lok Sabha

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Firebrand BJP leader Uma Bharati has sent in her resignation from Lok Sabha, lower house of Indian Parliament, and the party's policy-making body National Executive.

In a letter to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Bharati, who belongs to backward caste, has said she will however remain an ordinary member of BJP.

The action by Bharati, who won five consecutive parliamentary elections from the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh at present ruled by Sonia Gandhi-led Congress, did not come as a surprise.

She had in the past made known her unhappiness with the party leadership, especially in Madhya Pradesh, for not sharing her aggressive approach against Madhya Pradesh government on the issue of dismissal of casual employees of state government recently. Bharati had waged a virtual single-handed battle for the employees and had even gone on a fast to press her demand for their reinstatement.

Uma Bharati became a Minister of State for Human Resource Development when Vajpayee became Prime Minister after general elections in 1998. But she was reportedly not given enough room to function in that ministry which was headed by a Cabinet Minister of her own party.

She was again inducted in Vajpayee government in November last year but this time was given the portfolio of tourism in the rank of minister of state at a time when she reportedly had expected her elevation to cabinet rank.

She resigned from Vajpayee ministry in May this year on the plea of devoting more time to strengthen BJP organizationally. Bharati, along with Sadhvi Ritambhara, was among the firebrand BJP leaders who were in the forefront of the movement for mobilizing support for Ram Janambhoomi temple. She is known for her oratory.

## Indian power minister's condition deteriorates

NEW DELHI, Aug 22: Indian Power Minister Rangarajan Kumaramangalam's condition deteriorated today and he remained in critical condition in hospital, a week after slipping into a semi-coma, reports AFP.

The prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi said in a medical bulletin that the 48-year-old minister was still on an artificial respirator.

The minister was hospitalised with a dangerously high fever on August 18, and his condition deteriorated rapidly, resulting in what doctors described as multi-organ failure.

Kumaramangalam, who has had mild fever for two months, is reportedly suffering from leukaemia and his blood count has fallen to an alarming level, according to medical sources.

## Gunfight leaves 20 hurt in Barisal

BARISAL, Aug 22: At least 20 people were injured in a gunfight between two rival groups at Nandir Bazar in Muladi upazila today, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said the armed clash began at about 4pm between the supporters of Quamrul group and Kabir group over possession of a trawler seized from a gang of pirates.

"During the clash, both the groups used lethal weapons and firearms," police said. Over 50 shots were fired and bombs exploded, during the clash that lasted over two hours.

Of the injured, Nipu, 11, Kabir, 40, and Aklima were admitted to hospital.

A tense situation is prevailing in Nandir Bazar area. Police were deployed there to avert further clash.

## Heroin seized in Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Aug 22: Police seized 90 packets of heroin worth about Tk 1 lakh from Kashinathpur area in the town in the early hours today.

Acting on a tip-off, a DB police squad raided the area and recovered the heroin. Two youngsters were arrested in this connection.

The arrested were identified as Saifuzzaman, 32, and Kabir Hossain, 22. A case was lodged with Magura thana.