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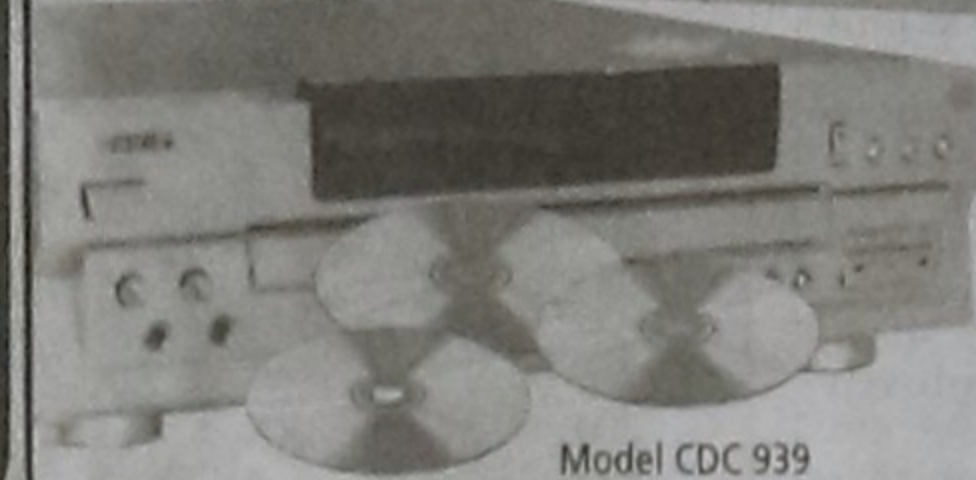
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Times of India says Dhaka's demand for apology from Pakistan timely

NEW DELHI, Sept 16: A leading Indian daily described Sheikh Hasina's demand for an apology from Pakistan for the genocide in 1971 as timely when the UN is negotiating for trial of other war criminals, reports UNB.

"Her demand is in tune with the spirit of the times. The UN is negotiating to bring members of the Pol Pot clique in Cambodia to an international trial for atrocities committed in 70s - just a few years after the Bangladesh War," said Times of India.

The daily in an editorial titled "Hasina's Nightmare" on Friday also referred to war crimes in Bosnia, Burundi and Sierra Leone, and the UN process of holding trial for war crimes in those countries.

It said realisation of Prime Minister's demand is relevant because in Bangladesh, pro-Pakistan "jehadi" elements are still active and they continue to oppose the liberationists who are represented by the Awami Party.

As Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf suggested to forget the past, the leading Indian daily called it

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US, India fail to overcome differences on N-issues

WASHINGTON, Sept 16: President Bill Clinton and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, celebrating a new era in US-Indian relations, agreed on a broad expansion of cooperative programmes but apparently fell short of overcoming thorny differences on nuclear issues, reports AP.

"It's inconceivable to me that we can build the kind of world we want over the next 10 to 20 years unless there is a very strong partnership between the United States and India," Clinton said yesterday during a photo session in the Oval Office with Vajpayee.

Vajpayee praised the progress in US-Indian relations, particularly economic deals, but still he refused to budge on nuclear issues.

His meeting with Clinton yesterday "reflects the considerable progress made between the two countries even within six months," Vajpayee said. In March, Clinton visited India and laid the groundwork for the White House session.

The visiting prime minister met with US and Indian business leaders last night and dis-

cussed recent and planned changes in Indian regulations to privatise state utilities and other industries. He was there to woo foreign investment to help India gain the high-tech infrastructure it needs to expand its economy.

At the same time, he expressed awe at US economic power. "The continued US prosperity is almost a miracle," he said, adding that it has "inspired India."

At a welcoming ceremony on the White House South Lawn, Vajpayee said: "This is a time of new hope and new opportunities in Indo-American ties."

Agreements were announced on enhancing cooperation on such issues as trade, investment, counterterrorism, counterdrug issues, energy and the environment, among others.

Disagreements over nuclear issues remained, but as the day unfolded a strong sense emerged of a new comfort level between the two countries and a perception that problems can be dealt with in a trusting atmosphere.

The chief bilateral problem is India's refusal so far to sign the

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which has yet to take effect. The United States has signed the nuclear pact, but the Senate has refused to ratify it. The Clinton administration has tried to persuade India to sign and ratify regardless of what this country does, arguing that it would be in India's national interest.

India has said it would not stand in the way of the treaty's implementation, indicating that once major powers such as the United States and China ratify it, India will be prepared to follow.

In the meantime, India has vowed to maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing, which drew praise from Clinton at the welcoming ceremony.

Vajpayee, 75, has been hobbled by a bad knee throughout his US visit. Departing from custom, he remained seated as Clinton spoke to the gathering, and sat during the meeting with business leaders. A planned mid-afternoon news conference was canceled because Vajpayee complained of exhaustion, White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said.



US President Bill Clinton (R) and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee review US troops in Washington, DC on Friday. Vajpayee is on his first official visit to US. - Star photo

NSI interrogates gunman

KHAGRACHHARI, Sept 16: A high-profile intelligence team today interrogated Abul Kalam Azad who had held 14 people hostage at the local DC's office for 25 hours, reports UNB.

Sources said the four-member team headed by NSI director Maksudul Haq talked interrogated Azad at a special cell of local jail for about an hour, but did not get any significant information.

Azad reportedly told the special interrogation team from Dhaka that he had conducted the operation for the sake of greater interest of the country and the people, not for his own interest.

The team members visited the room at the DC's office where the hostage drama was staged and talked to the DC, SP and three army majors who were also among the hostages of the desperate gunman on Monday.

Villagers keep 4 policemen confined for taking bribe

BAGERHAT, Sept 16: Villagers kept four policemen confined for about four hours on Friday night at village Mogra in Sadar upazila for releasing two accused allegedly after taking bribe, reports UNB.

The villagers alleged that one ASI and three constables went to the village to arrest two accused in a woman repression case, but they took bribe from the accused and set them free.

The villagers encircled the law enforcers and confined them to a house. They however, later released them after intervention by Additional Police Super M Shamsuddin.

When contacted, Sadar thana police denied the allegation and said the four policemen went to the village to arrest two fugitives, but they did not take bribe from them.

Lankan minister, 13 others killed in chopper crash

COLOMBO, Sept 16: Sri Lanka's Ports Minister MHM Ashraff was killed in a helicopter crash today together with all 13 others on board, a police official told AP.

Ashraff, 52, had boarded the Sri Lankan air force Mi-17 transport helicopter at a police headquarters in Colombo to travel to his home constituency of Ampara in the east of the country.

Details on page 5

2 electrocuted in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Sept 16: Two day-labourers were electrocuted while cutting a branch of a mango tree at Kalkicharanpur village under Jhenidah sadar thana on Friday evening.

The dead were identified as Julhas, 35, and Abdus Sabur, 33, of village Badanpur village under the same thana.

Witnesses said, both of them died on the spot after coming in contact with a live electric wire entangled with the branch.

A different JS session in last 14 months

By Nazmul Ashraf

The just-concluded session of the Jatiya Sangsad was different from all the five others held in the last 14 months that were characterised by the absence of mainstream opposition lawmakers.

Dissident BNP lawmaker Akhteruzzaman made all the difference by giving the Treasury Bench a tough time more often than not by virtue of his unrelenting questions and scathing criticisms.

The Major-turned-politician joined the 19th session defying the decision of his party to boycott the parliament and risking expulsion for the fifth time. His noisy presence on five of the seven working days gave the

House a touch of the usual storm that had for so long been missing.

The rebel opposition lawmaker, better known for his bluntness, brought life back into the mundane proceedings as he fought a lone battle against the Treasury Bench enjoying quiet support from a faction of Jatiya Party. And to some extent he did succeed.

Akhter's participation in the House proceedings once again proved that the government cannot go arbitrarily if there is an effective opposition in the parliament in view of the fact that his dogged insistence on the government's accountability actually exposed some wrong-

doings of the government and a procedural error by the Speaker.

Taking advantage of the Chair's generosity, Akhter spoke several times everyday he joined the session and tried to generate heat in the House. In fact, his fiery speeches, shouts and other forms of protests against the role of the Speaker and the ruling party made a lot of sense.

Both the Speaker and the ruling party were embarrassed when the rebel MP protested the procedural mistake in moving three private members' bills in the House on the concluding day of the session on

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Khaleda won't hesitate to sell country for profit: PM

FATULLAH, Sept 16: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the defeated forces who got united to topple her government "will never win," reports UNB.

"If they win, they will plunder again the public money and sell out the country ignoring people's interest," she told a mammoth public meeting outside the newlybuilt Khan Shaheb Osman Ali National Cricket Stadium.

The first phase of the stadium has been completed to accommodate 30,000 people. On completion of the entire project, it will be the biggest stadium of the country with a capacity of 80,000.

Referring to the statement of Khaleda Zia about the selling of gas, Hasina said Khaleda agrees to sell gas if she gets profit. "She will not hesitate

even to sell the country if she gets profits. If Khaleda Zia goes to power she will sell out the country to India," she added.

Hasina said those who brought independence at the cost of blood could never sell out the country.

The PM said the transit agreement was signed during the rule of General Zia. "So it is clear who will sell out the country's interest."

Referring to the unity of Khaleda and Ershad, she said one corrupt is consoling the other "but the trial of the cor-

rupt will certainly be held on this soil."

The court has given verdict against Ershad for corruption while corruption case has been filed against Khaleda, she said adding the people will not forgive the corrupt.

The huge open space outside the stadium and some five kilometres of nearby roads were filled with people, who came to join the meeting with posters, banners and festoons.

The Prime Minister requested the people of Narayanganj to vote for Awami League for a second term in office.

The meeting, presided over by District Awami League President Prof Nazma Rahman, was addressed by Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, State Minister for Sports Obaidul

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5 killed, 26 hurt in bus accident

FENI, Sept 16: At least five people were killed and 26 injured when two buses collided at Basantapur on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at 2 pm today, reports UNB.

The mishap occurred at 25km north of Feni when a Dhaka-bound bus from Luxmi-pur collided with a Chittagong-bound bus from Chandpur, resulting in death of four people on the spot.

Survivors said rash driving was cause of the accident.

Sub-Inspector Amandowla of Chowddagram thana said an army officer injured in the accident died on way to the Combined Military Hospital in Comilla.

The dead were identified as Sepoy Mohammad Gamruzzaman, 30, of Chittagong 18 artillery field regiment, Sepoy Abul Hashem, 30, of BDR, Akbar Hossain Chowdhury, 80, of Faridganj and Abdul Mannan Talukdar, 70, of Patuakhali. Identity of the other victim could not be ascertained.

Of the injured, nine were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital. Their condition was stated to be critical. Others were taken to different hospitals and clinics.

The damaged buses were seized by police. Both the drivers fled the scene.

Production at AJM suspended for hours

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, Sept 16: Production at Adamjee Jute Mills was suspended today for hours as the workers of AJM were taken to the meeting of Prime Minister at Fatullah.

The mill incurs a loss of Tk 3 crore if production remains suspended for an hour. The production suspended at 12-20 pm did not resume till filing of this report at 8:30 pm.

Dhaka rejects

From page 1

Pakistani ruler. The contents of the letter were not revealed fully but Sami said at a pre-departure press conference that it "would share her (Hasina's) perceptions and concerns regarding regional peace and stability and need for enhancing cooperation."

Bangladesh had taken an initiative to expand regional cooperation by revitalising SAARC and sent the Foreign Secretary to Islamabad and earlier to Delhi on a two-day visit from August 7, carrying a letter to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

As early as in the third week of August, it was known in diplomatic circles that General Pervez Musharraf had sought a meeting with Sheikh Hasina on the sidelines of the UN Millennium Summit. The time for Hasina's bilateral meetings with Musharraf and Vajpayee separately were fixed on September 8.

The meeting with the Indian Prime Minister took place but that with the Pakistani ruler was not held as he did not turn up at the scheduled time at the UN venue.

A day earlier on September 7, Hasina in her speech at the Security Council called for action against unconstitutional capture of power by military regimes.

On her return home from New York, the Prime Minister at a press conference on September 12 bitterly criticised Pakistan and said Islamabad should apologise for the atrocities committed by its army in Bangladesh during the War of Independence in 1971. She also said Pakistan should publish full text of Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report so that the atrocities by the Pakistani army could be known.

Responding to a question on the Pakistani ruler's failure to turn up for the scheduled bilateral meeting, Hasina said, "I do not know why Pervez Musharraf took my words personally. I spoke of my principle and belief and did not name any body."

Who runs Biman

From page 1

But former Biman Managing Director Abdul Muveed Chowdhury said the fleet planning committee acts under directives from board.

Mohsin said prior to procurement of the F-28s, technical experts verified the condition of the aircraft before going for the purchase.

But Bhiuiyan alleged that the engineers were asked to certify regardless of the conditions of the planes.

There were also debates over the grounding of the ATPs for the management and high-ups were blamed. The association leaders wanted to know why action was not taken against the managing director for grounding the aircraft.

The State Minister for Civil Aviation Syed Ashraf Islam intervened at this stage. He said the parliamentary committee was investigating the matter. The committee is also probing purchase of wheels for the grounded ATPs, he said.



Another set of gruesome murders took place in the city yesterday. The mutilated bodies of the two victims were recovered from the city's Sutrapur area. Pictures (from left to right) show the inconsolable mother (extreme L) of Mohsin, one of the victims, police arresting one of the suspects (middle) while scores of people thronged the police station at Sutrapur to look for their missing ones when they heard of the recovery of two bodies. - Star photos

Myanmar opposition vows to draft national constitution

YANGON, Sept 16: Myanmar's democratic opposition declared today it would draft a national constitution, a sign that a recent official crackdown against the party has not dented its ambitions to end military rule, reports AP.

Two hundred members of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy held a meeting at the party's Yangon headquarters, two days after authorities eased restrictions against NLD leaders.

Party leaders had been confined to their homes for two weeks after Suu Kyi tried to travel outside Yangon on party work but was denied the right to do so.

At the meeting, the party commemorated the second anniversary of its Committee Representing People's Parliament, a proxy parliament formed as a direct challenge to the ruling

military government, which has refused to honour the NLD's victory in a 1990 general election.

Military authorities had earlier blocked the road to the NLD office in downtown Yangon, but they allowed the meeting to take place, attended by 200

12 BCL activists expelled in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Sept 16: Twelve pro-government Chhittara League activists of the district unit have been expelled for violating party discipline and various other charges, reports UNB.

The action was taken as they were found involved in drug addiction, robbery, grabbing property and launching an armed attack that left 6 party activists injured here on Wednesday.

A press release signed by district BCL president Arifur Rahman Manik and general secretary Ashraf Hossain Chowdhury today (Saturday) said the decision was taken in an emergency meeting on Friday.

party members and diplomats. Reporters were barred from entering.

The NLD passed three resolutions at Saturday's meeting: to demand the government to release all political prisoners; to maintain the proxy parliament until a proper parliament is convened; and to draft a national constitution.

According to 1996 law, drafting a charter without the government's approval could result in a 5 to 20-year prison sentence.

A state-organised national convention was set up seven years ago but was boycotted by the NLD on the grounds it was dominated by the regime. It has not met for four years and has not produced a constitution.

With the support of the people and with support from countries who support democracy, a democratic government will certainly emerge," a declaration released by the CRPP said today.

At the meeting, Suu Kyi announced she would take over as CRPP secretary and its representative for ethnic affairs, replacing Aye Thaw Aung, who was arrested and sentenced to 21 years in prison in June for violating a publication law and an emergency law.

AL polls conducting committee meets

Awami League Election Conducting Committee held a preparatory meeting in the city yesterday with its coordinator Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria in the chair, reports UNB.

Advocate Gazul Haque, Engineer Mazharul Islam, Muzafar Hossain Paltu, Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, Moinam Sarker, Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin, Barrister Amirul Islam, Prof. Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir, Sultan Mohammed Sharif, Ambassador Mizanur Rahman and Enamul Haque Khasru attended the meeting.

Sylhet clash

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Additional police were deployed in the market areas today to avoid further clash, police said.

Police said no case was filed in this connection. But 18-people were arrested so far for their alleged involvement in yesterday's clashes.

About 50 people were injured in series of clashes yesterday. Police lobbed three tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. Of the injured, a restaurant owner was sent to the CMH, Dhaka last night in a critical with head injuries while some others were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital and private clinics.



Some rights at last! Hermaphrodites (Hijras) celebrate with traditional dances at the end of their first ever national conference held yesterday in Dhamrai. The long neglected section of the society was given franchise this year. - Star photo

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