

## Disease threat looms in flood-hit West Bengal

NARSINGHPUR, India, Sept 29: Outbreaks of water-borne diseases were expected to increase among the millions of people in eastern India affected by the worst flooding in 22 years, officials and relief workers said today, reports Reuters.

Conditions were dire and some five million people were still marooned even though the floods waters, which have killed an estimated 600 people, were receding, they said.

"The situation is still quite critical. It's a huge disaster," Fernando Soares, a spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies told Reuters.

Vast areas remained cut off, making it difficult for volunteers to get relief supplies to victims, Soares said.

Army officials said that although water had receded from most main roads in worst hit West

Bengal state, the flooding had caused severe damage, particularly in Calcutta, northern parts of the state, as well as in neighbouring countries.

Heavy flows in the Ganges and 56 other rivers sweeping into Bangladesh from India have swamped 11 western districts of that country.

The deluge has affected 17 million people, of whom more than five million were still marooned by vast lakes of water on Thursday.

Government officials have already distributed 100,000 halogen tablets used to treat contaminated water, and medical teams have been sent to distant areas.

A military official supervising relief operations said outbreaks of water borne diseases were expected to surge.

"Usually the situation becomes a lot more critical after the water recedes and we fear that in the

coming days there could be an outbreak of water borne diseases," said Lieutenant Colonel EJSanchis.

The suffering will continue for a long time. It is already a very poor area and many people have lost all their belongings.

West Bengal state has appealed to the federal government in New Delhi for 9.62 billion rupees (\$209.6 million), but the amount was expected to cover less than a third of the cost of damage to buildings, infrastructure and crops.

In the worst hit district of Murshidabad, 40 metre (yard) stretches of road on both sides of a bridge had been washed away, Sanchis said.

While many areas were now accessible, army boats had to travel 20 km (12 miles) to distribute food and medicines to people in some areas, such as Narsinghpur, 50 km (30 miles) northeast of Calcutta, he said.



Former South African President Nelson Mandela (R) and British Prime Minister Tony Blair walk onto the stage before Mandela addresses the delegates on the final day of the Labour Party annual conference in Brighton on Thursday. —AFP photo

## KSA turns back Yemeni jet bound for Baghdad

Plane takes off again for Iraq

SANAA, Sept 29: Saudi Arabia refused to allow a Yemeni plane headed for sanctions-hit Iraq to overfly its territory without UN authorisation today, forcing the aircraft to turn back to Sanaa, officials said, reports AFP.

"The plane returned to Sanaa 30 minutes after take-off because the Saudi authorities refused the overflight of its territory without a green light from the UN sanctions committee," a Yemeni official said.

"We are now waiting for authorisation from Saudi authorities for the plane to depart," he said, asking not to be named.

There was no immediate Saudi comment on the incident.

The Yemeni flight, with Foreign Minister Abdel Qader Bajammal on board, was to be the second flight in three days from an Arab

country, after more than 10 years of UN sanctions against Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait.

Earlier a Yemeni plane left Sanaa for Baghdad, the second flight in three days from an Arab country after more than 10 years of sanctions against Iraq, an official Yemeni source said.

The delegation on the flight is led by Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdel Qader Bajammal, the source said.

The plane, belonging to the national carrier Yemenia, is carrying about 100 people "to give humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people," a Yemeni official told AFP, asking not to be named.

"The Yemeni delegation is to hand over a cargo of medicines to the Iraqi people, and try to alleviate their sufferings" caused by the sanctions, the source said.

Meanwhile, a Yemeni plane bound for sanctions-hit Iraq took off for a second time on Friday after securing Saudi authorisation for the flight, an AFP correspondent at the airport reported.

Saudi Arabia earlier refused to allow the plane to overfly its territory without UN authorisation, forcing the aircraft to turn back to Sanaa, Yemeni officials said.

An airport official said the plane would make a brief stopover in Amman, apparently to avoid crossing a "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq bordering Saudi Arabia that is enforced by the United States and Britain.

The plane took off again immediately after the captain received authorisation from Saudi aviation authorities to fly over the territory of Saudi Arabia," he said.

## China condemns US arms sales to Taiwan

BEIJING, Sept 29: China today condemned new US arms sales to Taiwan, warning that Washington would bear unspecified consequences for defying Beijing, reports AP.

"The Chinese side urges the US to... abandon the planned arms sales to Taiwan," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said.

"Otherwise, the US side should bear the serious consequences arising therefrom," he said in a statement read on state television and carried by the official Xinhua News Agency.

China claims Taiwan as a breakaway province to be recovered by force if necessary and hotly objects to all weapons sales to the island. The sides split amid a civil war in 1949 and have no official contact despite burgeoning trade and investment links.

## Vietnam steps up evacuation efforts as flood toll rises

HANOI, Sept 29: The Vietnamese army stepped up efforts to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people hanging on in flooded areas of the Mekong Delta today as the death toll rose relentlessly even as water levels began to recede, reports AFP.

A total of 159 people, 137 of them children, have died in the floods, the worst to hit the region in nearly 40 years, provincial officials said.

And with large areas expected to remain under water for weeks to come, officials fear many more will lose their lives unless the estimated 400,000 people in stricken areas are swiftly moved to higher ground.

The Vietnamese army deployed another twenty rescue boats to speed up the evacuation effort Friday and a further twenty were expected to arrive in the region in the next few days.

A total of 31,000 families have been moved to higher ground, but regional relief officials say another 56,000 are surviving on makeshift platforms above their homes, eking out a subsistence from fishing.

"The evacuation of stranded families is now our top priority in order to limit casualties in a situation in which a vast area is likely to remain under water for weeks to come," said Nguyen Thanh Tuan, assistant disaster relief director in Ken Giang province.

"Water levels have begun falling this week but the death toll is still rising because many peasant families have remained in flooded areas to fish, their sole remaining means of sustenance."

In the provinces of An Giang and Dong Thap alone, 106 corpses, 95 of them children, have been recovered.

## Captain, officers of Greek ferry charged with manslaughter

ATHENS, Sept 29: The captain and four officers of a Greek ferry which sank this week killing at least 64 people have been charged with multiple counts of manslaughter, a prosecution source said today, reports AFP.

The Express Samena, which was carrying 511 people, sank Tuesday after hitting a rock off the island of Paros in the Aegean Sea.

A number of passengers have alleged that crew members were watching a football match on television when the ship ran aground.

Among a long list of charges, Captain Vassilis Yannakis was also charged with failing to fulfil his duty and causing a shipwreck, the prosecution source added.

Yannakis, his second-in com-

mand Anastassios Psycholios, and three other officers are being held in Syros, the main island of the Cyclades archipelago.

Greek authorities vowed Thursday to severely punish those responsible for the disaster, saying there would be no attempt to cover up negligence or protect big interests.

"I will ensure that light is shed and that those responsible be punished with the utmost severity, however high-placed they may be," said the minister responsible for the merchant marine Christos Papoutsis.

"The penalties will be very severe and there will be no attempt at a cover-up," he said, adding that a thorough investigation will be carried out "even if it affects big interests."

## Court rejects Sharif's plea to summon Musharraf

KARACHI, Sept 29: A Pakistani court today dismissed ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif's plea to summon military ruler General Pervez Musharraf in an appeal against his conviction for hijacking and terrorism, reports AFP.

Syed Saeed Ashad, Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court, said the application, moved by Sharif's lawyer Azizullah Sheikh during the main appeal, was drafted in bad faith to delay the proceedings.

"This application has not been filed with bonafide intention but with a view to obtain undue and uncalled for advantage which cannot be permitted. Accordingly the application stands dismissed," the judge observed.

Sheikh had requested

Musharraf attend court "in the interest of justice" to testify that his plane was hijacked on the night of the October 12 coup last year.

"Musharraf became an important witness in this case after the prosecution described his first (post-coup) address to the nation as a case against Sharif," Sheikh had said.

To a request that other generals be questioned, the court observed that additional witnesses could not be entertained at this stage.

"We are satisfied beyond any doubt that the appellant has failed to make out a case for production of additional evidence of the witnesses in question," the court said.

Public prosecutor Barrister

Zahoorul Haq had opposed the application as "a belated attempt from the defence." The defence could have called Musharraf in the trial court, he said.

Sharif was convicted for life by anti-terrorism court on April 6 for trying to stop a jet carrying Musharraf and 198 passengers from landing in Pakistan on October 12.

The court has fixed October 4 to hear a plea by the prosecution that Sharif receive the death sentence -- the maximum punishment for an offence under the country's anti-terrorism law.

The state has also challenged the acquittals of six co-accused, including Sharif's brother Shahbaz for which a hearing date has not yet been set.

## Putin to boost defence ties during India visit

MOSCOW, Sept 29: President Vladimir Putin flies to New Delhi on Monday at the start of a three-day visit the Kremlin hopes will stop the Indian military deserting Russian defence contractors for foreign rivals, reports AFP.

Russian military equipment has provided the backbone of India's armed forces since the end of the Cold War but recently New Delhi has been looking at other markets in Europe and Israel.

Putin is therefore expected to use his summit meeting with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to offer Russian investments in India's defence industries in return for continuing arms sales.

Russian defence officials are already in New Delhi to clinch a deal for 22 MIG-29K fighters

worth 1.8 billion dollars, ITAR-TASS reported Wednesday, with the future purchase of 20 more planes on the summit agenda.

The two sides are also expected to sign contracts for New Delhi's purchase of T-90 battle tanks and for the manufacture under licence of SU-30 fighter planes in India.

But Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov, in charge of the military-industrial complex, conceded during a preparatory trip to New Delhi last week, that Russia's stranglehold on Indian contracts was under threat.

"We are well aware of India's contacts with Israel, France and Britain. We will do our best to become competitive in this situation," he said.

## Indian troops gun down 17 militants in Kashmir

JAMMU, India, Sept 29: Indian armed forces have gunned down 17 suspected Muslim militants in separate gunbattles in the Indian-administered zone of Kashmir, officials said here yesterday, reports AFP.

An Indian army spokesman in the state capital of Jammu said eight of them were killed in Kashmir's south yesterday. He said eight were Pakistanis who were shot after they crossed the border and entered Indian territory.

Spokesman Sanjay Khanna identified six of them as rebels belonging to the Lashkar-e-Tolba separatist group and said they were killed in an encounter in the forests of Panjara, some 150 kilometers (90 miles) northwest of Jammu.

The other two killed yesterday were militants from the dominant Hizbul Mujahideen group, Khanna said, adding that they were killed in a fierce encounter in the southern Kashmiri district of Udhampur.

"All eight were Pakistanis," he said, adding that a junior commissioned army officer also died in the fighting.

Nine other suspected Muslim militants, including a former Hizbul guerrilla leader, were killed by the army in separate encounters late Wednesday night in the disputed Himalayan territory, officials said in Srinagar.



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (C) is offered a helping hand as he arrives at the Organisation of American States (OAS) on Thursday in Washington, DC. Fujimori met with OAS Secretary General Cesar Gaviria and is expected to meet with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright yesterday. —AFP photo

## Ex-Canadian PM Trudeau dead

MONTREAL, Sept 29: Former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a flamboyant and charismatic political giant who led the country through some of its most tumultuous events, had died. He was 80, reports AP.

Trudeau died Thursday of prostate cancer, said Roy Heenan, senior partner of the Montreal law firm Heenan Blaikie, where Trudeau worked.

Trudeau was hospitalised for 10 days with pneumonia at the beginning of the year and associates say he never fully regained his strength. He also was believed to suffer from Parkinson's disease.

Heenan said Trudeau's health had declined "very steadily" in his final days.

During 16 years as prime minister, briefly interrupted by a 1979 election defeat, Trudeau seemed to personify North America's dynamic political and social changes, with a sophisticated, sometimes irreverent style that fascinated and captivated his country.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien praised Trudeau late Thursday as a force for change that continues to "shape the soul of his people."

He said Trudeau "dreamed of a society that afforded all of its citizens an equal opportunity to succeed in life."

## Suharto verdict biased: Wahid

JAKARTA, Sept 29: Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid has called the decision by judges to drop charges case against former president Suharto "biased," the state Antara news agency said today, reports AFP.

"Commenting on the court decision, the president said the verdict is 'biased'," Antara said. Wahid added he had spoken with the attorney general and expected prosecutors to appeal the verdict.

"We have been too lenient. Even a thief stealing a chicken can end up in jail," Wahid told journalists on the plane taking him from Venezuela to Brazil on Thursday night.

"Pak (Mr) Harto is not jailed. He's at his own home," he said.

Wahid said he would ask the chief of the supreme court to provide judges who are "clean,

determined and cannot be bought" for the appeal.

"I've telephoned Attorney General Marzuki Darusman and he told me that would fight for justice in the appeals court," Wahid said.

A panel of five judges on Thursday dismissed the multi-million-dollar corruption case against Suharto and released him from house arrest after doctors pronounced him permanently unfit for trial.

Suharto, 79, was accused of stealing 571 million dollars from the state by allegedly funneling money from huge tax-free charity foundations he ran into the businesses of family and friends.

During Suharto's rule, judges were subject to bribes, and verdicts were often in favour of the financially and politically powerful.

## Opposition plans shutdown to oust Milosevic

BELGRADE, Sept 29: Yugoslav's opposition upped the stakes today in its bid to oust Yugoslav President Milosevic, calling mass rallies as the first step in a campaign of civil disobedience to force the increasingly isolated strongman to accept defeat and step down, reports AFP.

With rallies due to start in Belgrade and other Serbian towns at 2:00 p.m. (18:00 BST), the opposition has vowed to call people to take to the streets and shut down the country if Milosevic refuses to go.

The call for action came late Thursday after the federal electoral commission declared Milosevic would have another chance to hold on to the presidency in an October 8 run-off against opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica.

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia, which insists Kostunica won the presidency outright in elections held Sunday, warned that "beginning Monday, Serbia will be progressively shut down".

International pressure for Milosevic to go also heightened, with US President Bill Clinton urging he step down and holding out a promise to lift sanctions on Belgrade as soon as a democratic government is in place.

## BRIEFLY

### 5 Anwar supporters arrested:

Malaysian police Friday detained five people who staged a protest in support of jailed ex-deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim in front of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Anwar supporters said, AP says from Kuala Lumpur.

The five people displayed a banner calling on Mahathir to resign as he arrived at the International Islamic University Malaysia for a speaking engagement, the FreeAnwar Campaign said in a statement.

## Biman BANGLADESH AIRLINES

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### Tender Notice

Sealed tenders in two envelope system (Technical Proposal & Financial Offer) are hereby invited for DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF BIMAN HOUSING COMPLEX OF HIGHRISE BUILDING AT ASHKONA, KURMITOLA, DHAKA ON TURNKEY BASIS (i.e. for designing to complete construction of the complex). The Real Estate developers/1<sup>st</sup> class enlisted contractors of govt/semi govt/autonomous bodies or the joint venture consortium of developers/1<sup>st</sup> class enlisted contractors/firms who have designed and completed construction in all respect of at least 10 storied RCC frame building having pile foundation of minimum Tk. 15.0 (fifteen) crore in a single work order will be eligible for participating in the tender.

The tender documents with detail terms and conditions will be available from the Cash & Banking Section of Bangladesh Biman "Balaka Bhaban" Zia International Airport, Dhaka and office of the Divisional Commissioner, 12, storied Govt Office Building, Room No. 206, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka on cash payment of Tk. 3000/- (Three thousand) only (non-refundable) per set on all working days from 05-10-2000 to 19-11-2000.

Tenderers shall have to deposit earnest money @ 2.5% (two point five per cent) of the total quoted amount in favour of Bangladesh Biman Corporation in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order alongwith the Financial Offer.

The tender will be received in the office of the General Manager, Project & Works, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Balaka Bhaban, Kurmitola, Dhaka and the office of Additional Divisional Commissioner, 12, storied Govt Office Building, Room No. 303, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka up to 1200 hrs on 20-11-2000 and only the Technical Proposal will be opened at 1430 hrs on the same day in presence of the tenderers (if any) in the office of the General Manager, Project & Works, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Balaka Bhaban, Kurmitola, Dhaka.

Biman Management reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

GD-904 General Manager (P&W)

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### Extension of Submission Date for Enlistment of Local & Foreign Advertising Firms/Agencies

Ref our Enlistment Notice published on 19, 20, 21 & 23 Aug. 2000 in local dailies for enlistment of Advertising Firms/Agencies, Management has extended the date of submission for enlistment of Advertising Firms/Agencies upto 16<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

Mohammed Ali  
Manager Printing & Publications

GD-903

## Notice for "Space To Let" at BCIC Bhaban

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of BCIC Bhaban at Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka shall be let for use as office space. Interested firm/organisations may apply in their letter heads. Addressed to the Secretary, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, 30-31, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka by 15-10-2000.

The rate of rent Tk. 24/- per month per sqft.

BCIC-847-21/9/2000

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G-1696 Deputy Secretary EMD