

International

Opinion poll
Vajpayee most
popular
leader

NEW DELHI, Oct 15: One year into the job, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee is still the most popular leader in the country, according to an opinion poll published today, reports Reuters.

Nearly 70 per cent of the 827 Indians surveyed in the poll rated Vajpayee's performance in office as ranging from good to excellent, the poll published by the Hindustan Times said.

Only seven per cent of those polled described the 73-year-old Vajpayee's year in office as poor.

In contrast, barely a quarter of voters polled approved Sonia Gandhi's track record as head of the main opposition Congress party, around 74 per cent of voters said the Italian-born Gandhi's performance ranged from very poor to average.

The poll surveyed people across the four big cities of New Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The responses were obtained through street-corner interviews and the people selected were in the age group 18 to 50.

Vajpayee, whose coalition government took office last October, marked the anniversary recuperating from knee surgery in a Bombay hospital.

The poll found 48 per cent of those polled said the 23-party coalition government's overall performance ranged from good to excellent. Only 13 per cent said its track record was poor, despite escalating violence in Kashmir and a slowing economy.

The poll was not all positive for the coalition. It found about 40 per cent of voters thought the National Democratic Alliance's handling of the economy ranged from poor to very poor.

Six US nationals
killed in Mexico
plane crash

TIJUANA, Mexico, Oct 15: Six US nationals died when the small private plane in which they were travelling crashed at Ensenada, northern Mexico, local authorities said Saturday, reports AFP.

At a press conference, municipal police commander Jesus Velez identified the victims as Michael Cala, Mervin Webster, Ellen Goldsenn, Edith Lowster, Debra Wayne and Drya Caen.

The victims were all members of the humanitarian organisation Air Doctors, on their way to speak to local mayor Daniel Quintero, to discuss rural health assistance programmes, Velez said.

He said death appears to have been instantaneous.

The plane crashed less than one kilometre from the runway at Ensenada Military Air Base.

The aircraft was travelling to Ensenada from San Ignacio, after initiating its journey in San Felipe, according to air base commander Sergio Escobar. All three towns are in the Mexican state of Baja California.

Myanmar
closes
universities

BANGKOK, Oct 15: Myanmar has closed several universities in the capital Yangon after anti-government posters were found on their walls, opposition radio said today, reports AFP.

The government shut Dagon university and teacher training colleges under the emergency act, said the Democratic Voice of Burma, an opposition radio station transmitted from Oslo and monitored in Bangkok.

The closure of the Dagon schools, located in a suburb of Yangon, occurred after police found "wall posters about opposition to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)'s education system and administrative machinery," it said.

The SPDC is the official name for the Yangon junta, which reopened Myanmar's universities last month after a suspension in the wake of a 1996 student uprising.

Myanmar's universities have been sporadically closed since a popular uprising in the summer of 1988 threatened to topple the military regime.

Egypt prepares to host crucial summit to end ME violence

sible.

Nasrallah said Thursday that Israel must free all Arab prisoners it holds to obtain the release of the three soldiers.

Sunday's announcement by the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hezbollah came as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat prepared to meet at this Egyptian Red Sea resort on Monday.

Hezbollah chief Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said in Beirut, "The Islamic resistance has succeeded in taking prisoner an Israeli officer with the rank of colonel in a complex operation whose details will be given later."

The Israeli army said it was trying to verify the claim.

On October 7 Hezbollah snatched three Israeli non-commissioned officers in an ambush in the disputed Shebaa Farms area captured by Israel from Syria in 1967 but claimed by Lebanon.

The move sparked threats of retaliation by Israel, which held Lebanon and Syria, the main power-broker in Beirut, responsible.

Though Barak and Arafat yielded to intense international pressure and agreed to attend

without pre-conditions, they have not dropped their respective conflicting demands.

Arafat continues to insist on an international inquiry into the causes of the violence, while Israel says it will only accept a limited fact-finding exercise.

Clinton said the summit's central objective would be to stop the violence and agree "on a fact-finding mechanism concerning how this began and how it can be prevented from happening again, and find a way back to dialogue and negotiations."

He urged Americans Saturday to pray for the success of the conference, while admitting that "ending the violence and getting people of the Middle East back to dialogue will be hard after what has happened."

"We should be under no illusions," Clinton added. "The good news is the parties have agreed to meet and the situation appears to be calmer, but the path ahead is difficult."

The attempt to salvage the

Middle East peace process comes as Clinton's stature as a peace broker begins to wane.

His status and power will effectively be eclipsed with the US presidential election on November 7, when his successor is elected -- despite the fact his mandate does not expire until January.

While the West Bank and Gaza Strip maintained their relative calm of the past few days, Israelis and Palestinians were both preparing for failure.

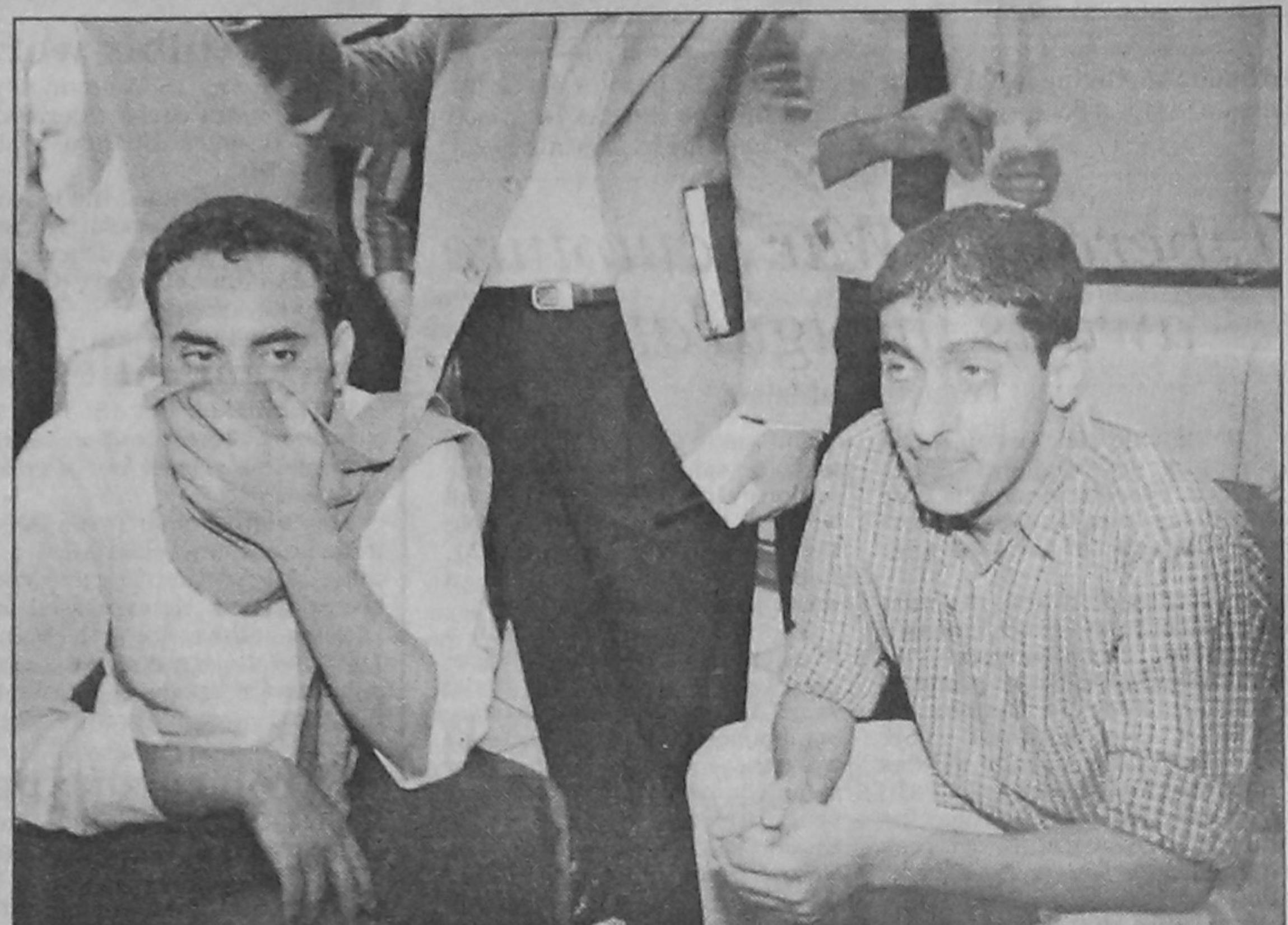
The Israeli army said it was implementing an emergency six million dollar plan to bolster defence of Jewish settlements in the West Bank over fears of Palestinian attacks.

As Barak chaired a pre-summit cabinet meeting, his principal advisor Danny Yatom warned that if the Palestinians revised their plan of declaring an independent state Israel would no longer be bound by any ceasefire accord reached at Sharm el-Sheikh.



Palestinian rally organisers, with the help of the New South Wales Police Force, attempt to hold back demonstrators trying to storm the US consulate in Sydney yesterday. The protest was organised by an umbrella grouping of local Palestinian, Arab and Muslim organisations in response to the crisis in the Middle East.

-AFP photo



The alleged hijackers of a Saudi Arabian Airlines Boeing 777 with 111 people aboard, mostly British passengers, are presented to the press by Iraqi authorities at Baghdad airport on Saturday. AFP photo

Lankan opposition seeks court order for repoll

parties.

The European Union poll monitors as well as other local monitoring groups had singled out the central province which returned 24 members to the 225-member parliament as the most malpracticed.

The elections chief Dayananda Dissanayake announced he was annulling the vote in 15 polling centres in the central province while virtually cancelling the entire exercise in the Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts.

There were no clear winners from Tuesday's vote, but President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance emerged the largest single party and cobbled together a coalition on Friday with the help of two minority

chief excluded the two areas.

The opposition UNP which tried but failed to form a coalition on its own on Friday said that it was seeking the intervention of the Court of Appeal to have a fresh election in the central province.

"The level of violence directly impacted on the final result," UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said. "If not for the violence and rigging we would have been in a position to form a government."

The private Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) said the final outcome in 17 polling divisions was "utterly meaningless" because of the extent of ballot stuffing.

Rival militias in Solomon Islands sign peace deal

BRISBANE, Australia, Oct 15: Rival militias in the Solomon Islands signed an accord today ending two years of fighting over access to land and jobs, reports Reuters.

About 70 people have died in the conflict in the former British colony, 1,000 miles northeast of Australia.

The parties to this agreement hereby declare that they renounce, deplore and do solemnly give up violence ... and confirm their respect for human rights and rule of the law," said the accord, signed by Solomon Island militia leaders and by national and provincial government leaders.

Millions queue up for Asia's richest TV game show

NEW DELHI, Oct 15: Asia's richest game show will hit millions of Indian TV screens this month, with a 2.2-million-dollar jackpot that markedly ups the ante in the quiz show wars" between rival media moguls, reports AFP.

Zee TV, still reeling from rival Star TV's success with "Kaun Banega Crorepati" (KBC, Who Wants to be a Millionaire?), promises a 100 million rupee (2.2 million dollar) prize -- 10 times that offered by KBC -- with its new quiz show that has a tentative launch date of October 23.

"Sawaal Dus Crore Ka" (The 100-Million Rupee Question) will be broadcast three times a week, with contestants required to answer nine questions to reach the pot of gold.

A Zee TV spokesman said the satellite network had received "more than 10 million" calls during an eight-day period last month when it opened its lines to applications from hopeful participants.

Zee is reportedly negotiating with Bollywood movie queen Madhuri Dixit to anchor the show, as a counter to the charisma of KBC's Amitabh Bachchan, India's biggest film star.

Since KBC's launch on July 3, only one participant has won the 10 million rupee jackpot, but the sums on offer and Bachchan's charm have sent the show's ratings into the stratosphere.

Zee TV, which claims a viewership of 5.5 million Indian households, says the size of the jackpot on "Sawaal Dus Crore Ka" will put KBC and its movie hero hot in the shade.

"We are offering an opportunity to earn 2.2 million dollars and even after taxes, cash in hand will be beyond the wildest dreams of most people," a source from the Bombay-based private network said.

India's average annual per capita income is around 226 dollars.

Zee tried to win back its lost viewership with a game show last month, but its comparatively meager first prize of 100,000 rupees just did not cut the ice.

The rivalry between Zee and Star have led to copycat game shows on other TV channels, and reports that Australian media tycoon Kerry Packer's Channel Nine is planning to launch its "Greed" game show in India.

Baraquito
crowned
'Miss America'

WASHINGTON, Oct 15: A Hawaiian schoolteacher beat out 50 other contestants late Saturday to be crowned Miss America, arguably the most coveted of US beauty pageant crowns, reports AFP.

Angela Perez Baraquito, 24, of Honolulu, won a 50,000 dollar scholarship that accompanies the title, and now prepares for a whirlwind, year-long "reign" including endless promotional appearances and endorsements.

A devout Catholic, Baraquito is a physical education teacher at a Honolulu elementary school. She said after being crowned that she had hoped merely to finish in the top ten to honour her students and the people of Hawaii."

During the talent portion of Saturday's competition, Baraquito performed a traditional Hawaiian hula dance.

One of nine children, her parents operate a mom-and-pop pest control company.

Organisers of the Miss America pageant consider it unique because it judges contestants not just on beauty, but also on their poise, ability to answer interview questions and talent.

The contest, held each year in Atlantic City, New Jersey, celebrated its 80th anniversary this year by undergoing a makeover, attempting a more up-tempo pace and a hipper look, in an effort to reverse years of declining television viewership.

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Ferry Division, Barisal

(RHD) Tender Notice

1. Tender Notice No
2. Name of work
3. Eligibility of contractor
4. Availability of tender schedule
5. Tender receiving officer
6. Last date of selling tender documents
7. Last date of receiving tender in sealed cover
8. Date and time of opening tender
9. Date & time of lottery (if applicable)

Gr No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earliest money
1	Supplying of spare parts for 150/190 kilowatt main engine of Utility/Ferry at Dapdabia Ghat under Barisal Ferry Sub-Division during the year 2000-2001.	Tk. 4,00,000/- As per schedule	Tk. 8,000/-
2	Supplying of spare parts for 120 HP Hydromaster (New Ford) engine of Utility Type-2 (Imp) Ferry No. 029/97 at Patuakhali Ferry Ghat under Ferry Sub-Division, Barisal during the year 2000-2001.	Tk. 4,99,925/-	Tk. 10,000/-

Md. Saber Ali
Executive Engineer (RHD)
(Mechl) Ferry Division, Barisal



US space shuttle Discovery Japanese Mission Specialist Koichi Wakata (L) talks about the days events on Saturday from the shuttle's flight deck as US Pilot Pam Melroy (R) checks some data. Wakata used the robot arm to install the Z-1 truss to the Unity Module after the crew overcame some minor glitches. --AFP photo

Institute of Food & Radiation Biology

Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE)

Ganakbari, Savar, Dhaka.

Sub: Availing Opportunity of Disinfecting Medical Equipment with Gamma Ray

It is notified for information of the manufacturers of medical equipment that, a cobalt⁶⁰ (Co⁶⁰) Gamma Irradiator at the Institute of Food & Radiation Biology, a unit of Atomic Energy Commission at Ganakbari, Savar for disinfecting various medical equipment through latest Hi-tech Gamma Ray system. With this, medical equipment manufacturers are being provided commercial service for 16-18 hours daily. It is requested to utilise this opportunity and obtain the disinfection service with guaranteed safety of gauze, bandage, syringe, needle, giving set, plastic container, medical kits, gloves etc.

We assure to provide quick, dependable & as per requirement service and allout cooperation.

Please contact:

Anwar Kamal Siddiqui
Director, IFRB, Phone: 07701340, 7701341, Res: 8817288
S.I. No. 610/2000
D.F.P.-24483-10/10

G-1796

Tender Notice No 42/2000

Biman Flight Catering Centre (BFCC) invites sealed tender from the experienced contractor/supplier to the following job.

Sl No	Name of item	Date for sale of tender SKD	Earliest money (taka) (refundable)	Cost of schedule (non-refundable)	Time & date of dropping of tender SKD	Time & date of opening of tender
01.	Supply of grocery items	From 15.10.2000 to 26.10.2000	60,000.00	400/-	From 10.00 hrs to 14.30 hrs on 29.10.2000	At 14.30 hrs on 29.10.2000

Schedule of tender along with other terms and conditions may be obtained on request in the official letterhead pad during office hours on payment of cost of schedule from office of the Manager Finance, BFCC, Zia International Airport, Dhaka. Any eligible bidder may participate in the tender.

BFCC management reserves the right to accept/reject any or all tender/tenders and also to change the opening date of the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. If tender opening day happens to be holiday, the tender will be opened on the next working day at the same schedule time.

D.F.P.-24593-11/10

G-1803