

International

Opposition plans strike to pressure Estrada to quit

MANILA, Nov 5: Opposition groups said today they will hold a general strike and other protests aimed at pressuring President Joseph Estrada to resign over allegations he pocketed millions of dollars in illegal gambling payoffs, reports AP.

Estrada, however, refused to resign despite a rally Saturday by tens of thousands of people demanding he step down to spare the country from a prolonged political crisis that could devastate the economy.

The Congress of the Filipino People, a group of activists who helped unseat dictator Ferdinand Marcos in a "people's power" revolt 1986, said they would hold protests in metropolitan Manila

on Monday coinciding with the start of congressional deliberations on an impeachment complaint against Estrada.

The New Nationalist Alliance, a coalition of left-wing groups, said it is planning a general strike Nov 14 led mainly by labourers, transport workers, teachers and students.

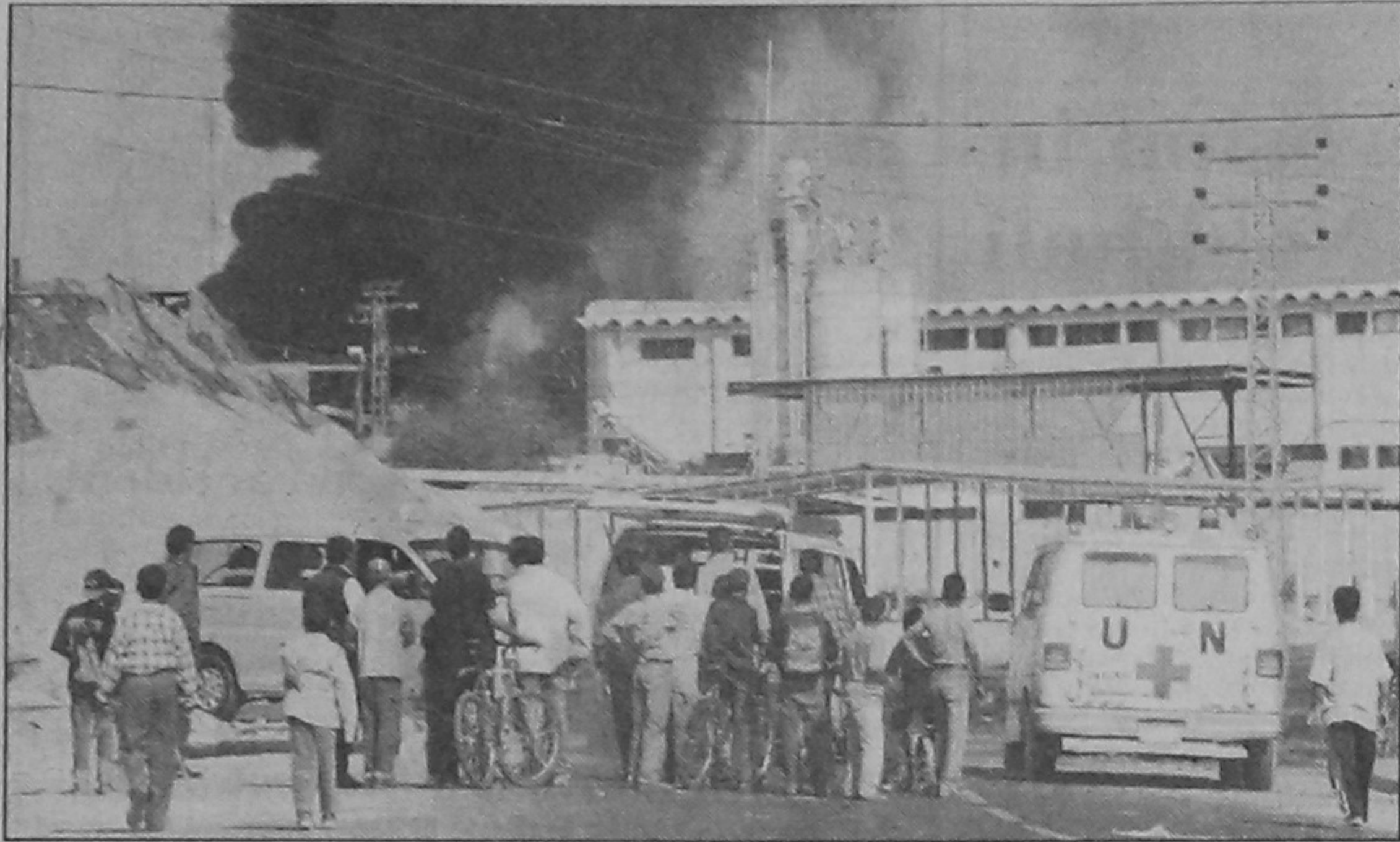
"It is important to show Mr Estrada how resolute we truly are," the group said in a statement.

Other groups announced rallies on Monday at the central bank and at the presidential palace, where Estrada is to convene the National Security Council to discuss how to address the economic impact of the political

crisis. Cabinet economic secretaries as well as national security officials are to attend.

Pressure on Estrada to resign has escalated rapidly as prominent lawmakers have deserted his LAMP party. More than 50 former LAMP congressmen have said they will support an impeachment complaint in the House of Representatives, virtually assuring enough votes to send it to the Senate for a trial.

Rep Heherson Alvarez, a congressman who led the filing of the impeachment complaint, said the gambling payoff scandal has so distracted and eroded support of Estrada's administration that the president can no longer effectively govern.



Palestinian boys gathered for clashes watch smoke billowing from a factory that was set ablaze in an Israeli-controlled area at Erez, the main crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, on Saturday. The day saw a marked drop in the level of violence in the West Bank and Gaza, as US President Bill Clinton said he "hopes to meet" Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak separately next week in Washington. --AFP photo

Malaysian police block opposition protesters

KLANG, Malaysia, Nov 5: Hundreds of Malaysian police and paramilitaries mounted a major operation today to block an opposition rally, opening fire on protesters with a water cannon at one point, reports AFP.

As a helicopter hovered overhead police blocked access roads to the rally site. They closed one lane of a main highway between this town and Kuala Lumpur to the east, causing a huge traffic jam.

An AFP correspondent said police opened fire briefly with one water cannon as one group tried to walk towards the venue.

Police chased protesters down the highway and plain-clothes officers were seen detaining some people. Other officers went from car to car in the traffic jam checking identity cards in search of demonstrators.

Supporters of jailed ex-deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim and other opposition elements staged impromptu protests amid the traffic jam, shouting

"Reformasi" (Reform).

"Restore the people's rights" read one banner displayed by a group atop a lane divider. "Up, up Anwar, down, down Mahathir," one placard said.

Opponents of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad had called for a "gathering of 100,000 citizens" to protest at Anwar's plight and at curbs on freedom of assembly and other perceived rights abuses.

One police officer who declined to be identified said about 500 police were at the scene, including regular officers, red-helmeted riot police and the paramilitary General Operations Force.

Police have declared the rally illegal and said those taking part can be jailed for up to one year.

Organisers and a national police spokesman said five men and one woman had been detained Saturday.

Raja Petra Kamarudin, director of the FreeAnwar Campaign, said 15 more people had been detained as of mid-afternoon Sunday.



Unidentified Japanese ex-hostages are guided to the Titania Hotel in central Athens by a policeman on Saturday. Thirty-three Japanese tourists, their Greek driver and Greek guide captured earlier on a Greek tour bus, were safe after an armed man, Christos Kentiras, surrendered. --AFP photo

Greek bus hijacker commits suicide

ATHENS, Nov 5: Christos Kentiras, the 48-year-old Greek man who hijacked a bus carrying 33 Japanese tourists over the weekend, committed suicide when he jumped from the seventh floor of a police building in Athens early Sunday, police said.

Kentiras shook off his police guard after having his fingerprints taken, opened a window and threw himself out as he was on his way to the prosecutor's office, the same source said.

Panagiotis Ehrassiadis, a senior official at the Greek public order ministry, ordered an administrative enquiry into the police's possible responsibility for Kentiras's death.

On Saturday, Kentiras had murdered his 77-year-old mother-in-law and a 44-year-old male friend he suspected of having an affair with his wife, before hijacking the tour bus on the

Corinth to Athens highway on Sunday.

He then submitted his hostages -- 33 mostly elderly Japanese tourists, their driver and a guide -- to a nine-hour ordeal at gunpoint, keeping the bus on the move and changing direction several times while a convoy of 50 police and emergency service vehicles gave chase.

Two helicopters also followed the bus, which had its curtains drawn.

He gave himself up to a Greek talk-show host at an Athens-based television studio late Saturday before being handed over to the police.

Kentiras, who was armed with a rifle, had been in an unstable state for some months after his marriage broke up, police said, adding that the killings were linked to family disputes.

19 tumors found inside woman's skull

BEIJING, Nov 5: Chinese surgeons who opened the skull of a woman who had complained about headaches and insomnia found 19 tumors, one as large as a goose egg, state media reported on Sunday, reports AFP.

The patient, a retired teacher, was treated at a hospital affiliated with the Harbin Medical College in northeastern Heilongjiang province, the Xinhua news agency said.

Doctors at the hospital diagnosed that her ailments could be due to a tumor, and were surprised during surgery to find not one, but 19, the agency said.

Doctors, who have now dismissed the cured woman, said they have never encountered a case like this before, Xinhua said.

Musharraf to visit Kazakhstan

ISLAMABAD, Nov 5: Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf will leave for the Central Asian state of Kazakhstan on Monday for a two-day visit, reports AP.

Musharraf will hold extensive talks with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev to boost economic and trade ties between the countries, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The visit is expected to provide a fresh impetus to the already friendly relations between the two countries," it said.

The leaders will also discuss Pakistan's sour relations with uneasy neighbour India over the disputed region of Kashmir and the security situation in the Central Asia, troubled by the protracted civil war in Afghanistan, the statement said.

Shakespeare was a dope smoker?

LONDON, Nov 5: Scientists believe they may have discovered the source of William Shakespeare's genius -- smoking cannabis, a British newspaper reported today, says AFP.

Researchers are investigating whether the secret of the Bard's creativity was his dope-smoking, according to the Independent on Sunday.

Pipes found at Shakespeare's home in Stratford-upon-Avon, central England, are being tested for traces of the drug, the paper said.

Dr Frances Thackeray, head of palaeontology at the Transvaal Museum in Pretoria, South Africa, believes there is evidence of Shakespeare's drug habit in his work, the paper said.

Thackeray points to the Bard's use of complex imagery of darkness and mental journeys as evidence of drug-induced visions, according to the Independent.

In a paper written for the Shakespearean Society of Southern Africa, he said: "There are very few literary scholars who have recognised the potential link between Shakespeare and hallucinogenic stimuli."

"A close reading of his sonnets and some other lines suggests that he was aware of them and may have experienced the effects himself," he added: "This project has Stratford agog."

Thackeray and a colleague, Professor Nick van der Merwe, have asked Pretoria police laboratories to analyse the contents of several clay pipes retrieved from New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare lived until his death in 1616.

Clashes in Kashmir: Death toll rises to 44

SRINAGAR, Nov 5: At least 44 people have been killed in Jammu-Kashmir state since a land mine killed a prominent Shia Muslim leader on Friday, according to press reports today, reports AP.

The Press Trust of India reported that among those killed were 25 militants and eight Indian army soldiers. Two girls were killed in cross fire between security forces and militants in the Wathoor area of Badgam district in central Kashmir on Saturday.

Except for patrolling policemen, streets were deserted in the Old Town area of Srinagar, the state's summer capital, and in the Shia dominated village of Pattan, 35 kilometres to the north, after the state authorities imposed an indefinite, round-the-clock curfew on Saturday.

About 50,000 people from both Shia and Sunni communities took part Saturday in the funeral procession of Agha Syed Mehdi, an independent politician and a Shia, who was killed along with his driver and four security

guards on Friday.

Police were forced to fire into the air in Pattan town to disperse a mob protesting the death of a man in fights that broke out after the news of Mehdi's death spread.

Police said they suspect the land mine was triggered by Islamic militants who want to sever the territory from India and join it with Pakistan, which controls one-third of the Himalayan region.

Both countries have claimed all of Kashmir since the bloody partition that carved two independent nations out of British India in 1947. The disputed region has sparked two of three wars between India and Pakistan. Most of the militant groups that have fought in Kashmir since 1989 are predominantly Sunni Muslims.

The new round of violence sparked by Mehdi's death included land mine and hand-grenade attacks, direct firing between militants and security forces and a bombing in a barracks at a police training centre.

Hemopoietic stem cells transplanted from mother to son

SHANGHAI, Nov 5: Chinese doctors have successfully transplanted purified hemopoietic stem cells from a mother to her son, reports Xinhua.

This is the first successful transplant of hemopoietic stem cells between a mother and son in China.

The nine-year-old boy, You Bin, from east China's Fujian Province, was diagnosed as having acute lymphatic leukaemia in February 1999. He had a relapse after undergoing chemotherapy in January this year.

Further medical examinations at the Shanghai Children's Medical Centre indicated that the boy's 9th and 22nd pair of chromosomes were out of place.

Doctors believed that since he had a relapse, the only way to save the boy's life was to transplant hemopoietic stem cells from another person to help rebuild his blood system.

His mother was chosen as the most suitable person to supply the hemopoietic stem cells, but because the probability of the same type of human leucocyte antigens being in both parents and children was only 50 per cent, there was a high possibility of rejection.

Another difficulty and possible cause of rejection was that hemopoietic stem cells are usually mixed with other cells, such as lymphocytes and lipocytes.

To ensure success, on July 12 the doctors added CD34 positive antibodies to sort out the hemopoietic stem cells because these cells have CD34 positive antigens on their surface.

The purified hemopoietic stem cells were then transplanted into the boy and the following day he was injected with five milliliters of lymphocytes to bring about a slight rejection to help kill leukaemia cells.

According to the doctors, the boy's abnormal chromosomes disappeared 30 days after the operation and the slight rejection was brought under complete control in 45 days.

US Presidential Election



Republican Presidential candidate Texas Governor George W. Bush shares cake with Laura Bush (R) on her birthday aboard Bush's campaign airplane on the way to New Jersey. Laura turns 54 on Saturday. --AFP photo



Democratic presidential candidate and US Vice President Al Gore sings "We Shall Overcome" at the Tennessee Democratic Victory Interfaith Prayer Breakfast in Memphis, Tennessee, on Saturday with his wife Tipper and US Rep. Harold Ford. --AFP photo

Bush, Gore fight for votes in key states

JACKSONVILLE, Florida, Nov 5: In the waning hours of the presidential campaign, Texas Governor George W. Bush prepared for a daylong blitz of Florida today, while Democratic rival Al Gore was set to hopscotch to a handful of key industrial cities, reports AFP.

The too-close-to-call battle for the White House culminates in Tuesday's election, with the campaigning becoming more raucous by the minute, as the candidates trade insults and their campaigns turn to increasingly nasty television attack advertisements.

Although his brother Jeb is the governor of Florida, Bush finds himself slightly behind in this state which is critical to his Republican party's bid to wrest the presidency from the Democrats.

Both Bush and Gore, the US vice president, have charged across the country, jumping in and out of planes and motorcades as the clock ticks down to Tuesday's date with voters in what has turned out to be the closest presidential race in decades.

Bush's message here is likely to vary little from the one he delivered on the stump Saturday at campaign stops in Michigan, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as he called for an end to the scandals and investigations that have plagued the Clinton administration.

"Shouldn't Tuesday it turn out the way I think it is going to, when I put my hand on the Bible... I will swear to uphold the honor and integrity of the office to which I've been elected to," said Bush in Dearborn, Michigan Saturday.

Despite a small tempest created by news of his 1976 drunk-driving arrest, the Texas governor stayed on message, saying the country needed "a fresh start from the season of cynicism," adding an appeal

that has become a refrain during his campaign rallies.

"Be patient, folks," he said. "In three short days, help is on the way."

For his part, Gore on Sunday was to campaign in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Dearborn, Michigan and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, before heading overnight to the state of Iowa.

While Bush slightly leads most national surveys of the popular vote, Gore appears competitive in vote-rich states like Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida which could help him piece together the majority of electoral votes he needs to become president.

Bush's endgame campaigning has had the ring of an early victory lap, while Gore has told his supporters that though victory was within reach, it is far from assured.

"There's not much time before the choice on election day... my friends, I ask for your prayers and I ask for your support," Gore implored the congregation at a black church in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Saturday a voice worn by scouring the nation for votes.

On Saturday Gore fired off perhaps his most vicious attack yet on his Republican rival, claiming the Texas governor's campaign embodied a cruel "dog-eat-dog, every person for himself" vision of the future. At another campaign stop Gore said Bush's positions represent a "mentality that works fine for the very wealthy, but does not work very well always for those who are struggling to get by."

Gore told supporters at various campaign stops that only he should be entrusted with America's booming economy, and promised prosperity equalling the flush era of the past eight years, ushered in under his boss, US President Bill Clinton.

Kumaratunga, Vajpayee discuss Tamil peace talks

COLOMBO, Nov 5: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bahari Vajpayee discussed efforts by Norwegian peace envoy Eric Solheim to end a decade of separatist bloodshed, official sources said today, reports AFP.

Vajpayee and Kumaratunga discussed by telephone the outcome of this week's meeting between Solheim and Tamil Tiger rebel leader V. Prabhakaran, they said.

The two leaders also discussed the willingness of Prabhakaran to hold unconditional peace talks

with the Sri Lankan government.

The rebel leader's offer came during his meeting with Solheim in Tamil Tiger-held northern Wanni province on November 1.

Solheim at a media briefing said the rebel leader had not laid down any pre-conditions for talks.

But the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in a statement said Prabhakaran had demanded immediate cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of government troops from the Tamil dominated north and east and lifting of an embargo on food and other essential items.

Solheim followed up his talks by meeting Kumaratunga and Indian high commissioner Gopalakrishna Gandhi, before he left for Oslo on Saturday.

Norway's ambassador to Sri Lanka Jon Westberg, who also took part in Solheim's meeting with Prabhakaran, was quoted in the state-owned Sunday Observer here as saying, "Solheim elaborated to the president, the stand taken by LTTE leader on the northeastern problem, but we are not prepared to reveal the contents of the issues discussed either with the president or with Prabhakaran."

Iran builds first quake-proof mosque

TEHRAN, Nov 5: Iran, one of the most earthquake-prone regions in the world, has built its first quake-proof mosque, the official IRNA news agency reported today, reports AFP.

The all-wood mosque, located near the northeastern city of Neshapur, took 14 months to construct and can withstand shocks of up to 7.0 degrees on the Richter scale, IRNA said.

Quakes and smaller tremors are an almost daily occurrence in Iran, which counts some 40,000 mosques nationwide.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Rajbari

(RHD) Notice Inviting Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited in the Bangladesh Form No. 2911 for the following works:

1. Tender Notice No : RRD/02 of 2000-2001 E
2. Name of work : Strengthening of existing pavement by WBM, carpeting and seal coat, primer seal coat with repair work at different KM of Rajbari-Kushtia Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2000-2001 E. (in 4 (four) groups) As per group list.
3. Estimated cost : -Do-
4. Earnest money : -Do-
5. Time allowed : -Do-
6. Eligibility of contractor : Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Rajbari/Faridpur/Madaripur/Shariatpur/Gopalganj/Barisal/Planning Division, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Dhaka/Sub-Divisional Engineer (RHD), Road Sub-Division, Rajbari.
7. Name of offices where tender documents will be sold : (A) Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barisal Zone, Barisal. (B) Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Faridpur. (C) Superintending Engineer, RHD, Monitoring and Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka. (D) Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. (E) Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Rajbari.
8. Name of offices where tender will be received : 19-11-2000 E up to office hours.
9. Last date of selling tender : Up to 12-30 PM of 20-11-2000 E.
10. Last date and time for receiving of tender : At 11-00 AM of 26-11-2000 E at the office of the undersigned.
11. Date, time & place of opening : At 11-00 AM of 04-12-2000 E at the office of the undersigned.
12. Date, time & place of lottery (if necessary) : 266 (Dev), for all group.
13. Chargeable head : GROUP LIST

Tender Notice No: RRD/02 of 2000-2001 E.

Group No	Name of work with location	Estimated cost (Tk)	Earnest money (Tk)	Time allowed	Eligibility of contractor
1 (one)	Strengthening of existing pavement by WBM, carpeting, seal coat & primer seal coat work at 8" (P) and 9" KM of Rajbari-Kushtia Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2000-2001 E	Tk. 28,07,540/=	Tk. 58,151/=	45 (Forty five) days	'A' to 'C' general category
2 (two)	Do-Do-work at 27" (P) and 32" (P) KM of Rajbari Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2000-2001 E	Tk. 30,79,275/=	Tk. 61,586/=	-Do-	-Do-
3 (three)	Seal coat and primer seal coat with repair work at 2" (P), 13" (P) and 14" (P) KM of Rajbari-Kushtia Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2000-2001 E	Tk. 11,98,446/=	Tk. 23,969/=	20 (twenty) days	'A' to 'D' general category
4 (four)	Do-Do-work at 20" part, 31" (P) and 32" (P) KM of Rajbari-Kushtia Road and 1" (P) KM of Machpara Connecting Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2000-2001 E	Tk. 10,23,526/=	Tk. 20,471/=	-Do-	-Do-

DDP- 26367-31/10
G-1951

Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Rajbari.